A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 9: Satan's Direct Assault on Jesus Christ, Part 2

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I. REVIEW

A. Last week, we asked the question, "What are demons?"

B. There were many questions after that lesson, and I received several more between then and now. The topic obviously struck a chord.

C. I stated my view that demons are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim. One question I received this past week was, "Does that mean that demons that are active in the world today are the spiritual element of the Old Testament giants?"

1. My answer would be, "Yes."
2. My answer is based upon the weight of the Biblical evidence as well as the extra-biblical texts, such as the Book of Enoch, which, in fact, state that very clearly.
3. As we know, demonic activity is alive and well in our modern times - - so in one way of thinking, the Nephilim element continues to manifest even in our times.

What is the difference between "demonic possession" and "demonic oppression?"

- Although previously addressed last week, perhaps the issue needs more emphasis and clarity.
- Demonic possession is when a demon(s) physically enters a person, and takes control of their faculties: mentally, physically, emotionally, and so on. They occupy that person and they take charge.
    - There are many examples of this in the Gospel accounts. Jesus cast demons out of many people – and as we learned last week, it was a sign that the kingdom of God had come.
- Demonic oppression is when demons do not enter or occupy a person, but they harass, torment, and in various ways make a person's life difficult or oppressive.
    - From my experiences overseas, I have generally seen that demonic oppression is a phenomenon that occurs when a powerful ministry is taking root in an area that was previously under Satan's control.
    - I know several missionaries that faced demonic oppression on a regular basis when they had helped to start churches in formerly heathen villages and that sort of thing.
    - As I shared last week, I do not believe a true Christian can be 'possessed' by a demon, but they can be 'oppressed.' There is a big difference.

Can demons read our minds?

- I'm not an authority on this matter, but I am strongly persuaded that they cannot.
- For that matter, I do not believe Satan can read our minds either. It is only God Himself who is all-knowing and omniscient. And since Satan is the 'overlord' of the dark side, then his minions cannot have powers he does not have.

- There is, as a case in point, the example of Job.
  - In the discussions between God and Satan in the beginning parts of the Book of Job, the point is made clear that Satan cannot read the minds of humans.
  - If Satan had known the mind and thoughts of Job, he'd have known that Job would never curse God as Satan stated he would do.
- **However,** Satan and his fallen angels and demons watch us very closely, and they know us very well. They have learned our patterns and they know how to read our inclinations.
  - I would suggest to you that demons know you and how you tick FAR better than you imagine they do.
  - It doesn't take much for them to perceive what is going through your mind given that you have established certain rituals and habits and subtle nuances of behavior that reveal your thoughts.
  - Most of us that have been married for a good deal of time can read our spouses pretty well even when our partners may think they are hiding their thoughts or emotions pretty good. Demons, I believe, can do this much more efficiently.

IS HIGH-TECH AN OPEN INVITATION TO DEMONS TO MANIFEST THEMSELVES?

- High-tech is a relative term. The first electronic arcade machines like Centipede or Asteroids were high tech when compared to pinball.
- Our smart phones are very high tech when compared to the bricks folks carried around in the early 90's.
- I understand the question to be more about Artificial Intelligence (AKA AI), advanced robotics, and other types of similar technology.
- I don't know if you read recently about Blake Demoine, the engineer that Google terminated. Blake had declared one of Google's AI platforms to be sentient – that is, he felt it was able to perceive things, feel things, and self-express.
- This revelation was apparently a violation of his confidentiality agreements with the Company, and that was stated to be the reason he was let go.
- However, there are many stories out there of technologies like Alexa suddenly laughing hideously in the middle of the night, suggesting people kill themselves, and so on.
- I personally believe the more we develop technologies that are 'smarter,' more human-like, more 'intelligent,' and so on, the more we roll out the red carpet for demons to control these technologies and manifest their intentions through them.
- This would be a situation much like Skynet that became self-aware in the Terminator movie series (Which, by the way, reveal about where things are headed in our world today).
- Many scholars have – in fact – suggested that the 'image of the beast' which is set up in the temple at the midpoint of the Tribulation is some sort of advanced AI or high-tech system which is demonically-controlled. We'll talk about that more in later lessons.

