

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

The Bible's teaching compiled
for established believers

Paul Mallison

The Bible Unpacked™

Comprehensive Study Series

The Bible's teaching compiled
for established believers

5. Angels, Satan and Demons

Paul Mallison

The work of [Paul Mallison](#) in [The Bible Unpacked](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#). **The Scripture translations used are not licensed under a Creative Commons license and have all rights reserved** (cf. copyright notices below).

The material may be freely reproduced and distributed for non-commercial purposes. Permission must be obtained from the copyright owners of the Scripture translations before the material may be used commercially or freely distributed with changes to how verses of Scripture are used.

Scripture quotations marked "CEV" are from the **Contemporary English Version** Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission.

Scripture quotations marked "ESV" are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "GNT" are from the **Good News Translation in Today's English Version**- Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission.

Scripture quotations marked "GW" are taken from **God's Word**® Copyright 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Used by permission of Baker Publishing Group. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "ISV" are taken from the *Holy Bible: International Standard Version*®, Release 1.44. Copyright © 1996–2007 by The ISV Foundation of Fullerton, California USA. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. All rights reserved internationally.

Scripture quotations marked "NCV™" are taken from the **New Century Version**®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations designated "NET" are from the **NET Bible**® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/> All rights reserved. Scripture quoted by permission.

Scripture quotations marked "NKJV" are taken from **The New King James Version** / Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers., Copyright © 1982. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations of short phrases from other Bible translations are on occasions included in comments on the verses. The copyright notices for these translations are given below.

Scripture quotations marked "AMP" are taken from the **Amplified**® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org).

Scripture quotations marked "NASB" are taken from the **New American Standard Bible**®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked "NLT" are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "NRSV" are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1989 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Contents

A Quick Wordiv

Suggestions for Study Groups v

I. Angels

a) Attributes of Angels2

b) Angels and God5

c) Angels and God’s People.....8

d) Further Teaching about Angels 11

II. Satan and Demons

a) Satan’s Evilness 14

b) Satan’s Power..... 17

c) Satan’s Work against God’s People 20

d) Demons..... 23

Topics in This Series 27

The Seven Editions..... 29

Persecuted Christians 30

A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who lead the Israelites and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Users are asked to pray regularly for persecuted Christians and, if possible, support them financially. These things can be done through organizations that provide aid to them and/or prayer notices, such as those listed under [Persecuted Christians](#).

Suggestions for Study Groups

Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
 - (a) how you relate to God and/or to other people; or
 - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

I. Angels

The Bible often mentions angels. The existence and role of these mighty servants of God should be a great encouragement to believers. This is in no small part due to the fact that their work often involves believers, including giving believers supernatural help.

Note that while the great majority of references to angels in the Bible are to God's holy angels, evil angels are also mentioned. These evil angels are commonly identified with demons (discussed in the second half of this chapter). In headings in this book, "Angels" primarily refer to angels of God. But bear in mind that some concepts, such as angels being very powerful, are applicable to all angels.

a) Attributes of Angels

Angels have human-like features, but are very awesome in appearance

DAN 10:5–6 [DANIEL, DESCRIBING A VISION:] *I looked up and saw a man clothed in linen; around his waist was a belt made of gold from Upaz. ⁶His body resembled yellow jasper, and his face had an appearance like lightning. His eyes were like blazing torches; his arms and feet had the gleam of polished bronze. His voice thundered forth like the sound of a large crowd.* NET

This is describing an angel. The reference to the angel as a “man” and the mention of his human-like features (waist, face, eyes, arms and feet) suggest that angels have a human-like form.

Angels have wings and can fly

ISA 6:2 [ISAIAH, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] *Seraphs stood over him [God]; each one had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and they used the remaining two to fly.* NET

The “seraphs” are apparently a high order or class of angelic beings. This verse illustrates that at least some kinds of angelic beings have wings.

Angels are very powerful

2THES 1:7B He will do this when the Lord Jesus is revealed, coming from heaven *with his mighty angels* in a blazing fire. GW

MATT 28:2 Suddenly *there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it.* NET

The accompanying earthquake appears to be indicative of the angel’s awesome power. The stone was the very large one that had sealed the entrance to Jesus’ tomb.

