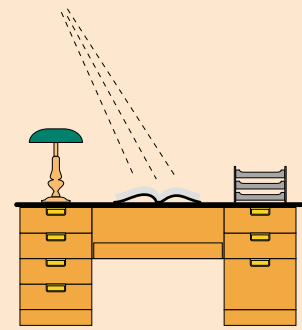


A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 21: Self-effacing Servant – Consuming Fire



Dear Friend

The Holy Spirit has chosen to reveal Himself through the Scriptures. What do they tell us about Him?

The primary revelation of the Holy Spirit is contained in His title: He is Holy. This is the standard by which we must judge every message, every manifestation, every movement that claims to be of the Holy Spirit: Is it compatible with His holiness?

From “Pentecostal” to “Charismatic”

Someone has said that “familiarity breeds contempt.” Unfortunately, this sometimes applies to the things of the Spirit – in particular, to the development of the Pentecostal movement. When the baptism and the gifts of the Spirit first impacted the Church in the early years of the twentieth century, it was neither fashionable nor popular to be labelled “Pentecostal.” There was a stigma attached to it. There was a price to be paid.

The early Pentecostals, for the most part, were not highly educated. They came “from the wrong side of the tracks.” Some of the things they said and did were foolish. Their concept of holiness was often legalistic. But they paid a price. Their experience was not cheap.

In the course of the twentieth century this has changed – particularly with the advent of the “Charismatic” movement. The substitution of “Charismatic” for “Pentecostal” somehow seemed to make it more respectable. It became quite fashionable to be “Charismatic.” In fact, the word was no longer confined to Christians. I was astonished the first time I heard the media apply the term to a rather unscrupulous politician.

To these developments there was both a plus and a minus. On the plus side, the baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been made accessible to the whole Body of Christ. But on the minus side, there are ministries and practices to which the word “holy” can no longer be applied. Here are just a few examples:

1. Flippant and irreverent language applied to the sacred things of God.
2. Public ministries motivated by barefaced covetousness, bolstered by claims that are not substantiated or promises that are not fulfilled.
3. Bizarre and unseemly manifestations attributed to the Holy Spirit.

That these things are found in ministries that claim to be Christian does not surprise me. After all, covetousness and self-serving are deeply rooted in human nature. What astonishes me, however, is that millions of professing Christians apparently accept that kind of behaviour as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. Obviously the time has come for us to take a fresh look at the Holy Spirit. What kind of person is He?

A Humble, Self-effacing Servant

I can still recall what a shock it was for me when I first realised that servanthood is part of the divine nature. Most people today regard being a servant as something to be avoided; something menial and degrading. This attitude is one of the corrupting influences that are poisoning our contemporary culture. Furthermore, it is false.

Servanthood did not originate in time but in eternity; not on earth but in heaven. Eternally Jesus the Son is the joyful, willing, obedient servant of God the Father. The Holy Spirit, in turn, is the obedient, self-effacing servant of the Father and the Son. He does not complain of “victimisation” or demand His “rights.” He perfectly fulfils His appointed role. He is the Servant God!

This is beautifully illustrated in Genesis chapter 24, which describes how Abraham went about obtaining a bride for his son Isaac. There are four beautiful “types” in this account. Abraham is a type of God the Father; Isaac is a type of God’s Son, Jesus; Rebecca is a type of the bride of Christ, the Church.

But what about Abraham’s servant? Although never given a name, he is the main character. He is a type of the Holy Spirit. As a servant, he had one supreme objective: to find the young woman who was to be the bride; to equip and adorn her; and to escort her safely to the bridegroom.

It was for a similar purpose that the Holy Spirit came down to earth at Pentecost. He is here with one supreme objective: to find, equip and adorn the bride of Christ – the Church – and to escort her safely through this world and present her to Jesus – a pure and spotless bride.

One main characteristic of the Holy Spirit is that He never attracts attention to Himself. Here is a literal translation of some of the things that Jesus told us about Him: “He will testify of Me . . .”¹ “He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears He will speak . . .”² “He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”³

More remarkable still, in all the revelation which the Holy Spirit has given us in Scripture there is no record that anyone ever addressed a prayer to the Holy Spirit. The pattern prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples commences with the words “Our Father.” To this Jesus added His own promise: “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”⁴

The terminus of all scriptural prayer is God the Father. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to help us to reach the Father with our prayers, not to offer us an alternative destination. We are to pray in the Spirit, not to the Spirit. (See Ephesians 6:18.)

In recent years, however, some sections of the Church have deviated from this scriptural pattern. The focus has shifted from the Father and the Son to the Spirit. Many songs – with little scriptural content – are directed to the Holy Spirit. Often the main emphasis has been on subjective experiences that cater to the ego of those participating. This subtle, unadvertised shift of emphasis has opened God’s people to spiritual dangers which many fail to discern.

We need to keep two basic principles in mind. First, the Holy Spirit never caters to the human ego. Second, the Holy Spirit never attracts attention to Himself. He always directs our focus to Jesus.

Whenever these principles are set aside, the result may be a lot of fleshly excitement and emotional self-indulgence without any genuine holiness. Or – more dangerous still – it may open the way for a satanic counterfeit which in turn opens the way for the activity of demons.

A Consuming Fire

One way in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself at times is fire. In fact, the last time that the Holy Spirit appears visibly in Scripture is as “seven lamps of fire . . . burning before the throne . . . of God.”⁵

The writer of Hebrews makes a simple, but profound, statement: “Our God is a consuming fire.”⁶ He does not say that God is like a fire, but that God is a fire. For this reason, “we must serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”⁷ Not slavish fear, but “the fear of the LORD, [which] is clean, enduring forever.”⁸

The writer of Hebrews is not speaking of God the Father, or of God the Son, but of God the Holy Spirit. He actually is a fire – a consuming fire.

At various points in the history of Israel the Holy Spirit came down among the people as a fire. In the tabernacle in the wilderness, when Aaron had offered all the appointed sacrifices,

*fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.*⁹

Again, when Solomon had finished praying at the dedication of his temple,

*fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.*¹⁰

Later, in a time of apostasy, when the LORD responded to Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel,

*Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!”*¹¹

Each time the fire came down and the people fell on their faces, they were not simply moved by a spiritual manifestation. They were responding to the presence of God – God the Holy Spirit – who had come down among them as a consuming fire. In His presence they were physically incapable of standing.

To Purify or to Destroy?

But there are two opposite sides to fire. Fire can be beneficial, but also dangerous. Fire can purify, but also destroy.

So it is with the fire of the Holy Spirit. He can minister God's blessing and favour on those who are obedient. But He can also minister God's wrath and judgement on those who are presumptuous and self-willed.

Immediately after the account of the fire that fell on Aaron's sacrifice in the tabernacle, the record continues:

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.*¹²

What a solemn lesson! The same fire that brought God's blessing on Aaron's sacrifice offered in obedience brought instant death to his two sons when they went into God's presence with “profane [unholy] fire.”

God has already defined the way in which we are to approach Him: “with reverence and godly fear,”¹³ “we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit [the Holy Spirit] to the Father.”¹⁴

To offer “profane fire” is to approach God with presumption and self-will in any spirit that is not the Holy Spirit. It is therefore a matter of vital importance – in fact, of life and death – to recognise the Holy Spirit in whatever way He manifests Himself and to distinguish Him from any other counterfeit spirit.

Of all the Israelites, Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, might have felt that they had a special privilege to enter God's presence by a way of their own choosing. By right of birth, Nadab should have succeeded Aaron as High Priest. But there is no substitute for obeying God's Word – neither denominational status nor dramatic miracles nor crowd appeal. God does not have a special privileged “elite” who can ignore His requirements without suffering the consequences.

God's judgement on the self-exaltation of Nadab and Abihu shows us that the Holy Spirit only imparts His blessing to those who meet His requirements. Today, His first requirement is to focus on exalting and glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, to carefully follow the directions which the Spirit Himself has transmitted to us in the Scriptures.

The theme of my next letter will be the Spirit of Truth.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

¹ John 15:26

² John 16:13

³ John 16:14

⁴ John 14:13

⁵ Revelation 4:5

⁶ Hebrews 12:29

⁷ Hebrews 12:28

⁸ Psalm 19:9

⁹ Leviticus 9:23 - 24

¹⁰ 2 Chronicles 7:1 - 2

¹¹ 1 Kings 18:38 - 39

¹² Leviticus 10:1 - 2

¹³ Hebrews 12:28

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:18

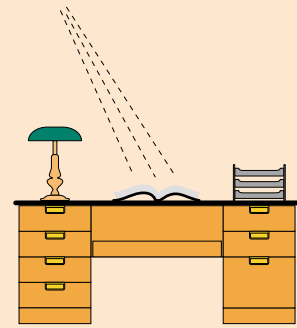
For further study, we recommend the audio cassette
4238 “Servanthood”.

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A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 22: The Spirit of Truth



Dear Friend

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”¹

When Jesus promised His disciples that He would ask the Father to send them a divine Helper, He gave this Helper a special name: “the Spirit of truth.” At the same time, however, He warned them that the world would not be able to receive this Helper.

For this, the Scripture supplies two reasons. First, from the time that men turned away from God in rebellion, they have been unwilling to accept the truth which exposes their unrighteous deeds. Therefore they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”²

Second, rebellion against God has exposed humanity to the domination of the god of this age, “Satan, who deceives the whole world.”³ Deception is the primary weapon that Satan relies on to keep humanity under his control. Once his ability to deceive is stripped away, Satan has nothing to offer anyone except a place with him in the lake of eternal fire!

Over many centuries, human philosophy has never been able to produce a satisfactory definition of “truth.” On the other hand, the Bible gives a threefold answer. First, Jesus said, “I am the truth.”⁴ Second, in praying to God the Father, He said, “Your word is truth.”⁵ Third, John tells us, “The [Holy] Spirit is truth.”⁶

In the spiritual realm, therefore, there are three co-ordinates of truth: Jesus, the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. When these three are in agreement, we know that we have arrived at truth – absolute truth. It is important, however, that we check all three co-ordinates before we arrive at a conclusion. There are three questions that we must ask concerning any spiritual issue:

- Does it represent Jesus as He truly is?
- Is it in harmony with Scripture?
- Does the Holy Spirit bear His witness?

