

"You and Your Beliefs"--Angelology, part 2

Two of the bestselling books in the evangelical Christian community in the early 90's were the novels by Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness*. I read both with great fascination. The books describe an ongoing struggle between angels and demons as they battle each other for influence on people who live on the earth. Both books did much to challenge me to pray more fervently. Both reminded me of the biblical truth that we are in a spiritual battle.

I think there is value in reading the books. There is also danger. The books are fictional novels. Peretti presents a picture of the spiritual battle that originates largely in his creative imagination, and not in the Bible.

Fact: There is a fervent fascination with angelic and demonic beings these days.

Discuss: Why?

Caution: We need to be careful of going to two extremes:

1. Denial of the reality of the Demonic world
2. Excessive fascination with the Demonic world

Both extremes are unbiblical. It's the second that really plagued Christianity in the 1990's and continues to do so in our present decade.

John MacArthur wrote about a conservative mission organization that required all of its missionaries to attend special training seminars to learn how to confront and assault the powers of darkness. Their strategy includes speaking to demons and learning techniques for exorcising them. It is becoming popular to deliver incantations against Satan and supposedly rebuke or bind him.

Do Christians need to attend spiritual warfare bootcamps?

Can we actually bind and rebuke Satan?

Are we supposed to break the strongholds of demons over towns?

We must go to the Bible. We are spending 2 weeks on the Doctrine of Angels.

--Last Week: Angels

--Tonight: Satan and the demons

Review: From last week...

We began to investigate what the Bible says about angels last week and ran out of time. Let's begin with a quick review, then we'll finish exploring what the Bible teaches about angels, after which we'll move to the subject of wicked angels/demons.

[See last week's notes, beginning at... III. What do angels do?]

This Week: Satan and Demons

I. Satan

A. Who is Satan?

Satan has not always existed. He is a created being.

See: Ezek 28:12-15

The prophet was speaking to the King of Tyre. But apparently he was speaking not only about the king, but the one who influenced this king, Satan himself. We see a description of Satan before he sinned.

What happened? See: Isaiah 14:12-14 "How art thou fallen from heaven..."

Satan's sin originated in pride. It ended in rebellion. It resulted in judgment. We can learn a lot about Satan by looking at the names and titles used for him in the Bible...

See: Radio Bible Class, "What in the world is Satan Doing?", pp. 10-11

B. What does he do?

His strategy is subtle. His aim is to thwart the plan of God. He started with Eve (see Gen 3:1ff).

Satan's strategy is no different today. (see John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil...")

Satan is a liar. He deceives, confuses, attacks the truth.

Does he have a red suit and pitchfork? No. (see 2 Cor 11:14 "And no marvel...an angel of light...")

Is Satan omnipresent? No.

How then can his attack be so pervasive in the world? He doesn't work alone...

II. Demons

When Satan rebelled against God, and was cast out of heaven, he wasn't alone.

Rev 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, called the Devil and Satan...and his angels were cast out with him." (12:4 implies that one-third of the angels fell)

A. What are they?

2 Cor 11:15 "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers..."

Who are Satan's ministers? Demons

Jude 6 "And the angels, who kept not their first estate..."

B. What do they do?

(taken from RBC, "What Can We Learn from the Angels?" 10-12)

1. *The oppose God and His people (1 Pet 5:8; Matt 13:39; Eph 6:12).*
2. *They slander God and His people (Gen 3:1ff; Job 1:9-11; Rev 12:10)*
3. *They deceive the unsaved and try to deceive Christians (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 12:9).*
4. *They plant evil thoughts into the minds of people (1 Chr 21:1; Matt 16:22-23; Lk 22:3; Acts 5:3; II Pt 2:1, 2, 10).*
5. *They take over the personality of some people (Mt 8:28; Mt 17:14ff).*
6. *They influence national leaders ("prince of this world" Jn 12:31; "god of this age" II Cor 4:4; King Ahab I Kings 22; King of Persia Dan 10:10-21; Rev 16:13-16)*
7. *They play a role in human illnesses (Job 2:6-8; Mt 12:22; 2 Cor 12:7?).*
8. *They try to pervert the doctrine of grace (I Tim 4:1-5; 2 Cor 11:3).*
9. *They try to distort the biblical view of Jesus Christ (1 Jn 4:1-3).*

Discuss: What are some examples of demonic activity in our society? Be careful. We're inclined to miss the evil's one's most dangerous attacks due to our preoccupation with the bizarre...

III. The Biblical Response to Evil Forces

"Territorial Warfare" is being promoted today. What is it?

See: MacArthur gives examples, *How to Meet the Enemy*, p. 42

Modern day teachers are saying we should "confront and bind Satan." Does the Bible ever say that? Are we supposed to wage war with Satan on his turf? Are we supposed to talk with him and reprove him?

Look at what Christ told the church at Pergamos.

Rev 12:13 "I know...where you dwell, even where Satan's throne is..."

What was their problem? They tried to accomodate the world (14-15).

Here's what another "expert" in territorial warfare did (MacArthur, 49). "For the last 10 years I have lived in the black community in L.A. My neighbors and I have common enemies. Spirits of despair (etc)...torment this community. Several years ago my staff and I went on a prayer walk around our neighborhood. We stood in front of every house, rebuking Satan in Jesus' name, and prayed for a revelation of Jesus in the life of each family."

Is that how we're to win our neighborhoods?

Did Christ instruct the Christians in Pergamos to walk the roads and say, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke Satan?"
" Did He tell Christians to command demons to leave the city? No.

Discuss: What is our God-given responsibility for reaching our community? We are to impact our community by preaching the gospel and holy living.

"But Satan and his demons are real. What are we to do?"

Discuss: What are we to do? Let's look at the Scriptures...

1 Pet 5:8 "Be sober...your adversary the devil...a roaring lion..."

James 4:7 What are our 2 responsibilities?

1. Submit to God
2. Resist the devil

Be careful of Satan's trickery. He masquerades his attack on God under such misleading covers as secularism, and new age teachings. Such teaching has infiltrated modern education.

Psychic William Hewitt has introduced a new age procedures into public schools, to show children techniques on how to invite spirit beings to be their helpers (RBC, "What Can We Learn From the Angels?", pp 3-4)

What must we do? See: Eph 6:10ff

1. Be strong in the Lord (10).
2. Recognize that the spiritual battle is real (11-12).
3. Appropriate the protection of Christ through the armor of God (13-17).