

Jonathan Srock

The Spiritual Realm Life Group

Week 2

Opening Prayer (5 Minutes)

Teaching (30 Minutes)

Setting the Stage

- Two Opposing Sides
 - In the spiritual realm, there are two major players – God and Satan. They had been fighting over creation for a very long time.
 - This is not a dualism, where two powers are equal and the battle is essentially a draw, like with Yin and Yang. God is much, much greater than Satan.
 - As we look deeper into the spiritual realm, we will spend a little more time on Satan, demons, and evil spiritual powers. However, we must not give them more credit or time than they are due. To do so would be the equivalent of elevating them to a position and giving them more time and glory than they are worth.
 - Most of what we will study in the spiritual realm gives more time to parts of the realm that the Bible does not give much space to. We study out of curiosity, but we must not allow ourselves to get carried away with these parts of the Bible that are minor.

Meeting the Players

- God

- There's so much to say and study about God that I can't cover it all in one life group session.
- God has no origin. He has always been, always is, and always will be. It's very hard for us to get our heads around the each hand around the eternal nature of God.
- He is outside of creation, so everything created has no effect on Him. Time and space have no effect on God. He only enters time to interact with His creation. God uses time to His advantage. He interacts with humanity through time.
- Everything besides God operates with the natural principles and laws of creation. We are subject to time. We are subject to creation and nature. We cannot go backward in time. We cannot go forward beyond the present.
- We must follow the physical laws of creation. We cannot defy gravity or the eventual aging, deterioration, and decay of nature.
- Decay and death are the natural results of sin and rebellion against God. We are subject to physical decay and death. However, as Christians, we have a different eternal destiny than those who did not know Christ. Physical death is a doorway to eternity in heaven.
- God is absolutely sovereign over His creation. He is the King of the universe. Everything is decreed by God and creation must bow to His voice.
 - God allows some things to happen and intervenes before other things happen. As Sovereign, He decides these things, and no human being has the right to challenge Him.
 - We cannot fully understand God's thoughts, God's ways, or God's decisions. They are beyond us ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#); [Romans 11:34](#); [1 Corinthians 2:16](#)).
 - There is much debate among theologians and scholars on how to square God's sovereignty with human free will. We would be here for years without coming to a definitive conclusion on this debate.
- Four Truths about God

- All-good
 - God is all good in His character. There is no evil or darkness in Him ([1 John 1:5](#)). He does not tempt anyone ([James 1:13-15](#)).
 - God’s ability to be all-good and all-powerful does not limit His decisions or actions. We will be talking about God and suffering until the end of the age.
 - God declared about Himself that He is “compassionate and merciful” ([Exodus 34:6](#)). Because of His compassion, God acts for the good of His creation.
- Omniscience
 - God is all-knowing. There is nothing beyond His understanding or wisdom. He knows everything about creation, and everything about you. He knows you better than you know yourself.
 - He has perfect knowledge, is unlimited in His wisdom, and complete in knowledge. He is also not limited by time. He knows everything past, present, and future.
 - God’s omniscience does not force Him to act based on knowledge of the future. He decides when and if He will act. We cannot understand what God understands, and we cannot challenge Him on His decisions and actions.
- Omnipresence
 - God is everywhere present all the time. But God is not creation (Pantheism). His presence is in creation.
 - David said there was nowhere he could go outside of God’s presence ([Psalm 139: 7-12](#)).
- Omnipotence
 - God is all powerful. He can do all things. His power is limitless over all creation.

- We must not spend our time on useless arguments about God’s power that attempt to create paradoxes such as, “Can God create a rock that’s too big for Him to move.” These trivialize the power of God.
- God has all power, but He decides how to use it. He decides when not to use it. And He is only limited by the limitations He sets for Himself, such as acting within His character.
- God’s power occupies two realities: authority and ability.
- The Unity of God and the Trinity (Godhead)
 - God is one, a unified being ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)). God is not schizophrenic in the Trinitarian understanding of His nature.
 - God exists as three Persons with the same substance. Whatever makes God God Exists in all three Persons of the Trinity.
 - We struggle to understand the Trinity is much as we struggle to understand God’s eternal nature. These matters are outside our complete comprehension. But just because we can’t understand God completely doesn’t mean we cannot know Him.
 - We understand the three Persons of the Trinity from Scripture ([Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8; Psalm 45:6-7](#)) The New Testament gives us further revelation about the Trinity ([John 1:1-5](#) cf. [Genesis 1:1-3; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21](#);
 - God the Father
 - Spoke the universe into existence.
 - He planned redemption and sent Jesus into the world.
 - Jesus and the Holy Spirit follow His lead. This is how the Bible explains relationships within the Godhead from a human perspective.
 - God the Son
 - Carried out the Father’s spoken commands to bring fish in about.