Historically, the Church would have been spared many errors and deceptions if it had always checked all three co-ordinates of truth. It is not enough that a teacher paints an appealing picture of Jesus as a perfect moral example. Or that a pastor batters his congregation with a barrage of Scripture verses. Or that an evangelist impresses his audience with a thrilling display of the supernatural. Before we can accept what is presented to us as truth, all three co-ordinates must be in place: Jesus, the Scripture, the Holy Spirit.

In the threefold presentation of truth, the distinctive function of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness. “It is the Spirit who bears witness.”⁷

The Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus as the eternal Son of God, who shed His blood on the cross as the all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. In the words of Charles Wesley:

- “The Spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God.”

The Holy Spirit also bears witness to the truth and authority of Scripture, as Paul wrote to the

Thessalonians, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance . . .”⁸

Ananias and Sapphira

There can be no compromise between the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, and Satan, who “is a liar and the father of it.”⁹ This was dramatically demonstrated in the early church, when Ananias and Sapphira lied about the money that they had offered to the church. They claimed that they had brought the full price of the property that they had sold, whereas in fact they had kept back part of it.

However, the Spirit of truth in Peter was not deceived. He charged Ananias with lying not merely to men, but also to the Holy Spirit Himself – the one who is the very Spirit of truth:

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.¹⁰

Three hours later Sapphira came in and repeated the same lie. Like her husband, she paid for it with her life.

Rightly defined, the sin of which Ananias and Sapphira were guilty was hypocrisy – religious pretence. They were pretending to be more generous and more committed to the Lord than they really were. Jesus reserved His strongest words of condemnation for this sin in the religious leaders of His day. Seven times in Matthew 23 He said to them: “Woe to you . . . hypocrites!”

What Is Hypocrisy?

Our English words “hypocrite,” “hypocrisy” are directly derived from the Greek word *hypokrites*, which means “actor.” This is the essence of hypocrisy: putting on a religious act. Probably no sin is more common among religious people than hypocrisy. In fact, some forms of religion almost demand it.

When people enter a religious building, their whole demeanour changes. They are no longer natural, free and open. They appear to be gripped by some kind of invisible “cramp.” They feel required to put on a religious mask. Different branches of religion may require masks of a different kind, but few of them allow people to be their real selves.

When the preacher condemns certain sins, such people respond with a dutiful “Amen!” But outside the church they commit those same sins without even a twinge of conscience. If they pray out loud, they use a special tone of voice and often a special vocabulary. They do not stop to consider how a human father would feel if his child were to address him with such artificial language or to put on an unnatural form of behaviour just to impress him.

The God of the Bible has no time for hypocrites. This comes out very clearly in the story of Job. Job’s three friends poured forth a torrent of religious platitudes. They said, in effect, “God always blesses the righteous, they never suffer unjustly.” On the other hand, “God always judges the wicked, they never prosper.” Yet the facts of history demonstrate that this is not true. It is just religious talk!

On the other hand, Job was completely frank. He said, in effect, “God is not treating me fairly. I have done nothing to deserve all this. But even if He kills me, I will still trust Him.”

In Job 42:7 the Lord revealed His estimate of the conduct of Job and his friends. “The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not

spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.”¹¹

We need to ask ourselves: How does this kind of religious behaviour differ from the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, which cost them their lives?

The Moment of Truth

At a certain point in his career, King David was guilty of two terrible sins. First, he committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of his neighbour Uriah. Then to cover up his sin, he procured the murder of Uriah.

Apparently David got away with all this. He still went through his regular forms of worship. He still carried out his duties as king. He still lived in the royal palace. Outwardly nothing had changed – until God’s messenger, the prophet Nathan, confronted David with his sin. At that moment David’s eternal destiny hung in the balance. By the grace of God, David made the right response. He offered no excuses, made no attempt to cover up. He acknowledged, “I have sinned.”¹²

Later on, in Psalm 51, David offered up a prayer of confession and then a cry for mercy. Verses 5 and 6 each begin with the word, “Behold,” expressing a sudden revelation of a vital truth.

Verse 5 says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” David had come face to face with something that only the Spirit of truth can reveal: not just the sinful acts that he had committed, but the awful evil power of inherited sinfulness that indwells every descendant of Adam.

Verse 6 reveals the only basis on which God offers deliverance from the power of indwelling sin: “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts.” Even after his sin, David had continued to go through all the outward forms of behaviour appropriate to his role as king. But now there was a vast gap between his outward behaviour and the inward condition of his heart. He had become a hypocrite – an actor playing a part which no longer corresponded to what was in his heart. For this there was only one remedy: honest confession and wholehearted repentance.

From Palm Sunday to Good Friday

There is one truth that runs through the whole Bible: God will never compromise with sin. This is vividly illustrated by two days in the life of Jesus: Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem as a popular hero – “the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.”¹³ The whole city was open to Him. He could easily have set aside His bitter enemies, the religious leaders, and established Himself as King. That was what the people were longing for.

Yet He chose another way. Five days later He hung rejected and naked on a cruel cross. Why? Because God will never compromise with sin and the only way to deal with sin was the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Many Christians today are speaking and praying about “revival.” They often overlook the fact that there is one barrier to revival that can never be bypassed. It is sin. Until sin is dealt with, true revival can never come. And there is only one way to deal with sin: “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”¹⁴

Frankly stated, many sections of the contemporary church are full of “covered sin.” Here are some sins that Christians often seek to cover:

1. Abuse of a child – physical, emotional, sexual – or a combination
2. Broken marriage vows
3. Unethical dealing with money
4. Addiction to pornography (I have been shocked to discover how common this is among leaders in the church)
5. Gluttony – over indulgence of our physical appetites.

God's remedy is twofold: first, confess; then, forsake. It is seldom easy to confess our sins. Yet there is no other remedy. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."¹⁵ God has never committed Himself to forgive sins that we are not willing to confess.

But it is not enough merely to confess. We must also "forsake." We must make a resolute determination not to continue to commit the sin we have confessed. We must follow the succinct advice that Daniel gave to King Nebuchadnezzar: "Break off thy sins by righteousness."¹⁶ Between righteousness and sin there is no middle ground. "All unrighteousness is sin."¹⁷ Whatever is not righteous is sinful.

Are you face to face with a difficult decision?

If this letter has caused you to question things in your life that you have been accepting, or has confronted you with some area of disobedience, open up to the Spirit of truth! He is ready and willing to come to your help.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

PS: The theme of my next letter will be the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

¹ John 14:16 - 17

² Romans 1:18

³ Revelation 12:9

⁴ John 14:6

⁵ John 17:17

⁶ 1 John 5:6

⁷ 1 John 5:6

⁸ 1 Thessalonians 1:5

⁹ John 8:44

¹⁰ Acts 5:3 - 5

¹¹ Job 42:7

¹² 2 Samuel 12:1 - 15

¹³ Matthew 21:11

¹⁴ Proverbs 28:13

¹⁵ 1 John 1:9

¹⁶ Daniel 4:27, KJV

¹⁷ 1 John 5:17

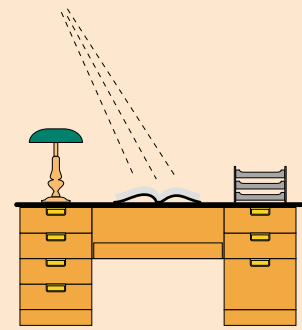
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4216 "Deliverance from the World - Part 1"
4217 "Deliverance from the World - Part 2"

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A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 23: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit



Dear Friend

When Abraham sent his servant from Canaan to Padan Aram to seek a bride for his son Isaac, the servant loaded ten camels to take with him. In the Middle East I have seen with my own eyes how much can be loaded onto a camel. It is amazing!

The ten camels with their loads were visible evidence that Abraham was an honoured, prosperous man. Included in their loads were precious gifts of jewellery. When the servant found the young woman who was to become Isaac's bride, his first act was to place on her face a very conspicuous nose jewel.

By accepting the gift Rebecca committed herself to become Isaac's bride. Had she refused the gift, however, she would have rejected and dishonoured Isaac. She could never have become his bride.

Today, in a similar way, God has sent His Holy Spirit with abundant provision for the bride of His Son Jesus – the Church. Included in it are nine beautiful spiritual gifts. By accepting these gifts, the Church is marked out as the one who is committed to become the Bride of Christ.

Nine Supernatural Gifts

These nine gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. To bring out the exact meaning, I give the following literal translation: 1. a word of wisdom; 2. a word of knowledge; 3. faith; 4. gifts of healings; 5. workings of miracles (literally, powers); 6. prophecy; 7. discernings of spirits; 8. kinds of tongues; 9. interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts are "manifestations." The Holy Spirit Himself is invisible, but through these gifts He manifests Himself. He impacts our senses in ways that we can see or hear or feel.

All of them are "for the profit of all." Through them Christians can minister to one another. They all serve some practical purpose. They are tools, not toys.

All these gifts are supernatural. They are not the product of natural ability or special education. An illiterate person may receive a word of wisdom or of knowledge. Similarly, the gift of "faith" goes beyond the faith that we all need for salvation. It is also distinct from the fruit of faith, which comes by a process of natural growth. It is a supernatural faith that goes beyond our natural ability and produces supernatural results.

It is often suggested that these gifts were withdrawn at the close of the apostolic age and are not available today. However, Paul thanked God for the Christians at Corinth because "you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."¹ Obviously, therefore, Christians are expected to continue to exercise spiritual gifts until the return of Christ.

The first two gifts that Paul lists – a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge – are related in a practical way. A word of knowledge gives us the facts about a situation. Then a word of wisdom shows us how God wants us to deal with that situation.