Angels have great wisdom and knowledge – but their knowledge is limited

2SAM 14:20 [A WISE WOMAN, TO DAVID:] My master, you are wise like an angel of God who knows everything that happens on earth. NCV™

MARK 13:32 [JESUS, SPEAKING OF THE TIME OF HIS RETURN:] But *as for that day or hour no one knows it – neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son – except the Father.* NET

Angels can communicate and interact with others

1KI 19:5–7 Then he [Elijah] lay down under the tree and slept. *Suddenly an angel came to him and touched him. “Get up and eat,” the angel said.* ⁶Elijah saw near his head a loaf baked over coals and a jar of water, so he ate and drank. Then he went back to sleep. ⁷Later the LORD’S angel came to him a second time. *The angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat. If you don’t, the journey will be too hard for you.”* NCV™

Angels have a will

1PET 1:12 They [the prophets] were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – *things angels long to catch a glimpse of.* NET

This clearly illustrates that angels have a will – also suggesting that they have a mind and the ability to reason.

Angels have emotions – notably joy

JOB 38:6–7 [GOD, TO JOB:] What were the earth’s foundations set on, or who put its cornerstone in place ⁷while the morning stars sang together and *all the angels shouted with joy?* NCV™

Note that the fact that angels have a will and emotions suggests that they are personal beings.

Angels are holy

MARK 8:38 [JESUS:] For if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be

ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with *the holy angels*. NET

Further attributes of angels

HEB 1:14 *All the angels are spirits* who serve God and are sent to help those who will receive salvation. NCV™

Angels are spiritual beings.

LUKE 20:36 *Nor can they die anymore, because they are like the angels* and, since they share in the resurrection, are God's children. ISV

Angels are immortal.

Do you believe in angels? Why or why not?

Some biblical passages describe angels in terms of a human-like form, but the Bible also says that they are spirits (e.g. Heb 1:14). How should we understand this apparent contradiction?

To what extent are you mindful of angels? Does any teaching in this section encourage you to be more conscious of angels?

b) Angels and God

Angels are with God, surrounding him and even standing in his presence

REV 5:11A [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels in a circle around the throne, as well as the living creatures and the elders.* NET

LUKE 1:19 *The angel answered him [Zechariah], “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.* NET

Angels worship God and Jesus Christ

REV 7:11–12 [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] *And all the angels stood there in a circle around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying, “Amen! Praise and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”* NET

HEB 1:6 *And when God brings his firstborn Son into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”* NCV™

Angels serve God . . .

Ps 103:20–21 *Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you powerful warriors who carry out his decrees and obey his orders! ²¹Praise the LORD, all you warriors of his, you servants of his who carry out his desires!* NET

. . . Angels carry out judgments of God

Ps 78:49 *He [God] sent his burning anger, rage, fury, and hostility against them. He sent an army of destroying angels.* GW

REV 16:1–4 [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION:] *Then I heard a loud voice from the temple declaring to the seven angels: “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God’s wrath.” ²So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Then ugly and painful sores appeared on the people who had the mark of the beast and who*

worshipped his image. ³Next, the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it turned into blood, like that of a corpse, and every living creature that was in the sea died. ⁴Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood. NET

Carrying out judgments of God is a prominent role of angels in their service of God. Note that the "loud voice from the temple" (v. 1) is presumably that of God, giving directions to angels.

Angels serve Jesus Christ

MATT 13:41 *The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers.* NET

MATT 26:53 [JESUS:] *Don't you think that I could call on my Father to send more than twelve legions of angels to help me now?* GNT

What does the teaching about angels in this section show about God?

What similarities and differences are there between how angels serve God and how we should serve him?

Is there anything in this study that should impact our attitudes and/or actions? If so, what and why?

Pray for persecuted Christians

c) Angels and God's People

Angels help and care for God's people

HEB 1:14 *What are all the angels? They are spirits sent to serve those who are going to receive salvation.* GW

Ps 34:7 *The LORD's angel camps around the LORD's loyal followers and delivers them.* NET

Ps 91:11–12 *For he [God] will order his angels to protect you in all you do. ¹²They will lift you up in their hands, so you will not slip and fall on a stone.* NET

Verse 12 figuratively depicts the work of angels in protecting God's people.

