

The Prince of Pride - Lesson 3 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

We're going to study a lesson tonight that is very important because it's dealing with a battle that everybody is facing, between good and evil. And we told you last night, one of the common questions that we get is 'If there's a God and if God is good, and God is all-powerful, then why is there so much suffering? If there's a devil then why doesn't God just destroy him?' If you understand this subject tonight, your whole world view is going to take on a sharper focus and things will start making more sense. This really made a big difference in my life.

The lesson tonight is called 'The Prince of Pride' and it begins dealing with a story about - and you find this in the second book of Samuel, chapter 18 where we would really take up. One of the sons of David, his name was Absalom, he was actually the third in line to be king. The Bible tells us that he was very bright and he was very beautiful - he was a handsome man from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, the Bible says, there was no blemish in him. He had long, thick, flowing hair - which can be dangerous - which is why I don't have any. No, the Bible actually goes at length to talk about his hair - it weighs his hair and everything and, personally, I think that hair got Sampson in trouble too, didn't it? I'm just playing it safe. There is actually a verse that says 'Go up thou bald head.' Did you know that? It's true.

But he was very good looking and he was very proud and he had some disagreements with his family - actually killed one of his brothers. He sort of deserved it. He had raped his sister - Amnon, his brother, raped Tamar, his beautiful sister. And he was irritated that his father hadn't done anything about it and - his father was David. And eventually Absalom decided he didn't want to wait for his father to die, he wanted to just take the throne. And so gradually he began to exalt himself before the people.

It says he got a chariot and he'd ride through the streets with fifty men running before him and they'd say, 'Here comes Prince Absalom!' They'd see him with his long, flowing hair and his beautiful gilded chariot. And when people came to King David for judgment, he would intercept them and he'd say, 'So what is it you need to talk to the king about?' 'Oh, that's - I'm with you. If I was king I'd take care of you.' And he did this and he'd hug them and he just won them over through subterfuge and gradually, the Bible says, he stole the hearts of the men of Israel and the conspiracy got worse and worse until it finally broke off into a battle where David actually had to get his - he had to flee Jerusalem and his forces engaged with the forces of Absalom.

And in this terrible battle, eventually Absalom fled through the woods and his soldiers - riding on his mule he went under the bough of a tree and his head got stuck in the bough of the tree. Well, you know, at that point he was pierced through - hanging between heaven and earth - the son of David. Now listen, the son of David hanging between Heaven and Earth in a tree, Joab came and pierced his heart and they stabbed him with three javelins and then David got the terrible news.

With Absalom's rebellion, in that picture, we find glimpses of the Gospel on both sides. First you hear about this beautiful creature that rebelled and we're going to be getting into this in our lesson tonight. And beginning with question #1 it says, 'What is the name of this rebellious prince in Heaven and why did he rebel?' Absalom is a type of a rebellion that took place in Heaven and you can read there in the Bible in Isaiah 14, verse 12, "How art thou fallen from heaven, o Lucifer, son of the morning!"

Now Lucifer is not a bad name. You've probably heard of something is 'luminescent' - luce - it means 'light.' You've probably heard of Lucite paint - and he was good when God made him. The highest of God's creatures was an angel by the name of Lucifer. He was good. He was perfect. Nothing wrong with him. We don't know how long he existed, but it was for a long time. And then something began to happen in his heart.

Now I don't know - I remember one time I was on the road doing meetings like this and - yes, I do, when Karen's not with me I do my laundry, iron my shirts, and I was in a laundromat waiting for my clothes to

dry, which is not very interesting, and there was a boy there - his mother was off folding clothes - and he was not far from me on the linoleum there playing with a toy or car or something like that. I just started chatting with him and finally I said, 'So what's your name?' And he didn't even look up. He said, 'Lucifer.' I didn't know quite what to say. I just thought to myself, 'I guess you don't go to church.' But, technically, it's not a bad name, but now it's associated with the prince of evil, that arch villain.