Some of the gifts are plural in both parts: e.g. gifts of healings; workings of miracles; discernings of spirits; kinds of tongues. This indicates that each healing, each miracle, each discerning, each utterance in a certain tongue (language) is a gift. If a certain gift regularly manifests itself through a certain person, we may say that the person has that gift.

Gifts That Cannot Be Earned

It must be emphasised that all these are gifts of God's grace. They are received by faith. We can never earn them. We can never be "good enough" to exercise them.

In 1941 in the middle of the night I had a powerful, life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ in a barrack room of the British Army. About a week later, in the same barrack room, I spoke for the first time in an unknown tongue. Then – quite unexpectedly – I went on to speak out the "interpretation" in beautiful, poetic English. It was an outline of God's plan for my life and ministry, which has been fulfilled – stage by stage – up to the present time (more than 55 years).

Fortunately for me, I was too "unspiritual" to know that you had to go to church to get saved, or that after speaking in a tongue you had to wait six months to receive the gift of interpretation!

From 1957 to 1961 I served as Principal of a Teacher Training College for African teachers in Kenya. During that time we had a sovereign visitation of the Holy Spirit in our college. In meetings with my students I saw all nine gifts of the Spirit in operation among us at various times. I also saw two of my students – on different occasions – raised from the dead. They both testified later of what they had experienced while their spirits were out of their bodies.

Later, in America, I received an unexpected "gift" for ministering to people who were lame. As I seated them in a chair and held their feet in my hands, the shorter leg would grow out in front of my eyes and they would be healed. Some people, however, suggested that this was not an appropriate ministry for a dignified, scholarly Bible teacher. I decided to ask the Lord about this and I felt He gave me this answer: "I have given you a gift. There are two things you can do with it. You can use it and get more. Or you can fail to use it and lose it." There and then I decided to go on using what God had given me, and indeed I did receive more.

On occasion I have seen a short leg grow out as much as two inches. Also the release of God's supernatural power in this way triggered other miracles. In one place, without any special prayer being offered, a man was healed of three major infirmities and delivered from nicotine addiction.

I remember one lady who came with a paper bag in her hand and a 1½-inch build-up on the heel of one shoe. When I took her feet in my hands, her short leg grew out 1½ inches. Then she opened her paper bag and took out a pair of new shoes with perfectly normal heels. They fitted her perfectly.

I eventually decided that the scriptural name for my gift was "workings of miracles (power)."

About the same time God directed me into what I came to see as a different application of the same gift. He began to use me in the public casting out of demons. Once again, there were those who objected to the noisy and disorderly manifestations that often accompanied this ministry. I observed, however, in the Gospels that similar manifestations often accompanied the ministry of Jesus and so I decided to continue. In the years that followed I have seen thousands of people wonderfully delivered from demon power.

If we desire the unhindered operation of spiritual gifts, we sometimes need to set ourselves free from traditional ideas of how we should behave "in church."

Another key to exercising spiritual gifts is to cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and to make room for Him to move as and when He wills. On one occasion Ruth and I were having lunch with a Christian couple and the wife shared that she had a medically diagnosed genetic defect which made her unable to utilise certain amino acids. Her brain was progressively deteriorating.

The husband left to keep another appointment and we walked back with the wife to their apartment. On the parking lot we paused for a moment to say goodbye. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Ruth said, "Let me pray for you." Then we parted.

About three weeks later the husband told us that his wife had been completely healed. This was later confirmed at the same hospital where her condition had been diagnosed.

God had just one place and one moment where He made healing available. Because Ruth responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, healing came and God was glorified.

Limitations of Spiritual Gifts

I feel a familiar tingle of excitement as I think back over some of the ways in which I have seen spiritual gifts manifested. At the same time, however, it is important to understand that there are definite limits to what we can expect from spiritual gifts.

First of all, spiritual gifts are limited to the present life. Speaking of the gifts of prophecy, tongues and the word of knowledge, Paul says, "But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears."²

We are still living in the "imperfect" age. But when we pass from time to eternity and then put on our resurrection bodies, we will no longer need the fragmentary blessings that come to us through tongues or prophecy or a word of knowledge. The same applies to other gifts such as healings or miracles. Our resurrection bodies will never need them!

If people are excessively preoccupied with spiritual gifts, it often indicates that they are more concerned with the things of time than eternity. Such people need to heed Paul's warning: "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."³

More important still, the exercise of spiritual gifts gives no indication of a person's character. Let me illustrate with a crude example. Suppose a person who is lazy, deceitful and conceited receives an unearned gift of one million pounds. His character will not be changed at all. He will still be lazy, deceitful, conceited. In fact, he may even be more conceited because he has a million pounds in his bank account!

The same applies to a person who receives a dramatic spiritual gift, such as prophecy or healings or miracles. If he was weak and unstable before, he will be just as weak and unstable afterwards. But his new gift will give him greater influence with people and he will have the added responsibility of exercising it in a way that is righteous and pleasing to God.

A major problem in the charismatic movement is that people tend to assess ministers more by their gifts than by their character. Yet experience has demonstrated time and time again that it is possible for a person to exercise dramatic, impressive gifts and yet have a very defective character. Sometimes such people may even use their gifts to cover up the imperfections of their characters.

There was a minister in a Scandinavian country who preached on the "latter rain" of the Holy Spirit in such a powerful way that people in his congregation actually felt the Holy Spirit falling on them like drops of rain. Yet he went straight out from those services to commit adultery. When he was charged with this, people could not believe that a man who preached like that would commit such a sin – until eventually he acknowledged it himself.

As a young preacher, I greatly admired an older man who had a spectacular ministry of miracles. He also taught very forcefully that it is possible for a Christian to live without ever sinning. Yet eventually he divorced his wife, married his secretary, and died an alcoholic. Other well-known and successful preachers have experienced similar personal tragedies.

When confronted with cases such as these, people often respond, "But surely if a person misuses one of these gifts, God would take it away!"

Yet the answer is No! The gifts of the Spirit are exactly what the name implies – genuine gifts, not loans with conditions attached or a repayment schedule. "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."⁴

Once we receive one of these gifts, we are free to use it, misuse it or just not use it at all. Ultimately, however, God will require an account of what we have done – or not done.

We need to bear always in mind the warning of Jesus, "You will know them by their fruits"⁵ – not by their gifts.

Jesus followed up these words by an explicit warning that the exercise of spiritual gifts is not necessarily a passport to heaven:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”⁶

This indicates that it is possible for a person to exercise spiritual gifts and at the same time to “practice lawlessness.” What is “lawlessness”? It is an arrogant assumption that God’s moral and ethical standards no longer apply to those who can exercise gifts of supernatural power.

Obviously, such ministries may at times confront us with the need to make difficult personal decisions. How should we respond?

First of all, we must keep in mind Paul’s warning to Timothy: “Do not . . . share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.”⁷

Second, we must also keep in mind the warning which Jesus gave us concerning such unethical ministries: “Heaven is for those who do the will of My Father in heaven.” We each need to ask ourselves: What is the will of God in my life? What does my Father expect of me?

For my part, I feel that God has given me a clear, simple answer: “This is the will of God, that you should be holy.”⁸ To this the Holy Spirit has added a warning: “Without holiness no one will see the Lord.”⁹ It is my determination to “pursue holiness.”

In my next letter, I will deal with the opposite side of the coin: the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹1 Corinthians 1:6, NIV

²1 Corinthians 13:8-10, NIV

³1 Corinthians 15:19, NIV

⁴Romans 11:29

⁵Matthew 7:20, NAS

⁶Matthew 7:21-23

⁷1 Timothy 5:22

⁸1 Thessalonians 4:3, NKJ & NIV

⁹Hebrews 12:14, NIV

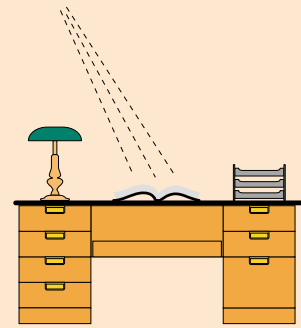
For further study, we recommend audio cassettes
4155 “Exercising Spiritual Gifts”
4156 “Gifts of Power and Revelation”

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A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 24: The Fruit of the Holy Spirit



Dear Friend

My previous letter focused on the **gifts** of the Holy Spirit. The focus of this letter will be the **fruit** of the Spirit.

There is a difference in kind between gifts and fruit. This may be illustrated by comparing a Christmas tree with an apple tree.

A Christmas tree carries gifts. Each gift is attached to it by a single act and received from it by a single act. No time or effort is required of the person receiving the gift.

On the other hand, there is both time and hard work required to cultivate an apple tree. To produce fruit, it must go through a series of stages that takes several years.

First, the seed must be placed in the earth. From this a root goes down into the soil and at the same time a sprout rises upward. Over a period of years the sprout grows into a tree. In due course blossoms appear on the tree. Then these fall off and fruit begins to develop.

But if the tree is to become strong, the blossoms or the young fruit must be plucked off in the first years so that the tree's root system will develop to support a strong tree. Several years must pass before the apples are fit to eat. (Under the Law of Moses at least four years were required.)¹

At various stages in its growth an apple tree is very fragile. Strong winds may uproot the young tree, or at a later stage frost may destroy either the blossoms or the fruit.

In this process seed and fruit are inseparably linked to each other. Fruit must grow from a seed, but on the other hand it takes fruit to produce further seeds. At the beginning of creation God ordained that every "fruit tree should yield fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself."²

This establishes an important spiritual principle: Christians who do not produce spiritual fruit in their own lives have no seed to sow into the lives of others.