Examples of angels, sent by God, saving God's people

DAN 6:22 [DANIEL, TO KING DARIUS:] *My God sent his angel and closed the lions' mouths so that they have not harmed me, because I was found to be innocent before him. Nor have I done any harm to you, O king.* NET

ACTS 12:11 *When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from everything the Jewish people were expecting to happen."* NET

Angels give God's people messages, such as instructions

ACTS 10:3–6 *About three o'clock one afternoon he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him, "Cornelius." ⁴Staring at him and becoming greatly afraid, Cornelius replied, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said to him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have gone up as a memorial before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa and summon a man named Simon, who is called Peter. ⁶This man is staying as a guest with a man named Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea."* NET

Note that the Hebrew and Greek words for "angel" carry the meaning "messenger".

Angels also give messages about future events

ACTS 27:23–24 [PAUL:] For *last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve came to me* ²⁴and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul! *You must stand before Caesar, and God has graciously granted you the safety of all who are sailing with you.*’ NET

REV 22:6 And he [an angel] said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And *the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.*” ESV

Note: Angels played a role in the introduction of the Mosaic Law

ACTS 7:53 [STEPHEN, TO THE JEWISH LEADERS:] *You received the law by decrees given by angels, but you did not obey it.* NET

Note that the term “the Mosaic Law” in the above subheading refers to the law that God gave through Moses, which is referred to in this verse.

Have you or someone you know of had an experience that you think involved angels?

In what ways do you think angels help Christians today?

In what ways do angels act on behalf of God?

Pray for persecuted Christians

d) Further Teaching about Angels

Angels are very important

GAL 4:14B [PAUL, TO THE BELIEVERS IN GALATIA:] *Instead, you welcomed me as though I were an angel of God, as though I were Christ Jesus himself!* NET

This points to the great importance of angels, even making something of a parallel of them with Jesus Christ.

There are different kinds and ranks of angels

ISA 6:1–2 [ISAIAH, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ²Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.* NKJV

As noted earlier, seraphim (or seraphs) are understood to be a high-ranking order of angels.

1THES 4:16 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.* NET

There are thousands upon thousands of angels

REV 5:11 [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels in a circle around the throne, as well as the living creatures and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand – thousands times thousands – ...* NET

Angels reside in heaven

MATT 24:36 *But as for that day and hour no one knows it – not even the angels in heaven – except the Father alone.* NET

Angels are not to be worshiped

REV 19:9–10 *Then the angel said to me, “Write the following: Blessed are those who are invited to the banquet at the wedding celebration of the Lamb!” He also said to me, “These are the true words of God.”*
¹⁰*So I threw myself down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “Do*

not do this! I am only a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony about Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” NET

Why are angels so important?

What is something in these studies on angels that you either: did not know before; gained greater insight into; or needed reminding of?

How does the teaching about angels in this and the previous sections encourage you?

Pray for persecuted Christians

II. Satan and Demons

See also:

- *II. Spiritual Warfare, Ch. 37*

Many people find the existence of Satan (i.e. the devil) and demons disturbing and choose to avoid the subject. But to live the Christian life it is vital to understand our chief opponents. Moreover, the Bible has a lot to say about Satan and demons – much of which is in fact encouraging to believers.

a) Satan's Evilness

See also:

- c) *Satan's Work against God's People*, p. 20

Satan is evil and is opposed to God's kingdom

MATT 13:19 *When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one [Satan] comes and snatches what was sown in his heart; this is the seed sown along the path.* NET

Satan is opposed to Jesus Christ

LUKE 22:3–4 Then *Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples. ⁴So Judas went off and spoke with the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard about how he could betray Jesus to them.* GNT

2COR 4:4 In their case *the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* ESV

Satan is deceitful . . .

JOHN 8:44 [JESUS, TO THE JEWS:] You people are from your father the devil, and you want to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not uphold the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.*

NET

. . . Those who follow Satan likewise are deceitful

ACTS 13:9–10 But Saul (also known as Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, stared straight at him [the magician Elymas] ⁹and said, "*You who are full of all deceit and all wrongdoing, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness – will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?*" NET

Note: Possible reference to Satan's original state and his fall

EZEK 28:12, 15–17 Son of man, sing a lament for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: *"You were the sealer of perfection, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ... ¹⁵You were blameless in your behavior from the day you were created, until sin was discovered in you. ¹⁶In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned; so I defiled you and banished you from the mountain of God – the guardian cherub expelled you from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom on account of your splendor. I threw you down to the ground; I placed you before kings, that they might see you.* NET

This is either simply "a lament for the king of Tyre" (v. 12) containing highly figurative language, or additionally also descriptive of Satan.

