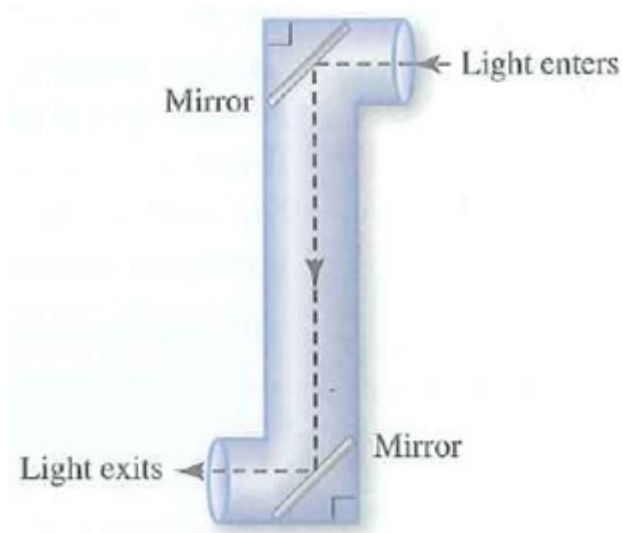


Dear Friends and Family,

Let me introduce you to a concept found in scripture that may be new to you. It is similar to the word *periscope*. A periscope is a tool used when line of sight observation is not possible. Instead, it relies on a set of mirrors to reflect a complete image.



Similarly, in biblical terms, a *pericope* is an extract from a text, usually consisting of a set of verses or different passages, which combine to form one coherent thought or unit. Interestingly, there are three major pericopes in scripture that explain God's wrath toward sin. Last week, we were introduced to two of those major pericopes: The Flood, and Sodom & Gomorrah. They all intertwine, forming a solid understanding of God's rejection of evil. Let us examine the third today.

If you had to guess, what is the third pericope that provides a clear line of sight to understanding God's wrath?

Consider the passage below from 2 Peter 2:4,9 &10.

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, held for judgment; ... *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from a trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt passion, and despise authority.”



Did you guess it? The third pericope is the fall of the angels. Scripture doesn't provide a full account of exactly how this event took place. However, let's first consider what Scripture details regarding angels.

1. God's angels are His special messengers (Heb. 1:14, Matt. 4:11).
2. Angels are created to be in His presence forever (Luke 1:19).
3. Angles are to praise Him unendingly (Rev. 4:5-8).
4. There are at least three classes of angels: cherubim (Ex. 26:1), seraphim (Is. 6:2), and archangels (Dan 10:13).
5. Angels are created beings. Most theologians presume that angels were created at some time before the Genesis account of creation. However, others believe that all created things are accounted for in the Genesis account. Therefore, when day 4 details God's creation of the stars, (Gen. 1:17) it included the physical and metaphorical stars of heaven (Is. 14:13, Job 38:7).



Secondly, consider Lucifer, 1 of just 3 angels named in Scripture. Two passages, Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, shed light into who Lucifer is and his history. Isaiah 14 actually provides the name and meaning of the fallen angel, Lucifer.

Found solely in this passage, “Lucifer” is the Latin derivative of the Hebrew word *Helel* meaning “*shining one, Day Star, Morning Star.*” Interestingly, the angels are collectively referred to as stars, yet Lucifer is singled out as the “Day Star”. Similar to our term for the sun, by far the biggest, brightest star we can see and the only one seen during the day, “Day Star” implies that Lucifer held a place of splendor and prominence.

Consider this and the meaning of his name as you read Ezekiel. Ezekiel 28 provides an allegory for Satan as it compares two kings - the earthly king/ruler of Tyre and the spiritual King of Tyre (Lucifer). Read Ezekiel 28:11-19 and notice how Lucifer is described before his fall:

- The seal of perfection
- Full of wisdom
- Perfect in beauty
- Present in Eden
- Adorned with every precious stone
- Settings and mountings made of gold (meaning flute and tambourine, his body was literally a musical instrument)
- Anointed as the cherub that covered/guarded God's holy mountain

And even though Lucifer was blameless in his ways from the day he was created, "wickedness was found" in him. Ezekiel 28:16-19 details the fall of Satan.

"You were filled with violence,
and you sinned.

So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.

Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.

So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings.

By your many sins and dishonest trade
you have desecrated your sanctuaries.

So I made a fire come out from you,
and it consumed you,
and I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of all who were watching.