II. SATAN'S DIRECT ASSAULT ON JESUS CHRIST." Last week was Part 1.

A. Lets refresh ourselves with the prophetic process that is taking place here.
   1. First, Satan attacked the genome of the human race – that's the story of ***Genesis 6:1-4.***
   2. He was told he would be crushed by one that would come from the seed of the woman.
   3. So, his first attack was to corrupt the genetic structure of the human race so that could not happen.
   4. He did not succeed. God sent the Great Flood to preserve humanity and the promise of our salvation, and to destroy the Nephilim.

5. This is the only reasonable view if we properly approach the Scriptures – and if we take into account the way the Bible interprets itself.

B. Satan's next focus was the lineage of Abraham, or the Jews. Satan learned the Messiah would come through this portion of humanity.
    1. Satan lined up his Nephilim troops in the land of Canaan to try to prevent the promises of God from coming true.
    2. He attacked the Jews relentlessly, both during their entry into the Promised Land, and throughout all phases of the Jews' deportations, and so on.
    3. Think of the story of Haman in the book of Esther. There were multiple attempts to exterminate the Jews in the Bible and throughout history since.
    4. These efforts, as well as all anti-semitic passions, find their origin in a Satanic source. Satan wants to destroy the Jews, he wants the church to believe it has replaced Israel, and he wants the world to hate and scheme against the Jewish nation. Sadly, Satan is succeeding in many ways on all these fronts.

C. But now, we've reached a point where Jesus arrives on planet earth. This is His First Coming.
    1. He was born in a manger, and destined to be a suffering servant.
    2. He was despised and rejected and ultimately crucified for the sins of you and I.
    3. This was all ordained in advance. None of this was Plan B. There was no element of Jesus' First Coming that sidestepped what had been determined before the foundations of the world.
    4. But for our purposes today, the target, from Satan's viewpoint, had shrunk. From the human race > the Jewish nation > and now to Jesus Himself.
    5. Satan knew now WHO this one was that would ultimately crush him. Satan could put a face and a name to the one that was prophesied to come all the way back in ***Genesis 3:15.***
    6. Again, this is why it is so important to get the beginning right. Prophecy hinges on properly understanding the "start" if we are to properly understand the "end."
    7. And so what do we see to suggest Satan strategically tries to destroy Jesus Christ, to work against Him, or render Him in some way unfit to be God incarnate.
        a. First, when Jesus is born – Satan works through Herod to kill all the Jewish babies under a certain age. Joseph and Mary and little Jesus flee to Egypt.
        b. As we discussed last week, it is during the debut of Jesus' ministry on earth that massive demonic resistance and symptomatology was exposed.
        c. These were the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim who recognized Jesus for who He was, and they were alarmed. They knew the future assurance of their own demise ***(Cf. Mark 1:23-24):***

"And immediately there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"…"

d. The demons feared Jesus Christ, and they tried every way to work against Him during His ministry.
e. Satan also tempted Jesus in the wilderness. His efforts were designed to get Jesus to fail, to compromise, and to worship himself, the devil.
f. If he could get Jesus to fail just once, then Jesus would sin. He'd be imperfect, and He would not qualify as God Himself. Therefore, Satan could one-up Jesus, he could expose Jesus as a fraud, and prevent his own eventual destruction. But of course, that didn't happen!
g. Now we come to the cross, and it's here where the whole Nephilim element gets quite interesting.

D. There were two groups that attended the crucifixion of Jesus Christ –
1. The first group is the physical one (These are the ones that can be seen. They are part of THIS dimension). They include:
    a. The Roman soldiers who had crucified Jesus and were gambling for His clothes ***(Cf. John 19:23-24)***
    b. The women and the lone disciple, John ***(Cf. John 19:25-27)***
    c. There were the chief priests, scribes, and elders (***Cf. Matthew 27:41)***
    d. And lastly, there was a multitude of gawkers and mockers from around the region ***(Cf. Matthew 27:39-40).***

2. Then, there was the second group. This is the group that is not physical, they cannot be seen. But they are still very real!
    a. They were from a different dimension, a spiritual one. The Bible gives us some insights that point back to the seed war that was prophesied all the way back in ***Genesis 3:15.***
    b. We typically don't think much about this second group, but chances are they vastly outnumbered the first group that stood on the ground around the cross.
    c. It's reasonable to assume that Jesus perceived this second group and their reactions.
        - In this unseen group, there were legions of righteous angels who were ready to instantaneously intervene on this horrific scene if summoned ***(Cf. Matthew 26:53-54).***
        - There were also in this unseen group the fallen angels who were roaring and frothing in delight at the suffering of Jesus Christ.
        - I know some of you are already uncomfortable with me suggesting there were fallen angels high-fiving each other at Christ's pending death, but it's here we all have to take into account the full counsel of Scripture.
        - We don't want to fall victim to the mistake of many Christians and churches of camping on one or two texts to the exclusion of others that speak to the same topic.

