



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 1/Issue 11

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

This week's reading is Psalm 74 (ESV). Titled, Arise, O God, Defend Your Cause A Maskil of Asaph.

1O God, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture? **2**Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old, which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage! Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt. **3**Direct your steps to the perpetual ruins; the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary! **4**Your foes have roared in the midst of your meeting place; they set up their own signs for signs. **5**They were like those who swing axes in a forest of trees. **6**And all its carved wood they broke down with hatchets and hammers. **7**They set your sanctuary on fire; they profaned the dwelling place of your name, bringing it down to the ground. **8**They said to themselves, "We will utterly subdue them"; they burned all the meeting places of God in the land. **9**We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long. **10**How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?

Is the enemy to revile your name forever? **11**Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the fold of your garment^c and destroy them! **12**Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. **13**You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters^d on the waters. **14**You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. **15**You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. **16**Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. **17**You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter. **18**Remember this, O LORD, how the enemy scoffs, and a foolish people reviles your name. **19**Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts; do not forget the life of your poor forever. **20**Have regard for the covenant, for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence. **21**Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame; let the poor and needy praise your name. **22**Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day! **23**Do not forget the clamor of your foes, the uproar of those who rise against you, which goes up continually!

In the title the word Maskil appears. It's a Hebrew term of uncertain meaning in the superscriptions of 13 psalms. It possibly means "contemplative poem." It's also been defined as a Hebrew literary musical term occurring in the heading of some psalms.

This psalm is a cry of anguish over a disaster that has happened to God's people; the temple has been laid to ruin (quite possibly by the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem). This is a community lament.

Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807



The Watchman's Notes
*Offering biblical messages, perspectives
and views on*

*Biblical & moral issues and current
events.*

*A Ministry of Chuck Vitel, Pastor – Bible
Teacher*

*"For thus the Lord said to me: Go, set a
watchman; let him announce what he
sees." Isaiah 21:6 [ESV]*

Dear friends:

I have another Two-Part topic for you to read: "The Realty of Evil and Spiritual Warfare"

[Looking into the Unseen World]– Part 1
Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

Next week - Issue #10 -May 28, 2020

"The Realty of Evil and Spiritual Warfare" [Looking into the Unseen World] – Part 2
Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

Most of what we know about the spiritual realm and the supernatural world comes from TV and movies on the big screen. Therefore, there is a lot of fiction, fantasy and false ideas floating around, and it's hard to know what's real and what's not. The Bible teaches clearly that there is an unseen world which is spiritual in nature, where there is an ongoing spiritual warfare or battle taking place. Yes, angels and demons exist in our world today.

Angels are spiritual beings created by God (Colossians 1:16). Demons are former angels who rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven with Satan (Revelation 12:4). Most spiritual warfare will involve tempting us to disobey God's instructions or to follow our sinful desires.

The Bible is our most powerful weapon against the temptations we face every day. Therefore, *we are to hide the Word of God in our heart so that we might not sin against God (Psalm 119:11)*. When we fill our minds with the truth of God's Word, we can easily distinguish between thoughts that are real or false, and/or evil or good. Let us take up the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17). And with the Holy Spirit's power, we win against the Devil (Satan) every time. God has already given us the victory (1 Corinthians 10:13).

"The Realty of Evil and Spiritual Warfare" – Part 1

[Looking into the Unseen World]

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

Get your scuba gear on folks because we're going deep today! We are going to look into the "Unseen World" or what is known as *the "spirit world."* How many of you believe in the reality of evil and spiritual warfare? How many of you believe in the Devil (Satan), evil and angels? How interested are Christians supposed to be in the "spirit world" or the unseen world?

This is one of those topics that every Christian should be aware of and should have some interest in because it pertains to the belief system of Christianity. I won't bore you with too many statistics, but you should know that right now about 89% of Americans believe in God; about 59% of Americans believe in the Devil [Satan]; 71% believe in angels; and 62% believe in Hell [*and it's rising*]. However, only 47% of Americans believe in Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Of course, these statistics are constantly fluctuating.

With this in mind, do you think it's important we know more about the *unseen spirit world* than we do? Understand, a human being is comprised of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23; Psalm 16:9). However, human beings tend to rely on the body [or the physical] more, while ignoring the spirit. This is unfortunate because we are missing some very important stuff.

