

Behold Our God
The Devil's Downfall
July 24th, 2011

Text - Isaiah 14:12-15

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 14:12-15

In Genesis 1 God creates the heavens and the earth and *everything* in them. The final verse in chapter 1 says this...

- **Genesis 1:31 (ESV)**

³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good.*

But sometime between Genesis 1 and Genesis 3 something happens. In Genesis 3 we're introduced to a creature who is anything but "very good".

- **Genesis 3:1 (ESV)**

¹Now the serpent was more *crafty* than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made...

- o Hebrew word arum (aw-room) - crafty, subtle, or cunning
- o Used both positively and negatively in OT
- o Certainly used negatively in this case

Later, we learn that this evil creature is a fallen, sinful, angel named Satan (adversary) or the devil (accuser).

- **Revelation 12:7-9 (ESV)**

⁷Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, *that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world*— he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

We see relatively little of the devil in the OT, though he does pop up on occasion.

- We first meet him tempting Adam and Eve to sin in Genesis 3.
- Inciting King David to sin and by taking a census in 1 Chronicles 21:1
- Taking away Job's wealth, family, and health in Job 1 and 2

- Accusing Joshua the High Priest before the angel of the Lord in Zechariah 3:1.

But though we may not always see him in the OT, he doubtless lies behind much, much more.

- In Deuteronomy 32 Moses is recalling Israel's sin and makes this comment about their idolatry which was their most prevalent and primary sin.
 - **Deuteronomy 32:17 (ESV)**
¹⁷They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.
- This fact is then confirmed by the Apostle Paul in the NT.
 - **1 Corinthians 10:20 (ESV)**
²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.

We learn much more about the devil in the NT.

- We see him tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), influencing Peter, Judas, and Ananias to sin (Mt 16:23, Lk 22:3, Acts 5:3), hindering the mission of the church (1 Thes 2:18), disguising himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:4), prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8), stealing, killing, and destroying (John 10:10), lying, tempting, accusing, and condemning (Jn 8:44, Mark 1:13, Rev 12:10, 1 Tim 3:6), contending with the archangel Michael (Jude 9), plucking up the seeds of the Gospel before they can take root in people's hearts (Mark 4:15), blinding the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:4), working in their lives and encouraging them to follow their sinful natures (Eph 2:2), and capturing them to do his will (2 Tim 2:24), and wreaking havoc and destruction in the lives of many through his demonic hoard (the Gospels and Acts).
- We learn that though both death and the devil were decisively defeated by Jesus death and resurrection 2,000 years ago (Heb 2:14), God in His all wise and all good sovereignty, has granted him a great deal of power and influence for a time. In fact, the devil is referred to in the Gospel of John as the ruler

of this world (Jn 12:31) and in the book of Ephesians as the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2).

- Though the devil can do nothing without God's permission (Job 1 and 2), and will one day be completely and finally defeated by God and cast into the lake of fire for eternity (Rev 20:7-10), for now he is content to wage war against God, His people, and His plans, and to do as much damage as he possibly can (Rev 12:13-17).
- Therefore, one application of these truths about the devil is this. Whether we realize it or not, we are in a war, a spiritual battle against the devil and his demons.
 - **Ephesians 6:10-12 (ESV)**
¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- According to Jesus, there are only two sides in this battle, His and the devil's.
 - Those who choose to trust and follow Jesus make themselves enemies of the devil. Those who choose to reject Jesus and His commands make the devil their friend.
- Jesus teaches this in John 8 when He says to a group of Jews who believe that they are not slaves of sin and that God is automatically their Father because they are blood relatives of Abraham...
 - **John 8:34-44 (ESV)**
⁴² *... "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires...*

- Paul teaches the same thing in Ephesians 2
 - **Ephesians 2:1-2 (NIV)**

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world *and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air*, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
- Whether we realize it or not, all of us are on one side or the other in the spiritual battle, there is no in between. We're either for Jesus and against the devil , or we're against Jesus and for the devil. The only question is which side will we choose?

So we know that something happened between Genesis 1 and 3 and that the devil and his demons were cast out of heaven (Rev 12:7-9, Lk 10:18), but what was it? What was it that led to the devil's downfall?

Many would say it was pride, and you'll see why in just a minute. But I want to suggest to you today that along with pride, covetousness also played a crucial role. In fact, I would argue that even more so than pride, covetousness lay at the root of the devil's fall from grace.

The two primary passages that talk about why the devil fell are Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Before we read them, it's important to note that not all Christians believe these passages refer to the devil.