E. To understand the connection between the cross and the ongoing Nephilim agenda, we need to go back to the Old Testament.
   1. The Old Testament has many prophetic references to Jesus' crucifixion and all of them were fulfilled exactly as their writers spelled them out. We looked in-depth at some of these things this past Easter Sunday during a special lesson for that time.
      a. For example, Jesus was betrayed by a close friend he'd shared bread with ***(Cf. Psalms 41:9)***
      b. He was handed over for 30 pieces of silver ***(Cf. Zechariah. 11:11-13)***
      c. He was spat upon, He was beaten, and He had the hairs of His beard pulled out ***(Cf. Isaiah 50:6)***
      d. He was silent in front of His unjust accusers ***(Cf. Isaiah 53:7)***
      e. His hands and feet were pierced ***(Cf. Psalms 22:16)***
      f. His garments were divided ***(Cf. Psalms 22:17)***
      g. None of His bones were broken ***(Cf. Psalms 34:20)***
      h. He was numbered with the transgressors ***(Cf. Isaiah 53:12)***
      i. He was buried in a rich man's tomb ***(Cf. Isaiah 53:9)***
      j. He died for our sins ***(Cf. Isaiah 53:4-6)***
      k. Before He died, Jesus even quoted David from ***Psalms 22:1***, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
      l. As ***John 19:36*** says, *"These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."*
      m. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was an extraordinarily cruel and dramatic event that fulfilled many specific Old Testament predictions about the circumstances concerning Jesus' death.

   2. This occasion was also one that exposed the fallen angels' agenda against Jesus Christ.
      a. In ***Psalms 22:12-13***, right in the thick of other very precise, very specific, prophecies concerning the crucifixion, David writes, *"Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. They open their jaws against me like lions that roar and maul…."*
      b. Insofar as events at the cross were concerned, David was describing a roiling and rabid crowd from another dimension. It was a scary scene.
      c. ***Psalms*** makes a definitive point here. I'm wagering Jesus was able to see this terrifying vision while He hung on the cross. Being both God and man, He could see into two worlds at the same time.
      d. He was able to see a raging horde of fallen angelic forces which were gathered around him even as ***Psalms 22:14*** says He was "….poured out like water"
      e. As Jesus was suffering and dying for the sins of the world, this unseen audience was celebrating His pending death.
      f. The Bible says they were "strong bulls" with roaring and gaping jaws, and they were from "Bashan."

F. Obviously, this raises a legitimate question, "What's the deal with Bashan? What's that all about? And why are these fallen angels, these unseen entities, linked to Bashan?"

1. Where was King Og from? He is the Nephilim giant that the Israelites had to face and conquer on their way to The Promised Land ***(Cf. Deuteronomy 3:11).***
    a. He was from Bashan.
    b. What region was specifically associated with the Rephaim, the descendants of the Nephilim going all the way back into antiquity? It was Bashan ***(Cf. Joshua 12:4-5).*** This passage even mentions Mount Hermon specifically.
    c. Where was Jesus when he mentioned the "gates of hell" to Peter ***(Matthew 16:13-18)?***
        - He was in Caesarea Philippi, in the area of Bashan, AND, at the foot of Mount Hermon!
        - It's no fluke that Bashan means "the place of the Serpent."

NOTE: Another meaning of this root word "Bashan" is "Serpent" (Lete, del O. G. (1999). Bashan. In K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, & P. W. van der Horst [Eds.], Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible *[2nd extensively rev. ed., p. 161]). Bashan has associations with the Rephaim, descendants of the Nephilim going way back in antiquity. Bible students should recall that Israel, under the leadership of Moses conquered this territory which belonged to Og king of Bashan.*

- When Jesus told Peter "….on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it," Jesus was standing at the foot of Mount Hermon, probably near the entrance to a deep cave that remains there to this day. I've been in that exact spot.
- Here – in this very place - the temple of Pan, a hybrid half-man and half-goat heathen god - was erected. Baal was also worshipped here.
- Bashan, and Mount Hermon, was a place that was a headquarters of evil and it had been that for a long time.