God is Spirit (John 4:24).

If we want to know God, we must experience Him spiritually, and we need to know about the spirit world – and the unseen realm that is real and all around us.

The Bible is clear that the "spirit world" is every bit as real as the physical universe (Ephesians 6:12). There is an "unseen dimension" around us, and there's an "unseen battle" taking place all around us every moment of the day – between God's Holy angels and the forces of darkness (Daniel 10:12-14; Ephesians 6:10-17; Jude 1:9). The spirit world is very real.

Most of what we know about the spiritual world and the supernatural, we've learned from TV and movies. Hollywood's interest in angels, the devil, demons, and the afterlife has dramatized the unseen world and the spiritual warfare so much that it's hard to know what is real and what's not. Think of the epic stories or movies – the best-selling movies of the last 30-40 years have all been grand tales of battles between *good and evil*: *Star Wars, The Dark Knight, The Lord of the Rings, Spiderman, and even Harry Potter.*

Real life is not as simple as movies portray – the plot in real life is much more complex. The difference between good and evil in real life is sometimes obscure, even intentionally distorted, and it takes more than 3 or 4 sequels to tell.

What evidence is there of a spiritual realm or spirit world around us?

As one writer stated: "Present reality exists in a state of cosmic-earthly conflict or spiritual warfare. The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil supernaturalism are engaged in fierce conflict one against the other."

In other words, there is a dualism of good and evil – which has existed at least since the beginning of time – and will continue until Christ returns and sets up His Earthly Kingdom.

In Genesis 1 – we read, “*In the beginning... God.*” There was no evil, no opposing force, just GOD – and God is Good & Loving. Then God created these moral beings, the angels, and placed them within His Kingdom. Long before the universe was created.

God created myriads and myriads of intelligent, personal, spiritual beings [called angels], probably intending them to enjoy God’s fellowship and to reflect His glory. At first, they obeyed His will. There was God and Good - no dualism of good and evil existed! However, at some point in the hidden past, rebellion occurred within the angelic kingdom. Dualism was born. Evil entered God’s kingdom, dividing it into two kingdoms: The kingdom of God [Good] and the kingdom of Satan [Evil].

One of those higher angels, *Lucifer*, was overcome by his own beauty and glory and rebelled against God. Lucifer was the anointed guardian angel, but his heart became proud and he rebelled against God.

- (Ezekiel 28:14-17) - makes reference to Satan and describes Satan prior to his fall – he enjoyed an exalted position in the presence of God, had the highest honor before God – called the anointed Cherub.
- (Isaiah 14:12-14) – *Isaiah explains Lucifer’s goals and plans. Though these words are addressed to the King of Babylon, many understand these words to refer to God’s archenemy, who influenced the King.*
- (Revelation 5:11) - speaks of Thousands upon thousands of angels.
- (Revelation 12:4-10) - mentions Satan’s original rebellion and speaks of “A Great Red Dragon [Devil].”

The Bible tells us that about one-third of Lucifer’s race of angels chose to follow him (about one-third of at least 600 million angels). God would not allow this attack or rebellion to go unanswered. God could have chosen to destroy Lucifer and his followers – but He didn’t! As a result, Good and Evil exists - even today – a dualism in the spiritual realm.

The Bible also teaches that MANKIND was created by God in “His image,” which means we have a will and a spiritual component (Genesis 1:27). *And it was all GOOD* (Genesis 1:31). We (God’s creation) are more than physical entities; we possess a soul and a spirit destined for eternity. Of course, we all know that mankind fell into sin and disobedience in Genesis 3 and sin entered the world.

Even though the spiritual realm is invisible to the physical eye, we are connected to it, and what goes on in the spiritual realm directly affects our physical world.

One of the best and most prevalent evidence available proving that there is a spiritual realm is,” Testimonial Evidence.” We can look at the sheer number of religions around the world throughout history - and the billions of people who focus their lives on the spiritual realm. Examples: *The Canaanite religions and deities – Babylonian Literature mentions the spirit world and the devil and demons, etc. And all the more modern religions speak of this as well. Is it likely that so many people would believe in and report encounters with the spiritual and it not be real?*

And the best testimonial evidence for the existence of the spiritual realm is the Bible itself. Jesus claimed to be God’s Son, the One who came down from heaven (from another realm). Jesus made it quite clear to the religious Pharisees, when He said in (John 8:23): “YOU ARE FROM BELOW; I AM FROM ABOVE. YOU ARE OF THIS WORLD; I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD.”