The New Testament speaks of spiritual **gifts** in the plural. The nine gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. On the other hand, the New Testament speaks of spiritual **fruit** in the singular. The nine forms of spiritual fruit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Love – the primary form of fruit – is listed first. The others that follow may be understood as different ways in which the fruit of love manifests itself.

joy is love rejoicing

peace is love resting

longsuffering is love forbearing

kindness is love serving others

goodness is love seeking the best for others

faithfulness is love keeping its promises

gentleness is love ministering to the hurts of others

self-control is love in control

We could also describe the fruit of the Spirit as different ways in which the character of Jesus manifests itself through those whom He indwells. When all the forms of fruit are fully developed, it is as if Jesus by the Holy Spirit is incarnated in His disciple.

Seven Stages of Spiritual Development

In 2 Peter 1:5-7 the apostle lists seven successive stages in the development of a fully formed Christian character:

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

Peter begins by warning us that to go through this process successfully will demand **diligence**. Paul expresses the same thing in another way when he says, “The **hardworking** farmer must be first to partake of the crops.”³ There can be no real success in developing Christian character without diligence, or hard work.

The process Peter describes could be compared to that by which an apple seed develops into a mature apple. The seed is God’s Word implanted in the heart. This produces faith, which is the indispensable starting point. Then out of faith there follow seven successive stages of development. Stage One is variously translated “virtue,”⁴ or “moral excellence.”⁵ Originally, in secular Greek, the word was applied to excellence in any area of life – to moulding a clay pot, steering a boat, or playing a flute. Here in the New Testament also, I believe, its meaning should not be restricted solely to moral character. It covers every possible area of life.

A teacher who comes to Christ should become an **excellent** teacher. A nurse should become an **excellent** nurse. A Christian businessman should excel in his field of business. There is no room for sloppiness or laziness in any area of the Christian life. Very rarely, if ever, does God call a person out of failure in a secular calling to success in a spiritual calling. He who is unfaithful in the least (the secular) will be unfaithful also in the greatest (the spiritual).⁶

Stage Two of spiritual development is **knowledge**. There are, of course, many different forms of knowledge. The knowledge extolled in Scripture is primarily practical, not merely theoretical. It is knowledge that **works**. Coming to Christ out of a background of speculative philosophy, this was what impressed me most about the Bible. It was so intensely practical!

The scriptural example is the teaching of Jesus Himself. It did not come under the category of what we would call “theology.” He never propounded complicated, abstract theories. His teaching was based on familiar, practical activities: sowing seed, catching fish, caring for livestock.

The most essential form of knowledge in the Christian life is the knowledge of God’s will as revealed in Scripture. This, too, is practical. It demands a regular, systematic study of the whole Bible. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”⁷

I have been shocked to discover how many people who would claim to be serious Christians have never once read through the entire Bible. Such people set limits of their own making to their spiritual development.

After knowledge comes **self-control** – also called self-discipline.⁸ This is the stage at which a Christian must prove himself a genuine **disciple** – that is, a person under **discipline** – and not a mere church member.

This kind of discipline must be applied in every major area of our personality – our emotions, our attitudes, our appetites, our thought life. It must govern not only our actions, but – more importantly – our reactions.

Until we have developed this kind of discipline, we cannot move up to the next stage – perseverance – which implies the ability to overcome the various tests and trials that will inevitably expose any

weak, undisciplined areas of our personality. That pinpoints one major reason why some Christians never progress beyond a certain stage of spiritual development. They never fulfil these two requirements of self-control and endurance. To take an illustration from the apple tree, their blossoms are blown away by the winds of adversity or their young fruit is killed by the frost of rejection.

The Three Final Stages

In the three remaining stages of development, the beauty of a truly Christian character unfolds. **Godliness** is the mark of a person whose life is centred in God – a person who has become a vessel of the presence of God. Wherever such a person goes, the atmosphere is permeated by a faint, but unique and pervasive fragrance. There may not be any preaching or other religious activity. Yet people become strangely aware of eternal issues.

The late British evangelist Smith Wigglesworth relates an incident which illustrates the impact that a godly presence can have in a non-religious atmosphere. After some moments of private prayer Smith took his seat in a railway carriage. Without a word spoken, the man in the opposite seat – a complete stranger – blurted out, “Your presence convicts me of sin.” Smith was then able to introduce him to Christ.

The last two stages of development depict two different kinds of love. The first – **brotherly kindness** – describes the way that believers in Jesus Christ should relate to their fellow believers – that is, their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

When I first began to consider this list of the seven stages of spiritual development, it surprised me that “brotherly kindness” – the kind of love that Christians should have for one another – should be the last stage but one. But then I realised that the Bible is very realistic. It does not paint a sentimental, religious picture of the way that we, as Christians, relate to one another. Let me say something which may shock you, but which is based on more than fifty years of close association with Christians of many different backgrounds: **It is not easy for Christians to love one another.**

This is amply confirmed by two thousand years of Church history. Scarcely a century has passed that has not been marked by bitter strife and contention – and even open hatred – between rival groups of Christians, all of whom often claimed to be “the true Church.”

The fact that a person has repented of his sins and claimed salvation in Christ does not mean that his whole character has been instantly transformed. Certainly a vitally important process of change has been set in motion, but it may take many years for that change to be worked out in every area of a person’s character.

When David needed smooth stones to fit in his sling to slay Goliath, he went down to the valley – the lowly place of humility. There in the brook he found the kind of stones he needed.⁹ What had made them smooth? Two pressures: first, the water flowing over them; second, their continual jostling against one another.

That is a picture of how Christian character is formed. First, there is the continual “washing of water by the word.”¹⁰ Second, as the stones jostle one another in personal relationships, the rough edges are gradually worn down, until they become “smooth.”

In parentheses, let me add that when Jesus needs “living stones” for His sling, He too goes to the valley – the place of humility. There He chooses stones that have been made “smooth” by the action of God’s Word and by the pressures of regular fellowship with other believers.

It is a mark of spiritual maturity to sincerely love our fellow Christians, not simply for what they are in themselves, but for what they mean to Jesus, who shed His lifeblood for each of them.

The final stage of development – **agape love** – represents the full, ripe fruit of Christian character. This is no longer how we relate only to our fellow believers. It is God’s own love for the unthankful and the unholy. It is the love that causes us to “bless those who curse [us], do good to those who hate [us], and pray for those who spitefully use [us] and persecute [us].”¹¹

It is the love that Christ demonstrated on the cross when He prayed for those who crucified Him, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”¹² It was the same love that caused Stephen to pray for those who were stoning him, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.”¹³

It is the love that changed Saul the persecutor into Paul the servant of Christ, who became “all things to all men, that [he] might by all means save some.”¹⁴

For my part, when I contemplate the Bible’s picture of the fully developed fruit of the Holy Spirit, I am both humbled and inspired. Humbled, because I still have so far to go. Inspired, because I have caught a glimpse of something more beautiful than anything that this world has to offer.

I echo the words of Paul: “I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”¹⁵

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹Leviticus 19:23-25
²Genesis 1:12
³2 Timothy 2:6
⁴2 Peter 1:5
⁵2 Peter 1:5, NAS

⁶Luke 16:10
⁷2 Timothy 3:16-17
⁸2 Timothy 1:7, NIV
⁹1 Samuel 17:40
¹⁰Ephesians 5:26

¹¹Matthew 5:44
¹²Luke 23:34
¹³Acts 7:60
¹⁴1 Corinthians 9:22
¹⁵Philippians 3:13-14

For further study, we recommend the book
B44 Who Is The Holy Spirit?

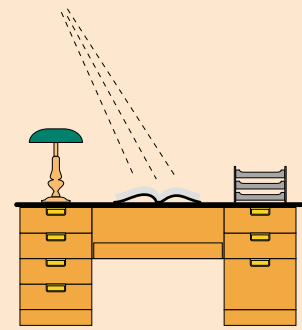
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A Derek Prince

Teaching Letter

No. 25: Because of the Angels
Angelic Intervention in Human Lives



Dear Friend

In giving instructions about the conduct of worship in the New Testament church, Paul writes: “For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”¹ Paul takes it for granted that when Christians meet for worship, angels will also be present and will participate.

More than once when Ruth and I were worshipping together, she heard the angels singing. We realised that we were privileged to experience a tiny part of the total worship of the universe, spanning both heaven and earth. I have heard similar testimony from other Christians.

In Hebrews 1:14 the writer says that God’s angels are “all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.” The Greek phrase translated “ministering spirits” describes specifically spirits who perform priestly acts of worship. In the New Testament Church heaven and earth were blended together in worship.

Successive Angelic Rebellions

The Bible reveals a succession of angelic rebellions against God. The first – and the most significant – was the original rebellion of Lucifer (an archangel) described in Isaiah 14:12-14:

*“How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
For you have said in your heart:
‘I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like [equal to] the Most High.”*

For my part, I believe that the divine Person whose position Satan aspired to was not God the Father but God the Son (revealed later in human history as Jesus of Nazareth). The conflict between these two came to its climax at the cross, where Satan apparently defeated Jesus, but, in actual fact, Jesus stripped Satan of all his weapons and left him totally defeated. “Having disarmed principalities and powers [of Satan], He [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it,”² i.e. in the cross.

In Revelation 12:3-4 Satan is depicted as “a great, fiery red dragon” whose “tail drew a third of the stars of heaven.” Apparently as an archangel, Lucifer (now Satan) had authority over one-third of heaven’s angels, who followed him in his rebellion and were with him cast out of heaven. Satan and the angels who followed him then established a rival kingdom in “the heavenly places,”³ somewhere between the third heaven⁴ (which is God’s dwelling place) and the heaven visible from earth.

Although Satan’s destiny has been irrevocably settled by his defeat at the cross, final judgement on him will not be carried out until the close of the millennium. At that time Satan – together with the antichrist – will be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. . . . And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”⁵

Fallen Angels Before the Flood

A further transgression on the part of angels is described in Genesis 6:1-2:

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.”

Who are these “sons of God”? They are twice referred to in the book of Job.

In Job 1:6: “There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.”

And again in Job 38:7 when God asks Job: “Where were you . . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Obviously, in both these passages these “sons of God” were angelic beings. Certainly there were no human beings present when God laid the foundation of the earth.