- Jesus brought redemption into reality by being sacrificed on the Cross for our sins.
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He came to earth in the first century A.D. to complete God's plan and mission to reconcile humanity to Himself.
- Jesus further reveals God's nature and desire for His creation. He completed God's plan of salvation by dying on the Cross to save humanity from sin and ransom humanity into His Kingdom.
- God the Holy Spirit
 - Unfortunately, most Christians are less familiar with the Holy Spirit than the other two members of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit inhabits us at salvation, empowers us with gifts for ministry, and makes Jesus real to us.
 - Moved over the face of the waters at creation to keep God's presence in His creation.
 - Seals us at salvation and brings God's presence into our lives daily.
 - We will never fully understand the Trinity this side of heaven. God is knowable, but also mystery to us. If He wasn't a mystery to us on some level, He would not be God.
- Names of God
 - When God names Himself we get a clear vision of who He is ([Exodus 34:6-7](#)). God named Himself, "I am that I am," or Yahweh (YHWH), a name that literally means, "I exist because I exist." It's believed to speak His name is like taking a breath in and breathing out. He is the God of life.
 - When others name God, His name is linked to an event and experience of His power and Person. People have given God names throughout the Old Testament. From Hagar receiving His help in the wilderness after she ran from Sarah and called him, "The God who sees me" to Abraham who called Him, "The God who provides," these names tell us about God through the experience of others.

- Satan
 - He first shows up as the serpent in the garden of Eden that tempts Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, choosing to rebel against God and decide morality from themselves.
 - As we learn more about God through progressive revelation as we read the Bible cover to cover, we also learn more about His adversary, Satan. Let's look at a key passage in Job.

Job 1:6–10 ESV

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Job 2:1–6 ESV

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."

- Origin

- We get the best idea of where Satan came from when we read a couple of the prophets. They seem to be talking about human kings at first, but the language becomes elevated into a more cosmic description of Satan.

Isaiah 14:12–15 ESV

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Ezekiel 28:12–17 ESV

“Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the signet 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, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

- Names in the Bible
 - i. Satan (Hebrew for adversary) ([Job 1:6](#)), the devil ([Revelation 12:9](#)), serpent ([Genesis 3:](#)), dragon ([Revelation 12:7-9](#)), deceiver of the whole world ([Revelation 12:9](#)), accuser of the brethren ([Revelation 12:10](#)), father of lies ([John 8:44](#)), the tempter ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)), prints of the power of the air ([Ephesians 2:2](#)), god of this age ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)).
- Ultimate Goals

- To rebel against God and take His creation away from Him. He is everything his names suggest.
- He tempts Christians to try to get them to sin ([2 Corinthians 11:3](#)).
- He blinds unbelievers to the truth and opposes the spreading of the gospel ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)).
- He promotes false doctrine ([John 8:44](#), [1 Timothy 4:1](#)).
- He persecutes the Church ([2 Corinthians 12:7](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:17-18](#); [Revelation 2:10](#)).
- He accuses the brethren, calling the faith of Christians into question ([Revelation 12:10](#)).
- War in Heaven
 - When did Satan get kicked out of heaven? A very interesting question. Let's look at three texts for background.

Job 1:7 ESV

The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

Job 2:2 ESV

And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

Luke 10:18–20 ESV

And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Revelation 12:7–10 ESV

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

- As you can see, by the time of Job, and it can easily be argued by [Genesis 3](#), Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth.
- Jesus mentions that He saw this event happen. Talk about the verbs
- John records the fall of Satan after a war in heaven in Revelation. But is this something that will happen or something that already happened? Is John recounting something that happened or something that happens again?
- It's clear that by [Genesis 3](#) Satan has fallen from heaven. He tempts Adam and Eve to rebel against God with success.
- We have read passages in [Isaiah 14](#) and [Ezekiel 28](#) that talk about his fall from heaven.
- Some scholars put this event right at the beginning of the tribulation with the opening of the seals. Others put this event of Satan's fall right at Christ's death on the Cross, signifying victory in heaven. Still others do not give it a place within the timeline.
- Interpretation of when this event happens also has to be tied to the woman fleeing to the wilderness and have that placed into this event. My personal opinion is that this recounts Satan's fall at the beginning of creation and the woman fleeing into the desert is added here to continue to describe the battle between good and evil, Satan and God, on earth, but like the Old Testament prophets, it is at a different time than the dragons fall.

- Final Destiny
 - We have already given the devil more time than he deserves. Let me finish by saying that his final destiny is the Lake of Fire. We will talk more about the end of the war in our last week. But I don't want to leave the subject of Satan without reminding us of this fact.
 - God is greater and stronger than anything in His creation, including the devil. We need not fear him because the Holy Spirit is greater in us than him ([1 John 4:4](#)). He is no match for God.

Joining the Play (Beginning Week 5)

Discussion (40 Minutes)

Application (15 Minutes)

- There is a war going on against God and Satan. You are involved as a flesh and spirit person. God wants you to love Him but Satan wants to steal you away.
- God is Sovereign over His creation. He created you, but wickedness and sin have stolen your spirit away. God has done the hard work to reconcile you.
- Satan is not merely powerful against God. It's an uneven match. We must not forget God is all-powerful and Satan only has authority where God has allowed it for a time.