The Bible tells of numerous encounters that people had throughout history with the spiritual realm. *Jesus cast demons out of people regularly, healed the sick by speaking to them, and performed miracles, and spoke with people who should be dead* – all indicators that the spiritual realm is real!

What do we know about Satan [Devil] and about angels?

Angels are immortal – that is, they do not die. They are created beings, and they exist in vast numbers. (Revelation 5:11) speaks of thousands upon thousands of them. Angels possess the elements of personality, for they render intelligent worship to God. The godly or unfallen angels are mentioned in the O.T. over 160 times. We are told that they are God’s “Messengers.” This is what the word “angel” means. They are called in the Bible: heavenly host (Luke 2:12), principalities, powers, dominions, authorities and thrones [Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21]. In a few cases, they are even called “gods” because they reflect God’s glory to us [Ps. 138:1].

Alongside the unfallen angels [the good ones] - there is also a vast host of fallen angels [who fell with Lucifer or Satan] at the time of the original rebellion against God. These fallen angels [called demons] are bent on opposing God’s rule and doing His people harm. The Bible describes these fallen angels as a terrifying force – however, they are not to induce terror or fear in us, but to warn us so that we might draw close to God for protection.

At the head of these fallen angels is the Devil or Satan himself – whom the Bible describes as a powerful enemy. Satan [aka the Devil] is called Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness and the Prince [Ruler] of this world (by Jesus, John 14:30). He is also known as the “Father of Lies.” The Apostle Paul referred to the Devil as the “ruler of the kingdom of the air,” the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

There are many jokes about the devil and demons to make us think lightly of him and thus to lower our guard. But the devil is no lightweight. *He is evil, real and personal.* Jesus bore witness to these truths when He referred to the devil by name, as He did on many occasions, and when He overcame him at the temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11).

When we talk about the Devil/Satan being evil, real, and personal – we must not over exaggerate the case. Because he is a spiritual being rather than a

material being. Satan is not equal with God. The devil is the “counterpart” to the Archangels; *Michael and Gabriel* – but he is not a spiritual counterpart of God. God is God! Every other being has been created by God - and is therefore limited for the simple reason that he or she has been created – *just like the devil*.

God is Omnipotent – all powerful. The devil is not. God can do anything He wishes. He does not need anyone’s permission. *The devil, like the rest of us, can do only what God permits him to do.* This is God’s universe – not the devil’s! Not even Hell is the devil’s! God has created Hell as the place where He will one day confine the devil and his followers.

God is Omnipresent – He can be everywhere at once. The devil cannot do this. Satan can be in only one place at one time - or he must *extend his influence* through one of his spiritual demons that fell with him. The result is – practically speaking – not everyone has been tempted by the devil directly. More likely, they have been tempted by his demons!

*In fact, in the entire Bible we know of only six individuals who were tempted by Satan himself: Eve – [not Adam]; Job, Jesus Christ, Judas, Peter, and Ananias [but not his wife Sapphira, Acts 5]. *There have been many others for sure – but these are the only ones the Bible actually mentions by name.**

God is Omniscient – He knows everything. Satan does not. He knows a great deal, and he is shrewd *but the ways of God must surprise him constantly*. He certainly has no more certainty about what is going to happen in the future than we have. At the moment, Satan is NOT in Hell. Rather, Satan roams the earth, seeking people to influence or to tempt into sin and thus separate us from God. Satan is not under restraint [except by God].

(1 Peter 5:8-9) states, *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.”*

As I conclude Part 1 of this significant topic, let me say; ultimately, Jesus will return to earth and will gather all those who belong to Him. *He will defeat Satan and all his followers* – and Satan and his followers will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be “tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Rev.20:10)

Some aspects of this spiritual warfare or spiritual battle are recognized and described in different ways by different people. *Some speak of the struggle between good and evil. Others talk of the battle between right and wrong, or between light and darkness.* Still others refer to the conflict or war between the positive forces which seek to preserve life and order in the universe and the negative forces which tend to disturb and even destroy life and order.