There are two passages in the New Testament which describe God’s judgement on the angels who sinned in this way with human women. In Jude 6 it says: “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home [heaven] – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great Day” (NIV).

Clearly these are not the angels who participated in Satan’s original rebellion, because Satan and his angels are not yet confined, but are free and active in “the heavenly places.” The sin of the angels Jude refers to was that they abandoned their appointed dwelling place in heaven and came down to the plane of earth, where they cohabited with human women.

Jude then continues: “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”

Jude compares the fallen angels of Noah’s day with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because both groups were guilty of the same sin of sexual immorality and perversion.

In 2 Peter 2:4-6 the apostle likewise joins together the fallen angels of Noah’s day with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgement; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly. . . .

In both cases their sin was unnatural sex. In verse 4, where the English translation says, “cast them down to hell,” the Greek word used is actually *tartarus*, a word that occurs frequently in Greek literature. *Tartarus* has been defined as “a place of confinement as far below Hades as Hades is below earth.” It is amazing how long the Lord will tolerate some forms of sin in the world, but there are certain boundaries which God jealously watches over. One such boundary is that which prohibits sexual perversion, whether it is between angels and human beings or between human beings of the same sex. When that boundary is crossed, God’s severest judgements will quickly follow. In one case, judgement came in the form of the flood; in the other it instantaneously wiped out the population of two entire cities.

Similar Sins in Our Day

The Bible clearly indicates that intercourse between angels and human women did not permanently cease at the time of the flood. “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”⁶

The Hebrew word *nephilim* is directly derived from the Hebrew verb *naphal*, which means “to fall.” *Nephilim*, therefore, are *fallen ones* – that is, *fallen angels*. There were *nephilim* on the earth “in those days” (i.e. at the time of the flood) – *and also afterwards* (i.e. after the flood).

Those who were born in this later period out of this unnatural union were called *heroes*. Greek mythology abounds with descriptions of such *heroes*. They were born when beings whom the Greeks called *gods* had intercourse with human women. These *gods* were supernaturally powerful beings who came down from a higher plane of existence. The Bible calls them *nephilim*. They were, in fact, fallen angels.

To give but a few examples, Zeus (the “father” of the gods) was said to have taken the form of a swan and united with a woman called Leda, who bore him three children. On another occasion, in the form of a bull, Zeus had intercourse with Europa, who also bore him three sons. Another “god” – Poseidon, the god of the ocean – united with a human woman and she bore him a son called Theseus, who became one of the most famous of the Greek *heroes*.

Many other examples could be added. These myths are like a cracked mirror, giving a distorted representation of events which are accurately summed up in Genesis 6:4.

As in the Days of Noah

In Luke 17:26 Jesus warns us: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.” In other words, conditions that marked the days of Noah will again characterise the period just before the present age closes.

In Noah’s day “the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.”⁷ Certainly both of these features are being manifestly reproduced before our eyes today: moral corruption and continually escalating violence.

In Noah’s day, too, humanity was invaded by angels from a higher plane who made human women the objects of their lust. Today, once again, the media are replete with reports of “visitors from outer space.” Sometimes these are attested by vivid eyewitness accounts.

We can write these accounts off as fabrications, but this does not explain their increasing frequency. Another explanation suggested by Scripture is that conditions from the days of Noah are being reproduced. Fallen angels are again at work on planet earth.

A Timely Word from Paul

If the above interpretation of Scripture is correct, it imparts a fresh urgency to Paul’s warnings given in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Paul did not view the Church as a little group of people tucked away on their own in some religious building. Rather he viewed the church as part of a vast, action-packed drama spanning both earth and heaven. Participation in their meetings was not limited to human beings but could also include angels, both good and evil.

In particular, Paul warned that human women participating in the worship of the church needed to be aware of the possible presence of both good and evil angels. Their appropriate response was to have a suitable covering on their heads. In this way, they affirmed that they were under the authority that Christ has vested in His Church. They also paid due respect to the good angels who might be present and at the same time protected themselves against impure spiritual influences that might proceed from evil angels.

The instructions concerning worship which Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 can be summed up in one word: *reverence*.

“Where Is My Reverence?”

In the time of Malachi the Lord charged His people with insincerity in their worship. They were very religious, yet they were irreverent. In Malachi 1:6 the Lord says:

*“A son honours his father,
And a servant his master.
If then I am the Father,
Where is My honour?
And if I am a Master,
Where is My reverence?”*

Then in Malachi 1:14 He concludes:

*“For I am a great King . . .
And My name is to be feared among the nations.”*

In almost all cultures there are certain rules of conduct which govern the way people relate to their king. We call these rules *protocol*.

Like an earthly king, the Lord, too, has His *protocol*. Some of the requirements of heaven’s protocol are stated in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. They remind us that Christians in their worship are not just a little isolated group on their own. On the contrary, Paul says, “we have been made a spectacle to the world [the universe], both to angels and to men.”⁸ We have seen that the “angels” include both good and evil angels.

As a token of our respect for the Lord, and also in our own best interests, we need to study and to follow the requirements of heaven’s protocol.

The theme of my next letter will be **Warfare In Heavenly Places**.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹ 1 Corinthians 11:10

² Colossians 2:15

³ Ephesians 6:12

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

⁵ Revelation 20:10

⁶ Genesis 6:4 NIV

⁷ Genesis 6:11

⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:9

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A D E R E K P R I N C E

TEACHING LETTER

Because Of The Angels Warfare In Heavenly Places

Dear Friend

In my previous letter I pointed out that Christians in their worship must reckon with the presence of angels – both good and evil. In particular, Scripture reveals the activity on earth of fallen angels before and also after the flood in Noah’s day.

I referred, too, to the original rebellion of Lucifer – now known as Satan – described in Isaiah 14:12–15. In this letter I will examine that rebellion and its consequences in greater detail. Important insights into Lucifer’s rebellion are provided in Ezekiel 28:1–19, which depicts two persons – the *prince* of Tyre and the *king* of Tyre.

The Prince and the King of Tyre

The prince of Tyre apparently claimed to be a god, but in verse 9 he is depicted as a man dying at the hand of invaders:

*“Will you still say before him who slays you,
‘I am a god’?
But you shall be a man, and not a god,
In the hand of him who slays you.”*

On the other hand, the king of Tyre is clearly an angelic being who originally occupied a place of great honour in heaven. “You were in Eden, the garden of God; / Every precious stone was your covering . . .” (verse 13).

“You were the anointed cherub who covers [the throne of God with your wings]; / I established you; / You were on the holy mountain of God; / You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones” (verse 14).

“You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, / Till iniquity was found in you” (verse 15). Lucifer was a resplendent figure, but he was a created being who rebelled against his Creator.

“By the abundance of your *trading* / You became filled with violence within, / And you sinned . . .” (verse 16, italics added). In Leviticus 19:16 a word from the same root as that translated *trading* describes “a talebearer” who goes about among his people. This suggests that Lucifer went about among the angels under him, undermining their loyalty to God and persuading them to join him in his rebellion. Perhaps he may have made suggestions, such as: “God doesn’t really appreciate you. If I were in the place of God, I would give you a much higher position.”

God – to whose eyes all things are naked and open¹ – was undoubtedly aware of Lucifer’s activity, but gave him time to perfect his scheme of rebellion before taking action against him.

“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; / You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor . . .” (verse 17). Lucifer’s outstanding wisdom and beauty filled his heart with pride and thus became the cause of his downfall.

Clearly this also was the motive attributed to Lucifer in Isaiah 14:13–14:

*“For you have said in your heart:
‘I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . .
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like [equal to] the Most High.”*

We all need to bear continually in mind that *pride* was the cause of Lucifer’s downfall. It is also the main motive that Satan uses in tempting human beings to sin. Pride has caused the downfall of more men and women than all the other sins put together.

The relationship between the prince of Tyre (a man) and the king of Tyre (a heavenly being) exemplifies the way in which throughout history satanic angels in the heavenly places have intervened in affairs on earth by controlling earthly rulers.

Their relationship is also a preview of the relationship that will develop between Satan and the antichrist. Satan will use the antichrist to gain for himself the worship of the whole world. “So they [the whole world] worshiped the dragon [Satan]...and they worshiped the beast [the antichrist]...”²

Since worship is due always and only to God, by gaining the worship of the whole world for himself Satan will be making one last claim to what he originally aspired to: equality with God.

The Location of Satan’s Kingdom

Satan and the angels who joined him in his rebellion against God were cast out of heaven, but they have not yet been cast down to earth. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul describes them as “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the *heavenly places* [plural].”

In Colossians 1:16 Paul lists the four main orders of heavenly beings who were created by God through Christ: thrones, dominions, principalities [rulerships] and powers [authorities]. In Ephesians 6:12 the two highest orders that Paul mentions as having joined in Satan’s rebellion are rulerships and authorities. This indicates that neither thrones nor dominions were enticed by Satan into joining in his rebellion.

From its opening verse the Bible indicates that the earth is singular, but the heavens are plural: “God created the heavens [plural] and the earth [singular].”³ In 2 Corinthians 12:2 Paul speaks of a man “caught up to the third heaven.” Obviously there cannot be a third heaven unless there is also a first and a second.

Paul says that in the third heaven this man was “caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful [or possible] for a man to utter.” This indicates that the third – and highest – heaven is a place of the utmost holiness, the actual dwelling place of God Himself. If the

first heaven is the one visible from earth, then there must be a “second” intermediate heaven somewhere between the visible heaven and the third heaven which is God’s dwelling place.

Daniel’s Three-week Fast

In Daniel 10:2–12 Daniel tells how he gave himself for three weeks to mourning and partial fasting. Then a heavenly being appeared to him and told him, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.”

Further on, in Daniel 10:13–21, Daniel refers to three other angelic beings: to Michael, an archangel of God; and to the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece. These latter two are angels – or perhaps archangels – of Satan.