All the nations who knew you

are appalled at you;
you have come to a horrible end
and will be no more.”



God exacts his wrath upon Satan as a consuming fire, decimating him to ashes, and foretelling a horrible end in which he will be no more. Considering Lucifer's purpose when he was created, the humiliation of his demise in the sight of all who are watching is fitting. The Bible explains that Lucifer was created to be the most visually AND auditorily beautiful angel in all of history and eternity. He was one of a kind, created specifically to guard God's holy mountain. His very body was an instrument of praise. So what was his sin? Examine Isaiah 14:13-14. We often mistakenly categorize Lucifer as wanting to overthrow God. However, how does this reconcile with the scriptural account of angels in that they were created to serve and worship God? Scripture reassures that "even the demons believe and tremble" (James 2:19)? Carefully examine Isaiah 14:13-14, here God itemizes Lucifer's sin:

"You said in your heart,

"I will ascend to the heavens;

I will raise my throne

above the stars of God;

I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,

on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;

I will make myself like the Most High.”

Perhaps it's splitting hairs, but consider that Lucifer knew it was impossible to usurp God. However, in his pride, he desired to be 'like God', worthy of worship himself. He longed to raise this throne above all of the other angels, to sit with worshipers at his feet, and to be treated as God alone deserves to be treated. And this is what he still desires!

God graciously shares warnings regarding Lucifer, offering insight into the spiritual world, and providing us with a clear picture of evil. Satan is consistent in trying to steal for himself worship that rightly belongs solely to God.

- Revelation 12 details the great war in heaven and how the Dragon swept $\frac{1}{3}$ of the stars (angels) down with him.
 - Job 1:6-7 and 38:7 provide a glance into the spiritual realm as Satan enters the presence of God, seeking to destroy Job.
 - Peter describes Satan as prowling around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).
 - John warns that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies. (John 8:44).
-



Now that we have a clear picture of Lucifer, what about demons? On earth, Jesus consistently demonstrated his power over demons in his numerous encounters. Jesus completely healed those tormented by demons and commissioned those healed to follow him. Consider Mary Magdalene, ruled by 7 demons in her when she first met Jesus (Luke 8:2). Yet she was the first person to learn that Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:11-18).

Likewise, in Mark 5:1-20 & Luke 8:26-39 Jesus casts the Legion of Demons out of a man. In both of those parallel passages:

- The demons fall down and worship Jesus
- They question him as to what business they have with one another
- They have genuine fear of Him and beg that He not torment them
- They plead not to be commanded to go into the abyss. (Luke only records this)

This abyss is described in Jude 6-7 & Rev. 20:1. These passages explain that some angels are kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement. Many commentaries identify these specific angels as a subset of the fallen angels. This

group are those who took human women as wives and gave birth to the Nephilim as described in Gen 6:1-4 and may have led to the evil that permeated the world.



So what does this mean for us?

When Lucifer and the angels sinned, God, in His wrath, executed judgement over them with a final conclusion that will not be altered. There is no option for them to be redeemed. They are held for eternal punishment in the lake of fire prepared specifically for them (Matt. 25:41). How does the fall of the angels align with the demise of Sodom & Gomorrah and The Earth by the Flood?

All three became objects of God's wrath. All three were consumed by evil to the degree that destruction became the only fitting resolution. The time tables vary greatly, however. God spoke quickly over Sodom & Gomorrah, giving just a day's notice for Lot and family to flee. Noah was given 175 years to build the Ark, warn others, and escape the flood. Satan is different. He has a penalty that has been issued, a warrant of death over him, yet God has allowed him to continue in existence. Why has he not been destroyed? Why is Satan allowed to rule this world?

Jesus speaks of this specifically in John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. The degradation in the world is specifically the work of Satan. He has infiltrated society, culture, and even religion. His desire has not changed, he still longs to be like God. Ultimately, he will create his own unholy trinity and demand to be worshiped. Yet God, the infinite sovereign ruler with all wisdom and all glory, knows this. And he still allows Satan to be. Why?

Now it's your turn! Spend time in prayer with the Lord and seek Scripture for answers. Let me know what answers you find. I know I'm leaving you with unanswered questions. May it help you dig into the word of God and earnestly seek Him! Stay tuned for next week - there's more to come!

In His Word,
Pastor Matt

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Dr. Matthew Long

Senior Pastor

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*

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