Why do you think that Satan is opposed to God and Jesus Christ?

What is one strategy that Satan uses to deceive people?

How can we guard against being deceitful ourselves?

Pray for persecuted Christians

b) Satan's Power

Satan is very powerful

MATT 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this they said, "He does not cast out demons except by the power of *Beelzebul, the ruler of demons!*" NET

The name "Beelzebul" refers to Satan. The description of him as "the ruler of demons" points to his extraordinary power.

HEB 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he [Christ] likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy *the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil), ...* NET

This most likely refers to Satan's power to induce people to sin and so to render them subject to the penalty of death. As such he effectively wields the power of death, an aspect of his very formidable power. In its ultimate or eternal sense, however, this power has now been nullified by Jesus Christ's sacrifice and resurrection.

Satan has great power and authority in the world

LUKE 4:5–6 Then *the devil* led him [Jesus] up to a high place and showed him in a flash *all the kingdoms of the world*. ⁶*And he said to him, "To you I will grant this whole realm – and the glory that goes along with it, for it has been relinquished to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish.* NET

1JN 5:19 [JOHN:] We know that we are from God, and *the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* NET

Satan works in and through unbelievers

EPH 2:2 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS IN EPHESUS:] Yes, in the past you lived the way the world lives, following the ruler of the evil powers that are above the earth. *That same spirit* [Satan] *is now working in those who refuse to obey God.* NCV™

2TIM 2:25B–26 Perhaps God will grant them [false teachers] repentance and then knowledge of the truth ²⁶and they will come to their senses and escape *the devil's trap where they are held captive to do his will.* NET

Satan is not as powerful as God . . .

ROM 16:20A [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet.* NET

. . . and Satan is not as powerful as Jesus Christ

LUKE 11:14, 21–22 *Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the man who had been mute began to speak, and the crowds were amazed. . . .*²¹[JESUS:] *When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his possessions are safe. ²²But when a stronger man attacks and conquers him, he takes away the first man's armor on which the man relied and divides up his plunder.*

NET

In v. 22 Jesus is referring to his overpowering of Satan, stripping him of his power and taking what was his – a truth demonstrated by Jesus driving out demons (v. 14) and thus releasing people from Satan's grip.

Note: Satan stands condemned

JOHN 16:11B *... the ruler of this world has been condemned.* NET

How should John's statement that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1Jn 5:19; cf. John 16:11b above) influence our outlook?

Why reasons are there to be wary of but not frightened of Satan?

What can we do to help unbelievers, knowing that to some degree at least Satan works in and through them?

Pray for persecuted Christians

c) Satan's Work against God's People

Satan schemes and fights against God's people

EPH 6:11, 16 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to *stand against the schemes of the devil*. ... ¹⁶and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can *extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one*. NET

1PET 5:8 [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] Be sober and alert. *Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour*. NET

Satan tempts God's people . . .

1THES 3:5 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS IN THESSALONICA:] So when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith, for fear *that the tempter somehow tempted you* and our toil had proven useless. NET

. . . and Satan can lead them astray

2COR 11:3 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] But I am afraid that *just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ*. NET

Paul was concerned that just as Eve was deceived by Satan, the Corinthians may also be led astray by false teachers who were ultimately inspired by Satan.

Satan can afflict God's people

JOB 2:7 *So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and he afflicted Job with a malignant ulcer from the sole of his feet to the top of his head*. NET

REV 2:10 [JESUS CHRIST, TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA:] Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. *The devil is about to have some of you thrown into prison so you may be tested, and you will experience suffering for ten days. Remain faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown that is life itself*. NET

Satan can only tempt and afflict as God and Jesus Christ permit

1COR 10:13 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] No temptation has overtaken you that is unusual for human beings. But *God is faithful, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. Instead, along with the temptation he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to endure it.* ISV

2COR 12:7–9 [PAUL:] So that I would not become too proud of the wonderful things that were shown to me, *a painful physical problem was given to me. This problem was a messenger from Satan, sent to beat me and keep me from being too proud.* ⁸*I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me.* ⁹*But he said to me, “My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you.”* So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me. NCV™

Paul’s affliction apparently came from Satan. But Paul implies that Jesus Christ permitted it, using it to both keep Paul from becoming conceited (v. 7) and make Paul receptive to Christ’s power working in him. As such, this passage illustrates that God and Jesus Christ may permit Satan to afflict their people, but only in accordance with their purposes.