- The main reason they are disputed is their context.
 - Both come in the midst of a series of negative, woe, or judgment oracles against Israel's surrounding enemies.
 - Is 14 is a taunt against Babylon
 - Ez 28 is a lament over the King of Tyre
- Some would say that these passages cannot refer to the devil's downfall because that does not fit the context.
- Many however, including myself, would argue that each of these passages has a *dual meaning* for at least three reasons.
 - The superhuman language

- o The parallels to the devil's fall described in Rev 12 and Luke 10
- o And the good sense it seems to make

As we read these two passages together, look not only for the devil's pride but also for his underlying covetousness that I believe *must have* contributed to his downfall.

- **Isaiah 14:12-15 (ESV)**

¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! ("O Lucifer, son of the morning" in the KJV) How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³ You said in your heart, *'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'* ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

- **Ezekiel 28:11-17 (ESV)**

¹¹ Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me: ¹² "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God: *"You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. ¹⁴ You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶ In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.*

So as you can see, pride was unquestionably a factor in the devil's downfall.

- **Ezekiel 28:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground;...

- I believe that it was pride that led the devil to *actually believe* that he could make himself like the Most High.
 - o He thought *so highly of himself* because of the beauty and splendor God had given him, that against *all wisdom*, he actually thought he could elevate himself to the same plain as God. To make himself like Him.
 - o This was obviously not going happen, and God cast Him out.
 - No one can be like God
 - **Isaiah 46:9 (ESV)**
⁹...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,
 - God doesn't share His glory
 - **Isaiah 42:8 (ESV)**
⁸I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other,...

So I believe it was *pride* that led the devil to think he could *accomplish his ascent*, but I believe it was *covetousness* that led him to *want to ascend* in the first place.

- God creates everything a certain way for a certain purpose to bring glory to Himself.
 - o The human eye
- This is especially true of human and angelic beings.
 - o Nothing that God has created has more potential to glorify Him
 - We are the greatest of God's creation
 - We can think about what God has done for us, appreciate it, and express our appreciation (worship)
 - o *One of the greatest ways we can bring glory to God is to trust and be thankful for who He has made us to be*

and what He has called us to do. Nothing brings more glory to God than a person or an angel who is content.

- The seraphim (Isaiah 6)
- The Apostle Paul
 - **2 Corinthians 12:10 (ESV)**
¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- According to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, though God created the devil in a very special way for a very special purpose, and it wasn't enough for him. He wanted more.
 - o Full of wisdom
 - o Perfect in beauty
 - o Blameless in his ways
 - o Anointed guardian cherub

Note that this temptation to covet, to want more than what God has given us, is the same temptation the devil used on others throughout the Bible and the same temptation he often uses on us today.

- Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
 - o To covet the fruit of the one and only tree in the garden they were not allowed to eat from and the knowledge of good and evil that came with it. The devil tempted them to want to “be like God” just like him, and they bit.
- Job (Job 1 and 2)
 - o The devil assumed Job's contentment and upright life was based on the blessings God had given him, rather than on God himself.
 - o When, with God's permission, he took his health, wealth, and family away, he assumed that Job would covet them all back and curse God to His face. Thankfully he was wrong.
- Jesus (Matthew 4)
 - o After forty days of fasting in the wilderness the devil came to Jesus and tempted him to covet three things.
 - Food

- To reveal His true identity RIGHT NOW
 - To begin ruling over the kingdoms of the world RIGHT NOW
- o In all three cases, Jesus resisted the devil's temptation using God's Word, and remained content.
- Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
 - o To covet the security, and perhaps the glory, that comes from wealth rather than trusting God to provide for their needs.
 - o They gave in to the temptation and paid a heavy price.
- Paul (2 Corinthians 12)
 - o The devil, again with God's sovereign permission, put a thorn in Paul's flesh in hopes of harassing him to the degree that he would so covet freedom from pain that he would turn from God and stop bringing glory to Him.
 - o His plan backfired and had the exact opposite affect instead.
- Us
 - o I think it was Martin Luther who thought God made "Do not covet" the 10th and last because it summed up all the rest.

James 4:7 says if we resist the devil he will flee from us. We have to learn to resist the devil in the area of covetousness. To do so, we have to learn to trust God and His promises and to see the bigger picture.

- God - All sovereign, all powerful, all knowing, all good, and all for us
- Promises - Work all things for good, always give us the best, spare no pain
- Bigger Picture - God is about more than our temporal pleasures, our comfort, and our glory. He is about His glory, the advancement of His Kingdom, and our sanctification and joy

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