It goes on to tell us in Isaiah chapter 14, verses 13 and 14, why this all happened. It says, "For thou hast said in thine heart, ...i will be like the most high." Something happened in his heart where he wanted to have the position that belonged to God and so, gradually, he began to be dissatisfied with who he was and he started wanting God's place. He began to be jealous. He saw that Jesus had creative power. But, you know, Jesus said, 'Angels don't marry, neither are they given in marriage.' Angels do not procreate. Angels do not have creative power and Lucifer started wanting that power that God had. At first he didn't say anything about it, but then he began to do what Absalom did, he went and began to try to steal the hearts of the other angels.

You know, God's got ten thousand times ten thousand - there are billions of angels out there and we don't know exactly what he said but he was probably saying things like, you know, 'God has these laws that really restrict our freedom.' And 'if I was in charge I'd say that every angel should be able to decide for himself what to do - that we're intelligent creatures. We don't need God's law guiding us or governing us.' And little by little he began a campaign to try to develop doubt about God's goodness and God's power and God's love and it actually had an effect. It finally broke out into an open rebellion. One of the reasons that Lucifer had this problem with pride is because of what was going on in his heart and he was also very beautiful. You can read in Isaiah - I'm sorry, Ezekiel 28, verse 17 - it says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." He was the most beautiful. He was the most bright.

You know, Jesus said it's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven - and it can also be hard for a beautiful person because if a person has a lot of power or a lot of pride, they sometimes begin to believe and drink in all of the compliments and it starts to really distort who they are and what they're doing. And this is what was happening to Lucifer, all the other angels just adored him. He was one of the first of God's creations - powerful.

You know, we look at what happens in the world today and - keep in mind, I don't like to ever exalt the power of Lucifer, but also don't underestimate - he's a very powerful being. Now it doesn't mean that God couldn't destroy him if he wanted to, and I'll get to that in just a moment. Now beauty can be a blessing - beauty can be a curse. Most of us don't have to worry about that, right? Most of us sort of look normal and we do the best we can to fix up what we've got. The Bible says - it's wonderful if God's blessed a man where he's handsome or a woman where they're beautiful and they're also - they've got a good disposition - that's great.

I heard one pastor put it this way, he said there's four kinds of people. You've got some people who are what you would call beautiful/ugly and what that means is they've got a beautiful disposition but they may not be beautiful. They may just be kind of average looking on the outside but you like to be with them because they're - they've got a smile, they've got a great disposition - a good personality - and they're a beautiful person. Then you've got people who are ugly/beautiful - they're beautiful on the outside but they're so conceited and into themselves on the inside that nobody wants to be around them. And, you know, I've met some people like this - I knew one gal that she couldn't just walk by a store window without turning and looking at herself. She was pretty - whenever you saw her she was reading 'Glamour' magazine - and she was just so preoccupied with primping and checking her make-up and all that - whew - guys wanted to date her but not too many wanted to marry her.

I heard about a man that was sitting in church one day and this very striking woman walked in with her husband in the back and all the heads turned and one man elbowed his friend and said, 'His wife always

looks like a million dollars.' And his friend said, 'And it's costing him that every week to keep her looking that way.'

Alright, question #2: Did God make a devil when he created Lucifer?' Now this is the big thing that confuses people. They think, 'If God is good, why did He make a devil to tempt us?' God does not tempt any man with evil, neither can He be tempted. Every good and perfect gift comes from God. You can read the answer in Ezekiel 28, verse 15. It says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

You know, how do we tell - where did AIDS come from? Who was the first patient? Where'd they get it? Or Ebola. Or name your favorite virus. These things are a mystery and sin is a mystery. If sin could be explained it wouldn't be sin, but one of the greatest evidences of God's love and that He makes us free is that He doesn't force us to love Him, He actually gives us freedom. God made all of His intelligent creatures with freedom of will and that means that if we're going to love God, we need to be able to love Him freely.