Satan accuses God’s people before God

JOB 1:8–11 So the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a pure and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil.” ⁹*Then Satan answered the LORD, “Is it for nothing that Job fears God?”* ¹⁰*Have you not made a hedge around him and his household and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock have increased in the land.* ¹¹*But extend your hand and strike everything he has, and he will no doubt curse you to your face!”* NET

The Greek word from which “Devil” comes, means “an accuser, a slanderer”. In being used of Satan it points to him carrying out such activity, notably accusing and slandering believers before God (as is the case in this passage). To what extent Satan is still able to accuse believers before God, if at all, depends partly on the meaning of Revelation 12:7–12.

What role do you think Satan plays in temptation – as opposed to sinful human nature?

What role do you think Satan plays in bad things that happen to Christians – as opposed to God's providence and "chance"?

What can we do to counteract Satan's work against us?

Pray for persecuted Christians

d) Demons

Evil spiritual forces are referred to by a number of names, including “demons”, “evil spirits”, “spirits” and (evil) “angels”. In order to be concise, only “Demons” has been used in this and the following subheadings.

Demons are evil and powerful spiritual beings

EPH 6:12 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *FOR our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.* NET

The terms “rulers” and “powers” are indicative of the great – but limited – power of demons. The last two clauses appear to together refer to the whole of the spiritual realm.

Demons are aligned with Satan

REV 12:7–9 Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and *the dragon and his angels fought back.* ⁸But the dragon was not strong enough to prevail, so there was no longer any place left in heaven for him and his angels. ⁹*So that huge dragon – the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world – was thrown down to the earth, and his angels along with him.* NET

This illustrates that evil angels or demons are aligned with Satan.

Demons are deceitful, propagating what is false

1TIM 4:1–2 Now the Holy Spirit clearly says that in the later times some people will stop believing the faith. *They will follow spirits that lie and teachings of demons.* ²*Such teachings come from the false words of liars whose consciences are destroyed as if by a hot iron.* NCV™

Note that this refers to the teachings of demons as being spread by false teachers.

Demons can possess people . . .

MATT 8:28 When he [Jesus] came to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes, *two demon-possessed men* coming from the tombs met him. They were extremely violent, so that no one was able to pass by that way. NET

ACTS 19:13 But some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over *those who were possessed by evil spirits*, saying, “I sternly warn you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” NET

. . . Demons can cause people they possess much harm

MATT 15:22 A Canaanite woman from that area came to Jesus and cried out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! *My daughter has a demon, and she is suffering very much.*” NCV™

LUKE 9:39 [A FATHER OF A DEMON-POSSESSED BOY:] *A spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions and causes him to foam at the mouth. It hardly ever leaves him alone, torturing him severely.* NET

Demons both fear and have to submit to God and Jesus Christ

JAMES 2:19 *You believe that God is one; well and good. Even the demons believe that – and tremble with fear.* NET

MARK 1:25–27 But Jesus rebuked him [a demon-possessed man]: “*Silence! Come out of him!*”²⁶After throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.²⁷They were all amazed so that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! *He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him.*” NET

Demons face eternal punishment

MATT 25:41 Then he [Jesus Christ] will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into *the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!*’ NET

Have you or someone you know of had an experience that you think involved demons?

How does a person come to be possessed by a demon?

What can be done for a person who is demon-possessed?

Pray for persecuted Christians

Topics in This Series

Section I. What to Know

Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

- 1. God's Being**
 - I. Basics
 - II. God's Pre-Eminence
- 2. God's Character**
 - I. Holy Characteristics
 - II. Loving Characteristics
- 3. Jesus Christ**
 - I. General
 - II. Jesus Christ and God
- 4. The Holy Spirit**
 - I. General
 - II. God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit
- 5. Angels, Satan and Demons**
 - I. Angels
 - II. Satan and Demons