2. It helps to understand some of the patterns of Jesus' teaching.
    a. When Jesus talked about being "fishers of men" in ***Matthew 4:18-19,*** He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee.
    b. When He talked about a "kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies" in ***John 12:24***, the inspiration of lush fields surrounded Him.
    c. Also, when Jesus talked about a conflict with the "gates of hell," He was standing at the place where fallen angelic forces had begun a war against Him centuries before, a war that was first prophesied in ***Genesis 3:15,*** a war that was a genetic seed war, and a war which the Bible gives details of in ***Genesis 6:1-4.***

3. According to the apocryphal Book of Enoch which is quoted by Jude ***(Cf. Jude 1:6),*** which is referenced by Peter ***(Cf. 2 Peter 2:4),*** which was found alongside all the other Dead Sea Scrolls, and which was touted as historical and factual by the early church fathers - - Mount Hermon is a VERY significant location.

a. It is located in Bashan. It is stated to be where the fallen angels first descended to earth before they forcibly "married" human women and produced the hybrid Nephilim giants we read of in ***Genesis 6:1-4.***
b. Interestingly, Mount Hermon is part of the Golan Heights, and this area remains one of the most problematic pieces of real estate in the world today.
c. Mount Hermon's name is derived from the Hebrew word "herem," which means "a thing devoted to God for destruction."
d. By all accounts, it's likely where the fallen angels started their campaign to destroy the human genome.
e. "Herem" also recalls God's genocidal commands to Moses, Saul, and Joshua. There's too much happening here to chalk it all up to simple coincidence.

4. In the foreshadowing of the crucifixion in ***Psalms 22:12-13***, the Bible peels back another layer in the ongoing enmity between the "zera" of the serpent and the "zera" of the woman that was prophesied clear back in ***Genesis 3:15***.
    a. God had also predicted Satan would "bruise the heel" of the Messiah, and that happened at the crucifixion.
    b. The cross wasn't the end of Jesus Christ, but the strong bulls of Bashan – the fallen angels - roared with open jaws as Jesus was dying on it.
    c. They miscalculated the situation. They were flush with hatred for the Messiah, and I believe the Scriptures make the case that they were elated at their perceived victory.
5. This explains why Jesus, though dead in body before His resurrection, was meantime *"….made alive in the Spirit in which He also went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison"* ***(Cf. 1 Peter 3:18-20).***
    NOTE: It is terribly important to see the Biblical processes and narrative that is unfolding here.
        - It's like building a wall, brick by brick.
        - If you get the first layer down properly – the next layer above is secure, and so on.
        - The point is, as we properly interpret the start of all Biblical prophecy - - then all the related portions which follow become clear.
        - If we responsibly handle God's Word, the Bible explains itself. If we choose to err or misstep, then we fall into confusion and dissension.
    a. These pithy verses in ***1 Peter 3:18-20*** make three points very clear about WHO EXACTLY Jesus visited while He was dead but alive in spirit:
        - These were spirits that were evil and had been uniquely singled out for incarceration.
        - These were spirits that had committed a grievous sin <u>before the Great Flood</u>. This passage is tied to that timeframe.
        - Lastly, these were spirits who were visited by Jesus to receive an announcement from Him.

b. I find the online world of self-appointed Biblical "experts" has mostly missed the plain truth of ***1 Peter 3:18-20.***
c. Again, it is plain to understand if one has already accepted the literal interpretation about the Nephilim within the greater context of God's Word.
d. It's plain if one believes the Bible means what it says and says what it means.
e. It's plain if one does not attempt to spiritualize the text or tries in any way to conform the text to an alternate view that the rest of Scripture does not support.
f. All that said, it is clear these imprisoned spirits in ***1 Peter 3:18-20*** are the fallen angels mentioned in ***2 Peter 2:4*** and in ***Jude 1:6***. ***(READ BOTH).***