No matter what or how you say it from a biblical perspective – the bottom line is – there’s an on-going conflict/battle waged on two fronts: *God and His angelic kingdom vs. Satan [the Prince of Darkness] and his demonic kingdom - while the children of God [that’s us] contend with the children of Satan.* Spiritual warfare rages on earth and in the spirit world.

This is the Biblical view or historical story of the past. As the focus of Scripture moves through time from the eternal past to the eternal future – one day, this dualism will VANISH! And the ultimate state in the end is that of eternal good – only God and His Perfect Kingdom will exist in the eternal future. Amen!

Part 2 of this Issue on the unseen world will be presented next week.

During our sojourn here, we are living and moving in enemy-occupied territory.

Pastor Vitel’s message this week, as well as next week’s, should cause us, as he says, “going deep.” It’s a topic that I feel we have all come to accept without really questioning our personal beliefs. I think back to Pastor Vitel’s message in Issue #5 where he posed the question, “Who is Jesus to You?” Hopefully, this question has been settled in your heart. I have challenged the Sunday School class with the question, “Who is Satan to you.” Without the answers to both these questions we can not be fully prepared for “The Reality of Evil and Spiritual Warfare.” We can only achieve victory if, and only if, we know our enemy.

C.H. Spurgeon: “When you sleep, think that you are resting on the battlefield; when you walk, suspect an ambush in every hedge.”

Writing in the 4th century BCE, the Chinese scholar Sun Tzu clearly recognized the centrality of accurate and timely information to the military commander. First among these is knowing your enemy. A commander wants to know a host of things about the forces arrayed against him—their size, the number and types of equipment available to them, their location, their readiness for battle, the extent of their logistics base, the intentions of the enemy commander, and more. The more accurate one’s picture of the enemy in all of these dimensions, the better one can prepare operational plans, array one’s own forces and assets, and anticipate the course of future events. Secondly, as important as knowing your enemy you need to know yourself. Its equally important to honestly assess our own capabilities, limitations, and spiritual walk. It is not immediately obvious why gaining such information should be difficult. After all, the enemy is working to conceal his actions from you. But do we have the same motivation?

Spiritual warfare is, in one sense, just a battle over what we believe. Whom we will trust. We're at war. Spiritual warfare sounds like a strange concept to many of us, believed only by some camps within Christianity, when it should be believed by all of us. It's the normal Christian life.

The spiritual battles we are engaged in are fought every day and though they might not appear to be major in scope, they all need to be won.

It's the cumulative effort of daily small wins that will be the key in winning the our overall battle against spiritual warfare. What is a small win? They are often simple things, like not provoking your child to anger even when he is disobedient or choosing whether or not you will show love to your wife by making the bed. It is simple things like deciding whether or not you will read your Bible today or show up to church on Sunday after our short hiatus of sheltering-in-place. Each of these is a small conflict in a much bigger war. It's any choice or action you make that supports the positive story that you tell yourself about who you are now and who you want to be in the future. That's a powerful thought. What kind of Christian am I today? What kind of Christian will I be tomorrow?

I leave you with this quote by Sinclair Ferguson, from his book *"The Preacher's Commentary: Daniel"* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1988), *"If once the curtain were pulled back, and the spiritual world behind it came to view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping everything within its range, that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem, by comparison, a mere game. Not here, but up there—that is where the real conflict is waged. Our earthly struggle drones in its backlash."*





PRAYER LIST

✓ Continuing Prayers for loss:

All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who have recently lost loved ones due to COVID 19. The family of Mary Grace Reyes.

✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs:

Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Anne Benliro's co-worker's husband—Oscar with Covid-19.

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs:

The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support of the church during the Virus

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries:

BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy Bartolome, Pastor and Sue Vitel

✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs:

Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruhlman

✓ Continuing Prayers for:

The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Erwin & Elizabeth Lickman living together at Bella Terra Nursing Home

Mylin Lardizabal - My husband, Errol, and I are both nurses and Errol did get assigned to work in ICU to take care of Covid patients, he will have to work on the unit for at least a month.

Liza Mitchell in her role as a health care worker at Vi Independent and Assisted Living Facility she has responsibility over those with Covid 19 .

Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect.

Rita McManus - Has been under the weather. Visited doctor. Reported NO Covid19.

George Bizadellis – Salvation. Brian has been witnessing to him. This past Saturday Al Nuzikowski was able to give him his testimony.

Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

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