Part B. God and the World: Basics

- 6. God's Creation**
 - I. General
 - II. God's Creation of People
- 7. God's Sovereignty**
 - I. God's Supreme Authority
 - II. God's Control over the World
- 8. God's Word**
 - I. General
 - II. Key Old Testament Covenants
- 9. The Problem of Sin**
 - I. General
 - II. The Law's Provision for Israel's Sin
- 10. God's Judgment**
 - I. Basics
 - II. The Manifestation of God's Judgment

Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

- 11. God's Promised Messiah**
 - I. The Messiah's Identity
 - II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person
- 12. Jesus Christ's Mission**
 - I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ
 - II. Ministry, Death and Resurrection
- 13. Salvation through Jesus Christ**
 - I. Salvation from Sin
 - II. Salvation for the World
- 14. The New Order**
 - I. Jesus Christ and the Law's Diminished Role
 - II. Key Elements of the New Order
- 15. 'The Last Things'**
 - I. Jesus Christ's Return and the Judgment
 - II. The Afterlife

Part D. God and His Own People

- 16. The Standing of God's People**
 - I. Basics
 - II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ
- 17. Keys to God's Interaction**
 - I. Basics
 - II. God's Holy Spirit in His People
- 18. God's Transformation of His People**
 - I. General
 - II. Spiritual Attributes
- 19. God's Care of His People**
 - I. God's Saving of His People
 - II. God's Preservation of His People
- 20. God's Plans for His People**
 - I. General
 - II. God's Plans for Israel

Section II. What to Do

Part E. Relating to God

21. **Being Right with God**
 - I. Getting Right with God
 - II. Staying Right with God
22. **Having Faith in God**
 - I. Faith and Hope
 - II. What Not to Do
23. **Loving, Fearing and Obeying God**
 - I. Loving and Fearing God
 - II. Obeying God
24. **Connecting with God**
 - I. Being Close to God
 - II. Praying to God
25. **Exalting God**
 - I. Instructions
 - II. Reasons to Exalt God

Part F. Church Life

26. **Being One Body**
 - I. General
 - II. Caring for the Body
27. **Worshipping God**
 - I. General
 - II. Offerings
28. **Serving God**
 - I. Preliminary Instructions and Insights
 - II. Doing God's Work
29. **Significant Practices**
 - I. Symbolic Rites
 - II. Other Significant Practices
30. **Church Leadership**
 - I. General
 - II. Teaching in the Church

Part G. Relating to People

31. **Love**
 - I. Loving Qualities
 - II. Antitheses of Love
32. **Justice**
 - I. Justice in Action
 - II. Being True
33. **Wisdom**
 - I. Being Wise
 - II. Antitheses of Wisdom and Knowledge
34. **Common Relationships**
 - I. Family Relationships
 - II. Civil Relationships
35. **Spreading the Gospel**
 - I. Instructions
 - II. Insights

Part H. Persevering

36. **Standing Firm**
 - I. General
 - II. Spiritual Warfare
37. **Rejecting Sin**
 - I. Encountering Sin
 - II. Avoiding Sin and Being Holy
38. **Major Pitfalls**
 - I. Pride
 - II. Riches and Sex
39. **Hard Times**
 - I. General
 - II. Praying in Hard Times
40. **Persecution**
 - I. The Persecution of God's People
 - II. What to Do in Persecution

The Seven Editions

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next one. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text and questions added. For more details and free downloads, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.



Two-Minute Edition – *Key Bible teachings for everyone.* For giving to non-Christians.



Pocket Edition – *Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth.* Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.



Concise Edition – *Key Bible teachings for new believers.* For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.



Foundations Edition – *The Bible's teaching condensed for young believers.* For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.



Intermediate Edition – *The Bible's teaching summarized for growing believers.* For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.



Comprehensive Edition – *The Bible's teaching compiled for established believers.* For a more comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.



In-Depth Edition – *The Bible's teaching expounded for Bible students.*

For pastors, church leaders, Bible students and all who want a deep understanding of the faith. Available in a single pdf file with some 100,000 hyperlinks.

Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support based on locally identified needs.

Christian Solidarity International – csi-usa.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Open Doors – www.opendoors.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com

This site provides weekly prayer bulletins.

The Bible League – bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com

VOM helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

World Watch Monitor – www.worldwatchmonitor.org

It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

This series of studies is based on the
Comprehensive Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked.*
These aim to address the needs of
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

For more information and free downloads go to:
www.thebibleunpacked.net