It cannot be forced. Lucifer was made with that same freedom. That means God did not force him to say, 'I love you, God.' He was able to do what he wanted. Matter of fact, I'm going to ask my partner to bring out my cell phone here. I want to illustrate something to you real quick. Thank you very much. This is my smart phone. I know it's smarter than me. "Hi Doug, I'm your smart phone and I just want to tell you there's nobody who loves you more than I do. I just love you with all of my heart and my soul. I love you because you're kind. I love you because you're good looking, you're smart - even though sometimes you leave me in the car and I ring and ring and you don't pick me up, I still love you. It's an unconditional love. I love you, Doug. I love you, Doug. Doug, I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you, Doug."

Alright, now how many of you think that that really made me feel better? Does everyone here want love? I mean, does anyone not like to be liked? We all want love - God wants love. Do you believe that? We should make an app, right? We could make a lot of money together. We'll just make a new app that says, 'I love you. I love you. I love you.' Will it sell? Probably not. Why? Because it's not love. The only way real love can be given is if it's done freely by choice. Forced love is not love. Matter of fact, forced love is sometimes called rape. God does not force us to love Him. Even though He knows all things.

I know, somebody's probably thinking, 'Pastor Doug, does that mean that at the factory wherever God makes His angels that He made a mistake with Lucifer and there was some kind of defect - there was something - a virus - something wrong in the programming? God obviously made a mistake. Didn't God know what Lucifer would do? Doesn't God know all things? Why did He still make him even though He knew that he would someday become selfish and rebel?

The greatest evidence that you really are free and capable of loving is that God would even make a creature that doesn't love Him. How many of you are parents? Did any of you get a written guarantee before you had children that they would always be obedient and loving and thoughtful and kind and compliant? How many of you realized that there was a risk, when you had children, that you could have an ornery child? How many of you went in it totally blind and idealistic thinking that - how many of you are wondering 'Why did I have children?' Love takes risks, doesn't it? Love will even take a risk of being hurt. God so loved the world He sent His Son and did it hurt - hurt God? God even made an angel that He knew would rebel and that's just evidence of His love for us. So He made this perfect, beautiful angel.

Reading on, question #3. It says here, 'What eventually happened?' And you find the answer in Revelation 12 and verse 7. It says, "There was war in Heaven." Now, it's hard for us to comprehend what a war in Heaven would look like, but it did actually happen. There was some kind of rebellion. We don't know what kind of weapons they may have used. I know it probably didn't look like Star Wars swords or something, but these angels had a war. One-third of the angels decided to follow Lucifer. Two-thirds remained loyal to God. It's amazing - it's almost mind boggling that his campaign was so successful, so

don't underestimate the enemy, but neither should you underestimate God. But the Lord needed to allow Lucifer to reveal what he was like.

So there was a war in Heaven and it says, 'Michael and His angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels.' Now the dragon is one of the signs - one of the names - that's used for Lucifer. It's interesting, as you travel around the world there's these pictures of dragons all over the world and some of them are even, I think, based upon the fossil record where they find these pterosaurs and pterodactyls - these great flying reptiles. I did an amazing fact one time - there's one of them that had a wingspan almost as big as a Cessna airplane. These just enormous flying reptiles. And so the devil is compared to a dragon, he's compared to a serpent in the Bible - we'll say more about that in a minute. So there's this big battle and, ultimately, Lucifer was cast out of Heaven.

You can read about this - now, we go to question #4: 'What powerful beings work under the devil's command?' Lucifer is not alone. You can read about it in Revelation 12. A lot of what we're going to find out about Lucifer is found in Revelation chapter 12. Revelation 12:4, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the earth." Revelation 12, verse 9 - it says, "He was cast out into the earth, and his angels" - not Jesus' angels - Lucifer's angels - the dragon's angels - "were cast out with him." You know all through the ministry of Jesus you hear Him talking about demons, evil spirits. People talk about ghosts, things of that nature. I don't believe in ghosts as disembodied spirits that go around haunting people, but there are fallen angels that will impersonate the dead. Yes, there are good angels. I believe in that.