6. This is a BIG point to make: THEREFORE, these imprisoned entities that Jesus paid a special visit to are also <u>the very same fallen angels</u>, the very same b'nai Elohim – yes, <u>the very same "sons of God"</u> mentioned in ***Genesis 6:1-4.***
   a. The ones that started it all, the ones that engaged in sexual relations with human women, the ones that produced the Nephilim, the ones that 'abandoned their estate.' Yes, these are THOSE specific fallen angels.
   b. It all ties together if one accepts what the Scriptures forthrightly state at each point along the greater narrative.
   c. The proclamation Jesus made to these fallen "sons of God", who were locked and chained in the Abyss, was the news that He was victorious.
   d. If they'd been hoping for some sort of lucky break "up top," Jesus told them instead that He'd won the most recent clash, and they'd lost, again.
   e. The fallen angels who were not imprisoned, those "Bulls of Bashan" who were surrounding the cross with their foaming and gaping jaws, would get the same message about Jesus' victory another way.
      - They would get it in three days with His resurrection, but Jesus gave this "chain gang" below the facts face-to-face.
      - As it had been with all the other hostilities between the two sides, Satan and his fallen angels had made a tactical error.
      - This error was a big one! If they had really known what was going to happen, they would not have crucified Jesus ***(Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8).***

"None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

G. Between the first part of Genesis and the last part of Revelation, the enmity between the physical "seed" of the woman and the physical "seed" of the serpent threads its way through the Scriptures as God divinely-intended it to do.
   NOTE: It's a message He placed there which is consistent, matter-of-fact, and significant. It's one we see if we responsibly approach and interpret God's Word, and it's one God wants us to respect.

1. This partly explains why Jesus said there will be a return of "….the days of Noah" ***(Cf. Matthew 24:37, Luke 17:26)*** before His Second Coming.
    a. Jesus could have picked any point in history to liken the time before his Second Advent to, but He chose "the days of Noah." And He had specific reasons why.
    b. I've heard many arguments that this period before the Great Flood was a time of great sin and God basically decided He'd had enough of it. He judged mankind then and so He'll do it again.
    c. Well, that's true, but "it's not true enough." There was much more going on.

2. In ***Daniel chapter 8***, Gabriel is explaining Daniel's second vision to him, and he tells Daniel several times that it concerns the very end of time.
        a. In ***verse 23 of that chapter***, Gabriel adds this will be a time when "….rebels have become completely wicked."
        b. Other translations speak of this time as one in which "….transgressors are come to the full."
        c. In other words, sin on the earth will reach maximum expression just before the Lord's return.
        d. It's like a cup of water that is so full it cannot take another drop. If it could, it wouldn't really be full. That's the picture here.
        e. The cup of man's depravities at the very end of the age will be completely full. There will be no room to add more. It's language of "maximum expression."
        f. This sounds an awful lot like the conditions just before the Great Flood.
        g. ***Genesis 6:5*** says, *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* This again is language of "maximum expression."
        h. There was a time on earth before the Great Flood when humanity had become so completely wicked that the proverbial cup could not take another drop. Jesus said those conditions are going to return.
        i. Those pre-Flood conditions were precipitated by the blending of fallen angelic "zera" ("seed") with the "zera" ("seed") of mankind. By pointing back to the "days of Noah" Jesus implies that this is going to happen again.
        j. ***Daniel 2:43*** also says as much. It is here that Daniel is explaining Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great statue to the king.
        k. Daniel says of the very end of the age, *"….they will mingle themselves with the seed of men."*
            - The text positions "they" and "men" as two different sources.
            - It's not hard to figure out who the "they" are here if one has already accepted the balance of the Scripture on these matters at face value.
            - It's not hard to see what's coming down the pipeline if one humbly accepts the implications of a return of the days of Noah.

- It's not hard to imagine Satan and his fallen angels are going to keep trying to gain the upper hand in this ongoing hostility between the physical "seeds" that has been manifesting since ancient times.
- It's not out of line to think Satan will try again and again to thwart his own defeat. It's not hard to imagine he will try over and over to prevent his own 'crushing.'

CONCLUSION: In our next lesson, we'll examine the ways in which "the days of Noah" might express once more. I'm inclined to think Satan will try some different tactics since his first frontal assault against Jesus Christ didn't go quite the way he'd planned.