In order to reach Daniel on earth, the angel sent from God had to meet and overcome satanic angels who opposed him. This confirms that Satan’s kingdom is located in “the heavenly places”– somewhere between the heaven that is God’s dwelling place and the heaven that is visible from earth. It also reveals several important facts about prayer and spiritual warfare:

1. The initiative in these events came from Daniel on earth. It was his prayer and fasting that set in motion the activity of God’s angels in the heavenly places.
2. Between the heaven of God’s dwelling place and the heaven visible from earth there is a kingdom of satanic angels. These opposed the angel sent to Daniel from the third heaven (the heaven where God dwells).
3. These satanic angels were so powerful that it took God’s angels three weeks to break through their opposition.
4. Daniel’s prayers played a vital part in the ultimate victory.

Lessons We Can Learn from Daniel

This account of Daniel’s praying contains important lessons that can make our prayers more effective.

1. Our praying can set in motion the forces of God in heaven. God sometimes waits for us on earth to take the initiative.
2. To reach the throne of God in heaven, our prayers must pass through a satanic kingdom in the heavenly places. For this they must be supernaturally empowered. “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.”⁴
3. Our prayer therefore needs to be enforced by praise and thanksgiving, which serve as a “booster rocket” to carry them up to the throne of God. Supplications, prayers and intercessions must be accompanied by giving of thanks.⁵
4. Fasting increases our spiritual sensitivity and adds supernatural power to praying. Some satanic forces will yield only to prayer that is accompanied by fasting.

In my next letter I will deal with various forms of spiritual protection that God has provided for us in our conflict with Satan's kingdom of rebellious angels.

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

¹ Hebrews 4:13 1

² Revelation 13:4

³ Genesis 1:1

⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:20

⁵ 1 Timothy 2:1

For further study, we recommend the audio cassette
4262, "The Structure of Satan's Kingdom."
A contribution to help cover cost will be appreciated, but is not necessary.

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A D E R E K P R I N C E

TEACHING LETTER

Because Of The Angels

Principles of Spiritual Protection

Dear Friend

When we are born again as Christians into the kingdom of God, we discover that we are caught up in a war with an opposing spiritual kingdom – the kingdom of Satan. In this we have no option. Because the kingdom to which we belong is at war, we are part of the war. We discover, too, that we have various kinds of enemies, but the most powerful and the most formidable is a kingdom of rebellious angels in the heavenly places, under the rule of God’s archenemy, Satan.

Because we have such powerful enemies, we all need to avail ourselves of the protection which God has provided. In 1 Corinthians 11:10 Paul explains that Christian women need the protection of scriptural authority over them – symbolised by an appropriate covering on their head. But this is only one example of a principle that applies more generally to all Christians – both male and female. Every Christian needs the protection of being under appropriate, scriptural authority.

Under Authority

Luke 7:1–10 records how a Roman centurion sent some Jewish elders to Jesus to ask for the healing of his servant, who was at death’s door. Jesus offered to go and pray for the healing of the servant, but the centurion responded:

“Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.

“Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.

“For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

By saying “I also am a man placed under authority,” the centurion recognised that the authority of Jesus in the spiritual realm was analogous to the authority which he had in the military realm as a centurion in the Roman army. In each case their authority was derived from submission to a higher source. For the centurion, the source was the Roman Emperor. For Jesus, the source was God the Father.

Note, too, that the centurion did not say – as many would have done – “I *have* authority,” but “I am *under* authority.” He affirmed a basic principle of Scripture: to *have* authority one must be under authority. Authority always flows *downwards*.

In Matthew 28:18, after His resurrection, Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” There are chains of authority that descend from God the Father through Jesus the Son into every situation in the universe. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul explains that there is a descending chain of authority that is designed to work in every family on earth: “The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Authority descends from God the Father through Jesus the Son to the husband and through the husband to the wife.

But what is true in the home applies to every other department of life. It applies to all Christians. Every Christian needs the protection of being under an appropriate authority. *A Christian not under authority is an unprotected Christian.*

Authority In The Church

In Ephesians 1:22 Paul says that God gave Jesus to be “head over all things to the church.”

The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. In its original meaning, *ekklesia* denoted a group of citizens in a city – state (such as Athens) who were the collective government of the city. When applied to Christians, it indicates that in His redemptive acts Jesus exercises His authority through the *church* which is His *ekklesia*.

To be under Christ’s authority, therefore, means to be rightly related to His church. We cannot claim the protection of Christ’s authority over us if we do not respect the authority which He has vested in His church.

This is clearly illustrated in the appointment of Paul as an apostle. In 1 Timothy 1:1 Paul calls himself “an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.” The ultimate authority of Paul’s apostleship was a decision of God the Father and God the Son made in heaven. But by definition an “apostle” is “one sent forth.” Paul’s apostleship did not become effective, therefore, until he was “sent forth” from a local church in Antioch.

In Acts 13:1 Paul (still called Saul) is listed as one of five men who are described as “prophets and teachers.” Then, in response to a direction from the Holy Spirit, the other three men laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them forth. After that, both men are called *apostles* (see Acts 14:4, 14). The apostleship of Paul was determined in heaven, but it only became effective when it was acknowledged and acted upon by a local church on earth.

In more than fifty years of worldwide ministry, I have always sought to recognise and respect the authority of Christ operating through a local church. First Lydia and I – and then Ruth and I – always identified with a local congregation wherever our place of residence was. When we went out on our ministry journeys, we were officially sent out from a local church. When we returned, we gave a report to the church that sent us out. This was the practice established by Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:3 and 14:26-27.

Some Christians are looking for a perfect church. I have to acknowledge that in more than fifty years I have never yet found such a church. But then I have to acknowledge also that if I ever should find such a church, I could not join it, because after I joined it would no longer be perfect! Meanwhile I am grateful for everything good I have received through various imperfect local churches.

Members of One Body

In Ephesians 1:22 – 23 Paul also gives a second picture of God’s people here on earth. He says “the church, which is His [Christ’s] *body*.”

In 1 Corinthians 12:27 Paul develops this theme: “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.” He uses various examples from the physical body to emphasise that, as Christians, we are all interdependent and we all need each other.

The most complete and authoritative picture of the church as the body of Christ is given in Ephesians. It is most significant, therefore, that throughout this epistle Paul consistently speaks of Christians in the plural. He has virtually nothing to say to or about individual Christians.

For example, in Ephesians 1:3-12 Paul says the following: God has blessed *us* – He chose *us* – He predestined *us* – He made *us* accepted – *we* have redemption – He has made known to us the mystery of His will – *we* have obtained an inheritance – *we* should be to the praise of His glory.

A careful reading of the rest of the epistle will confirm that this is its message from beginning to end. There are no promises and no prayers for any individual. Only in the last six verses is there one brief exception: Paul closes by asking for special prayer for himself.

This focus on the collective body of Christ comes to its climax in Ephesians 6:10-18 where Paul speaks about our spiritual warfare. In verse 12 all the key words are in the plural – both those which refer to God’s people and those which refer to the opposing forces: *we* wrestle against *principalities – powers – rulers – hosts...*

The spiritual warfare thus depicted is not a conflict between individuals, but a vast war between opposing armies. There is no room here for “lone rangers” pursuing their individual goals. Victory will require controlled and concerted action by God’s people working together as members of one body. This will demand discipline and a readiness to submit to scriptural authority.

In the Midst Of Abounding Lawlessness

One feature of the close of the present age concerning which Jesus warned His disciples was an upsurge of *lawlessness*: “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”¹ Jesus indicated that many Christians would be infected by this prevailing lawlessness and as a result their love for God and His people would grow cold.

The essence of lawlessness is a rejection of authority. This has become an obvious feature of our contemporary culture. There is a widespread contempt for any rules or regulations that interfere with each person’s individual liberty. People are very forceful in asserting their “rights,” yet very reluctant to acknowledge their corresponding responsibilities. At times, the consequence is a condition bordering on anarchy. As Christians, we have to guard ourselves against this kind of attitude. We are required to show our respect for legitimate secular authority.

But first and foremost, we must cultivate and maintain an attitude of respect and obedience toward God our Father and toward Jesus our Saviour. This will be expressed in a corresponding attitude of respect and obedience towards God’s Word, the Scripture.

In John 14:23-24 Jesus said: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.... He who does not love Me does not keep My words.” We may make claims to love God and we may even pray long and eloquent prayers or preach long and eloquent sermons, but in the last resort we do not honour and obey God more than we honour and obey His Word. In the midst of prevailing lawlessness it would be appropriate for each of us to make a fresh affirmation of our unreserved and total submission to the authority of Scripture. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”²

Our Personal Relationships

One main area in which our submission to God and His Word will be tested is that of our personal relationships. Jesus has laid down some very strict rules.

Concerning forgiving other people, for instance, He says in Mark 11:25-26: “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Again, at the end of the pattern prayer which Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13, He added only one comment: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

We always need to remember that forgiving another person is not an expression of emotion but an act of *self-discipline*. For this we can depend upon the Holy Spirit, who is a Spirit “of power, of love and of self-discipline.”³

Self-discipline is also required to produce the kind of attitude Paul describes in Ephesians 5:21: “submitting to one another in the fear of God.” This attitude of mutual submission is the key to right relationships both in the home and in the church.

Christians who refuse to forgive others or to submit to one another are in defiance of Scripture. Their root problem is *lawlessness*. They have opened themselves up to the spirit prevailing in the world around them. It will inevitably make them vulnerable to the evil angels who are their relentless enemies in the heavenly places.

Three Uncompromising Demands

We are confronted with three areas in which Scripture reveals clear, uncompromising demands of God, that apply to all Christians. The first is respect for Christ’s authority operating in and through each local church. The second is unqualified forgiveness for all who have wronged us or harmed us. The third is an attitude of submissiveness toward all our fellow Christians.

Obedience in these three areas provides Christians with a covering of scriptural authority that protects them from the attacks of satanic angels in the heavenly places. Conversely, disobedience inevitably makes Christians vulnerable to such attacks.