I believe they're in this place tonight because we have guardian angels. The devil would probably like to have his in this place too and I hope you're praying that they'll be evicted right now and that this meeting could belong to God. But one-third of the angels were cast out and it's their studied purpose to hurt God - to hurt Jesus. There's this campaign going on. You see, the Lord, if He wanted to, He could have snapped His fingers and destroyed Lucifer. But what would have happened? If, as soon as this war happened - I mean, you picture angels wrestling like sumo wrestlers or something, trying to throw one of them out of Heaven like they throw each other out of the circle and finally they - didn't God have enough power to just say, 'Out of here!' And they're gone? Of course He did. He made them. He's the creator they're the creation. But he allowed the natural order of things to play out. His angels - His good angels were involved in the battle.

They needed to be part of the choice to evict Satan. Lucifer is now called 'Satan' which means adversary or devil. If you take 'd' off devil, what do you have? Evil. He is consummate evil. The devil is like a - is sort of like a black star - what do you call that? A black hole.

I understand that a black hole is a result of a sun - when it burns out it implodes and the matter of a black hole could be so dense that an object the size of our sun - all the matter in our sun - would be condensed into a space sixty miles across. Do you know what escape velocity is? In order for you to throw a baseball out of the gravitational pull of the earth, that would be the escape velocity. Very - it takes a lot of power to do that. We had a rocket blow up last week, you remember? Because it didn't make it through escape velocity. The escape velocity of a black star or of a black hole is so powerful that light, that travels 186,000 miles a second, cannot escape.

Can you imagine that? The devil is - he's just a black hole. He completely lives for self. His whole existence is not about giving, it's about taking. God is what? God is love. What is the opposite of that? That's what the devil would be. God is all about giving. God so loved, He gave. Right? The devil is all about 'I want attention. I want worship. I want pride. It's all about me.' Everything he does is pointing inward and whoever we follow falls into one of those two categories, so why didn't God just snap his fingers and destroy Lucifer? Because - let's suppose he had done that and Lucifer was saying - you've seen some of the political ads out this week? Just before the election they get really nasty, don't they? It's not about what we're going to do, it's about how bad the other person is.

What if, all of a sudden, God had snapped His fingers and Lucifer was talking to the other angels and said, 'You know, you should trust me instead of God. God's really not good.' Poof! Lightning comes down, Lucifer is vaporized and - smoldering, scorched floor. The other angels would have gone, 'Ooh, maybe we better listen to God, but not out of love anymore. Look what happened to Lucifer.' And instead of the motive of His creatures serving Him because of love, now the motive is serving Him because they're afraid of Him - which is different from a Godly fear. So God had to allow Lucifer to carry out his rebellion and show what it was going to be like. So, that's what's happening. He was cast down to this earth. There was a new creation.

Lucifer was allowed, for awhile, to go through the unfallen worlds. He campaigned and said, 'Trust me.' And no one would listen to Lucifer until he came to this new world and God said, 'Look, you can't bother these creatures except at this one tree. And there, Adam and Eve, they went to that one forbidden tree and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. She gave it to Adam. What was the fruit? Apple - everyone says an apple. It doesn't say in the Bible it was an apple. Have you ever seen Eve picking a pear or a pineapple or a banana? Did you ever see - and what do they call this? Adam's apple. Because, you know, he took that bite and it got stuck in his throat, right? So you've got Adam's apple. I guess, I don't know. But there's all these myths connected with it.

But what did happen is God said, 'Do not eat from that forbidden tree or you'll die.' The devil said, 'You won't really die.' And when Adam and Eve chose to listen to the devil instead of God, they surrendered the dominion of this world to the enemy and so he then set up his headquarters down here on this planet to continue his rebellion against God. This world has become a beachhead for the devil to fight against God. Praise the Lord, my slides just came back up again. Thank you for praying. And so even Jesus referred to the devil as 'The prince of this world comes.' He called him the prince of this world.