This letter is written out of a deep personal concern. On the basis of many years of experience in the body of Christ, I am convinced that the consequences of disobeying these three requirements of Scripture can be tragic in the extreme. I believe that it is one main reason why many fine, dedicated servants of the Lord have become casualties. I pray that God may grant us all a new respect for the authority of Christ vested in His Church and that He may renew in each of us an attitude of forgiveness and submissiveness.

In my next letter I will deal with the weapons of our warfare.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹ Matthew 24:12

² 2 Timothy 3:16

³ 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

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A D E R E K P R I N C E

TEACHING LETTER

Because Of The Angels

The Weapons of Our Warfare

Dear Friend

In my previous letter, I pointed out that when we become Christians, we are automatically involved in a vast spiritual war that spans both heaven and earth. Furthermore, our most powerful and dangerous enemies are a kingdom of evil angels whose headquarters are in the heavenlies.

In His wisdom and mercy God has provided us with all the weapons that we need to achieve victory. Because our warfare is in the spiritual realm, our weapons are also spiritual. In 2 Corinthians 10:4 Paul says that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [but by implication, spiritual] but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.”

The strongholds that we attack are also spiritual. Over the centuries Satan has built them up in the hearts and minds of humanity. They are strongholds of fear, covetousness, hatred, idolatry, racial prejudice, religious superstition and many others.

It is these strongholds that frustrate all the attempts of politicians to negotiate real peace. The logical and political arguments in favour of negotiated settlements are not strong enough to break down the spiritual strongholds that stand in the way of peace.

True peace will only come to earth when the kingdom of Christ is established here. This is the objective of our warfare as Christians and the purpose for which we use our spiritual weapons. It is to break down the spiritual strongholds in the hearts of men and women and to prepare the way for Christ to set up His kingdom – first in their hearts and finally in the whole earth.

Seven Spiritual Weapons

In Ephesians 6:13–18 Paul lists seven spiritual weapons – or items of spiritual equipment – that we need. He takes his examples from the equipment of a Roman legionary in his day. Here is the list:

1. **The girdle of truth** (verse 14). In Paul’s day both men and women normally wore long, loose garments that came down at least to their knees. Before undertaking any strenuous activity, the first thing they had to do was to gather up their loose garments and tuck them into their girdle. Only after this were they free to undertake any vigorous action. Hence the phrase that occurs several times: *Gird up your loins*.

Using the girdle of truth requires that we renounce every form of dishonesty or compromise. If we do not “tuck them up” out of our way, they will hamper our spiritual progress. We must be faithful to the truth of Scripture even when it is controversial or unpopular.

We must also be completely open and sincere in all our personal relationships. This is an essential condition of proper spiritual growth. Writing to new Christians Peter says: “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, *that you may grow thereby*.”¹

Above all, we must be absolutely open and honest in our dealings with God Himself. This is a condition for receiving spiritual revelation. In Psalm 51:6 David says:

*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.*

God reveals His hidden wisdom only to those who have truth in their inward parts.

2. **The breastplate of righteousness** (verse 14). This protects our *heart*. In Proverbs 4:23 we are warned:

*Keep [guard] your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.*

Our success in the spiritual life depends on maintaining a right heart relationship with both God and man. We must follow the example of Paul and “always strive to have a conscience without offence toward God and men.”²

The kind of righteousness God looks for is not mere intellectual assent to doctrine. It is a condition of the heart, not the mind. “For with the *heart* one believes unto righteousness . . .”³

Neither is it the observance of religious rules. Paul had been occupied with those for many years, but when he met Christ, his ambition changed: “. . . that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”⁴

3. **The shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace** (verse 15). Roman legionaries were equipped with very strong sandals. These made them highly mobile. They could make long forced marches at short notice.

As Christians, we need to be *mobile* – available to God for His purposes wherever and whenever He calls upon us – even at short notice or in unexpected circumstances. This requires *preparation*. We must familiarise ourselves with the basic truths of the Gospel and how to present them to an unbeliever.

Also, it is a gospel of *peace*. We can only communicate it effectively if we have real peace in our own hearts – a peace that is not dependent on our external circumstances. To a troubled, perplexed sinner the tone of our voice may communicate our message more effectively than the actual words that we speak.

4. **The shield of faith** (verse 16). The word here translated *shield* is connected with the word for a *door*. Its length was greater than its width. A trained soldier could so crouch down and draw his body in that he was completely protected. But he had to be fit and athletic. An overweight man would not be fully protected.

Our shield of faith must likewise be complete in all its dimensions. It must cover our total personality – spirit, soul and body. We must also be so spiritually trained and exercised that we can draw ourselves together within an area that is completely covered by the promises of Scripture. Anything in our lives that is superfluous or self-indulgent will be outside the protection of our shield.

At times the arrows Satan uses against us are “fiery.” They have been set on fire. They are designed not merely to wound but also to set on fire whatever they are aimed at. They can start fires of gossip or slander or division in families or even in whole congregations. But the shield of faith – vigilantly and effectively used – will not merely stop the arrows, it will *quench* them. It will extinguish the flames.

5. **The helmet of salvation** (verse 17). Just as the breastplate protects our *heart*, so the helmet protects our *mind* – our thought life. The mind is the area in which Christians are most regularly attacked. Inside our minds there is often a continuing war. Satan seeks to insinuate thoughts that will disturb us or distract us or in some other way make us ineffective in our war against him.

God has taught me personally many lessons in this area. When I was first born again, I was continually assailed in my mind by depression or discouragement. I saw that I needed some effective protection in that area. When I read Paul’s list of armour in Ephesians 6:13–18, I realised that it was the *helmet of salvation* that I needed. But then I said to myself: “I know that I am saved. Does that mean that I already have the helmet of salvation or is it something that I need to get after salvation?”

As I pondered on this, I saw that the Christians in Ephesus to whom Paul was writing were already saved. Yet

Paul still instructed them to *take* the helmet of salvation. Clearly, therefore, I needed to do the same. But what was this *helmet of salvation* that should be the protection for my mind?

Fortunately, I was using a Bible with cross references in the margin. The cross reference to Ephesians 6:17 was 1 Thessalonians 5:8: “. . . and as a helmet the *hope* of salvation.” That Scripture revolutionised my thought life. If *pessimism* was my problem, then *optimism* was the logical solution.

I set myself to seek out – and in many cases to memorise – passages of Scripture that provided me with a basis for strong, continuing optimism. Today my mind is effectively protected!

* * * * *

Up to this point all the items of equipment that we have considered have been solely – or primarily – for purposes of *protection* or *defence*. Only at this point does Paul turn to weapons of *attack*. For this there is a logical and practical reason: if we attempt to attack before we have secured our defence, we are unprepared for the enemy’s counterattack and we are likely to become casualties. This is one main reason why some Christians are wounded and become casualties.

We will turn now to the two remaining weapons.

6. **The sword of the Spirit** (verse 17), which is the Word of God.

This sword can be used for both attack and defence, but it is primarily a weapon of attack. Someone has said, “The best defence is attack” – and this is often true in the spiritual realm.

The word here translated *word* is *rhema*, which usually denotes a word that is *spoken*. It is not the Bible in our bookshelf or even on our nightstand that is effective. But when we take Scripture in our mouth and proclaim it boldly through our lips, then it becomes a sharp, two-edged sword.

Note, too, that it is “the sword of the [Holy] Spirit.” We can take God’s Word in our mouth, but it only achieves its full effect when it is the Holy Spirit within us who actually wields it.

The perfect pattern of how to use the sword of the Spirit is provided by the encounter of Jesus with Satan at the time of His temptation in the wilderness. Three times Satan approached Jesus with a temptation and each time Jesus drove him back with the same phrase: “It is written.”⁵ Jesus used no other weapon but the *rhema* – the spoken word of the Lord. God has made the same weapon available to each Christian.

It is important, however, to bear two things in mind. First, Jesus had already been “filled with the Holy Spirit.”⁶ It was the Holy Spirit in Jesus that directed Him in the use of the sword.

Second, Jesus – like every Jewish boy of His day – had memorised long passages of Scripture. When Satan confronted Him, He did not need to consult a concordance or go to a library. He had already stored up the Scriptures in His memory. Surely we today need to do that just as much as Jesus did!

7. **All prayer** (verse 18). This seventh weapon is not listed in exactly the same way as the previous six, but it is definitely needed to make the equipment of the Christian soldier complete. Of the previous six items, only the last one – *the sword of the Spirit* – is a weapon of attack, and even the sword is effective only as far as a soldier’s arm can reach.

But this seventh weapon of *all prayer* is subject to no such limitations. We may fairly call it our ICBM – our *intercontinental ballistic missile*. Focused prayer, directed by the Holy Spirit, can reach across continents and oceans and strike with unerring accuracy at any target assigned to it. Undoubtedly it is the most powerful and the most effective of all the weapons in the Christian arsenal.

Like the sword previously mentioned, this weapon of *all prayer* depends on the Holy Spirit for its effectiveness. It must be prayed “in the Spirit.”⁷ God does not commit such a weapon to Christians who are guided only by their carnal desires and emotions.

All prayer includes many different kinds of prayer – such as those listed in 1 Timothy 2:1: supplications,

prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks. It is not a solo instrument to be played by one Christian on his own. Rather it is produced by an orchestra of many instruments blended together in harmony by the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it takes apparently insurmountable obstacles to provoke this kind of prayer. In Acts 4:15–18 the apostles were confronted with a satanic strategy that could have put a stop to all further evangelistic activity. The Jewish council, which was the supreme religious authority of the Jewish people, officially commanded the apostles “not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”

The opponents of the gospel were perceptive enough to recognise the unique importance of the name of Jesus. The entire effectiveness of the gospel was dependent on it. As Peter himself had declared to the council: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”⁸ By this decree of the council, Satan had built a “stronghold” that would have prevented all further progress of the gospel or growth of the infant church.

Confronted with this satanic scheme, all the believers came together to seek God’s help. Blended together into an orchestra, they cried out to the Lord for His intervention. God responded with such a demonstration of His power that “the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”⁹ The weapon of *all prayer* had demolished Satan’s stronghold.

In many parts of the world today Satan has built up obstacles and opposition to the progress of the gospel which resist all normal evangelistic methods. It is time for the church to deploy its most powerful weapon: the weapon of *all prayer*.

* * * *

The topic of my next – and final – letter on this theme will be “The Climax of the Conflict.”

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹ 1 Peter 2:1–2

² Acts 24:16

³ Romans 10:10

⁴ Philippians 3:8–9

⁵ Matthew 4:4; 4:7; 4:10

⁶ Luke 4:1

⁷ Ephesians 6:18

⁸ Acts 4:12

⁹ Acts 4:31

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A D E R E K P R I N C E

TEACHING LETTER

Because Of The Angels

The Climax of the Conflict

Dear Friend

Confronted by the scriptural revelation of the rebellion of Satan and his angels against God, we might be tempted to exclaim: “Well, couldn’t God have crushed that rebellion on the spot and sent Satan and all his angels to the lake of fire, where they belong?”

Certainly God could have done that, but He chose not to. In His inscrutable wisdom God chose to make Satan in his rebellion an instrument that God could use for purposes of His own. It was C.T. Studd, the English cricketer turned missionary, who remarked: “God has used Satan almost more than any other created being.”

It is a principle of God’s dealings with us that our relationships with Him are not secure until we have passed through certain tests which He has appointed. This applies to both angels and human beings. Untested relationships are like unrefined gold. They are not acceptable in heaven.

For this reason Jesus said to the Christians in Laodicea: “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire.”¹ In other words, “Your claim to be My people is not valid until you have passed the test.” Gold of that quality is not cheap. We have to *buy* it. There is a price to pay!

Satan the Tester

One main instrument that God uses to test us is Satan. Twice in Scripture he is called “*the tempter*.”² This could more literally be translated *the tester*.

In the first instance God used Satan as His tester among the angels in heaven. Only those angels who refused to join Satan in his rebellion passed the test. Three times in reference to the return of Christ in glory and the judgements He will carry out, the Scripture states that He will be accompanied by the *holy* angels.³ These angels are distinguished from those who had joined Satan in his rebellion and had thus lost their holiness.

God also uses Satan to test humanity. This began with the first human beings – Adam and Eve. God placed them in the garden with one simple negative command: *not* to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then Satan made his way into the garden and tempted them to do the one thing which God had forbidden. When they yielded to this temptation, God pronounced judgement on all three of them. Satan had played his allotted role as the *tester*, but Adam and Eve had failed in their test. For this they alone were responsible.

Even in the life of Jesus Himself, Satan was permitted to play the role of tester. After Jesus had fasted forty days in the wilderness, the tempter (tester) came to Him and subjected Him to three successive temptations (tests).⁴ But where the first Adam had failed, the last Adam prevailed. He passed all three tests victoriously and Satan had to retreat.

Three and a half years later the tester was again released against Jesus. First of all, Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and used him to betray Jesus.⁵ Then Satan stirred up a multitude of ungodly men to demand the crucifixion of Jesus. Once again, Jesus passed the test. He willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice for the sins of all humanity.

But it was here that the unsearchable wisdom of God reached its climax. The atoning death of Jesus on the cross had in fact cancelled all Satan's claims on fallen humanity. Satan's apparent victory became the cause of his irrevocable defeat.

From Slaves to Conquerors

Yet God still had one more way in which to use Satan as a demonstration of His own unfathomable wisdom. Satan had tempted humanity into rebellion against God and had thus made them his slaves. But through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, God not merely saves us from our sins and makes us heirs of His kingdom, He actually makes us instruments through which He inflicts defeat on Satan. Satan's slaves are transformed into his conquerors. Only God could have planned that!

In Revelation 12:7–11 John describes a war – still in the future – that finally puts an end to Satan's kingdom of rebellious angels in the heavenly places:

(7) *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,*

(8) *but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.*

(9) *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

(10) *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

(11) *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."*

This account brings out some extremely important facts:

1. Up to the time of the events here described, Satan and his angels have continued to maintain their kingdom in the heavenly places.
2. When the voice in heaven speaks of "our brethren," it is referring to the believers on earth.
3. Satan and his angels are not driven out until they have been defeated by a combined force of God's angels in the heavenly places and the believers on earth.

This points to an amazing climax to the conflict: "*they [the believers on earth] overcame him [Satan].*" It is the redeemed believers on earth who are responsible for the final eviction of Satan from the heavenly places where he has maintained his kingdom. Satan's victims have finally become his conquerors.

The battle is fought out with spiritual weapons. Satan's main weapon is *guilt*. That is why *he accuses us before God day and night*. He reminds God of all the sins we have committed. His purpose is to continually emphasise our guilt. If we are indeed guilty, then we have no power against him and no right to take his place in heaven.

Our victory will only come as we avail ourselves of the most powerful of all the weapons that God has put at our disposal: *the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony*. The blood of the Lamb affirms the all-sufficient sacrifice that Jesus offered on the cross on our behalf. "For by one offering [sacrifice] *He has perfected forever* [us] who are being sanctified."⁶ The sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf is forever sufficient. Nothing need ever be added to it and nothing can ever be taken from it. The last utterance of Jesus on the cross was "It is finished!"⁷ It is completely complete and perfectly perfect.

The Pattern of the Passover

The provision that God has made for us in this end-time conflict with Satan was prophetically foreshadowed in the ordinances of the Passover through which God delivered Israel from their slavery in Egypt. The lamb to be sacrificed in the ceremony foreshadows Jesus, "the Lamb of God."

It was the responsibility of the head of every Israelite family to select and to slay the lamb and then to catch its blood in a basin. But his task was not yet complete. The blood in the basin did not protect any Israelite. The blood had to be transferred from the basin and smeared on the lintel and the two doorposts of every Israelite home. Only then was that home protected. God's promise was: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you,"⁸ that is, "My judgment will not come upon you."

There was, therefore, one further essential element in the Passover ceremony: a plant called hyssop, which grows profusely over most of the Middle East. The head of every family had to pluck a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood in the basin and then sprinkle it on the lintel and the two doorposts of his home. Only then was that home protected.

How does this apply to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross when He poured out His lifeblood on our behalf? To borrow a picture from the Passover ceremony, the blood is now in the basin. But the blood in the basin protects no one. It has to be transferred from the basin to the place where each of us lives.

In the Passover ceremony it was the hyssop that applied the blood where it was needed. What is there in our lives that corresponds to the hyssop? How can we apply the blood of Jesus where we need it?

The answer is provided in Revelation 12:11: "they [the believers on earth] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and *by the word of their testimony*." It is our testimony that does for us what the hyssop did for the Israelites. It is when we testify personally to what the blood of Jesus does for us that we can claim all the benefits that God has provided for us through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Our bold, continuing personal testimony becomes the hyssop that applies the blood of Jesus to our lives.

We need to remember, however, that Satan has access to the Bible. He is familiar with the purposes of God revealed in Scripture. He knows that God purposes to make the believers on earth one main instrument of his final defeat. His strategy, therefore, is to paralyse us with a sense of our guilt, to make us feel totally unworthy and inadequate. For this purpose he accuses us "before our God day and night."⁹

We may ask: Why does God not silence Satan's accusations? The answer is that God will not do for us what He has given us the means to do for ourselves. He has provided for us spiritual weapons by which we can overcome every charge that Satan may bring against us. To every accusation of Satan we can respond that the blood of Jesus shed on the cross has provided a full and perfect propitiation. Therefore we are *not guilty!*

A Manual for End-time Soldiers

In an earthly army a soldier who is enlisted is provided with appropriate weapons, and then he receives training to make him proficient in their use. It is imperative for us, as soldiers in the Lord's end-time army, that we, too, become proficient in the use of the weapons that God has provided: the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. We must learn how to testify appropriately concerning each provision made for us through the blood of Jesus.

I outline below a "training manual" on how to appropriate the various provisions made for us through the blood of Jesus. If you will familiarise yourself with the passages of Scripture quoted – or, better still, commit them to memory – you will be prepared to take part in the vast spiritual conflict with which the present age will close.

We overcome Satan when we testify personally to what the Word of God says the Blood of Jesus does for us.

Revelation 12:11

Through the blood of Jesus, I am redeemed out of the hand of the devil.

Ephesians 1:7

Through the blood of Jesus, all my sins are forgiven.

1 John 1:9

Through the blood of Jesus, I am continually being cleansed from all sin.

1 John 1:7

Through the blood of Jesus I am justified, made righteous, just-as-if-I'd never sinned.

Romans 5:9

Through the blood of Jesus, I am sanctified, made holy, set apart to God.

Hebrews 13:12

Through the blood of Jesus, I have boldness to enter into the presence of God.

Hebrews 10:19

The blood of Jesus cries out continually to God in heaven on my behalf.

Hebrews 12:24

One Final Requirement

Revelation 12:11 closes with one distinguishing characteristic of all those who emerge victorious from this conflict: *they did not love their lives to the death.*

How shall we apply this to ourselves? It means that for us it is more important to do the will of God than to stay alive. If we should ever find ourselves in a situation where to obey God will cost us our lives, then we will obey God.

Probably not all of us will actually have to make this clear-cut choice. But the decisive issue is our *commitment*. This imparts a quality to our testimony which makes it a weapon against which Satan has no defence. We each need, therefore, to confront ourselves with this question: *Can I truthfully say of myself that I do not love my life to the death?*

Yours in the Master's service



Derek Prince

¹ Revelation 3:18

² Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5

³ Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26

⁴ Matthew 4:1–11

⁵ Luke 22:3

⁶ Hebrews 10:14

⁷ John 19:30

⁸ Exodus 12:13

⁹ Revelation 12:10

Further copies of this teaching letter may be obtained from our office at the address shown below.

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