So what methods does Satan use - this is question #5 in your lesson. 'What methods does the devil use in continuing his work of rebellion against God?' And the answer is found in Revelation 12, verse 9. He's referred to as "Satan, which deceiveth" - some of the world? Most of the world is deceived by the devil. There's very few in the world that understand this great battle that's going on between good and evil. People are blaming God for all the suffering in the world, but the devil - Jesus said the devil is the one who causes these things. You know what makes the devil especially dangerous? The devil can commingle truth with error. God can only use truth. Deception is mixing them together.

Now we're going to kind of go through a little alphabet list of what some of the devil's tactics are so you can understand that. Mark 1:13 - another part of the answer - it says that Jesus "Was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan." So what does the devil do? He tempts people. Tempts them to do what? To disobey God. To do things that are wrong. You know, God, through His spirit, is trying to guide us in lives of holiness because that's where happiness comes from. God wants you to have an abundant life.

Sin does not bring happiness. The devil will advertise alcohol as just something as a wonderful party. I mean, just look at all the beer commercials - and I drank more than my share before I was a Christian. The devil, the advertising agencies never show the person that's hungover, they're hugging the porcelain pony or in the gutter or beating their wife. They don't advertise that way.

But you look at what the sin really does to our world and he's a very clever marketing wizard. When he came to Jesus - Jesus faced all the main temptations that humanity will face - when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. John tells us in 1 John chapter 2 - it's really summed up in three categories - all sin: lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Any temptation that you might face will typically fall into one of those three categories. Jesus overcame all three and He gave us an example how we can overcome.

You can do all things through Christ, friends, amen? Matthew chapter - and I'll share more later this

week when I share my testimony, but I mean, I was really trapped by the devil and the Lord just worked so many miracles in my life. I believe He can do it for you too. Look at what He did with Jesus - Matthew chapter 4, verse 8, "Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory." He didn't show Him the slums, he showed Him the glorious parts of the kingdom. This is a picture of Dubai - I've been there - where they've got this tower - it's nearly a mile tall - the Burj Khalifa - and I went about - you can only go about three quarters of the way up there - beautiful city. If you want to know where all your oil money has gone, go visit Dubai.

It's fascinating. They took me to a hotel that had golden toilet seats. One of the church members - he worked there - he said, 'Pastor Doug, I want to show you something.' I couldn't believe that place. And the devil showed Jesus all the beautiful side of the world. He didn't show Him all the starvation and war and suffering. He said, 'Jesus, You've come to this world to die - to save these people - You don't have to die. I'm the prince of the world. Fall down and worship me. I'll give it to you.' Clever, insidious - Jesus said, 'Get behind Me Satan. Thou shalt worship the Lord only.' Every temptation He met with the Word of God, right?

How important is it for us to know our Bibles? Answer C: it says, "For they are the Spirits" - and this is Revelation 16:14 - "For they are the spirits of devils," - doing what? - "Working miracles." So can the devil work miracles that really look real? How many of you remember the story that when Moses came to get the people out of Egypt and God told him, 'Take your staff and throw it down before pharaoh and I'll reveal my power.' And Moses did that and he threw down his staff and it turned into a serpent. And so the pharaoh clapped his hands and out came his magicians and they threw down their staffs and what happened? They turned into serpents. But you know the rest of the story: Moses' serpents gobbled up their serpents and then turned back into a staff. So the devil can counterfeit certain miracles and that's important to know because you know what it says the beast power is going to do, in Revelation 13? He'll deceive the world by miracles, even going as far as bringing fire down from Heaven. Typically it's God that did that - when fire came down on the altar when Elijah prayed and fire came down.

But the devil's going to counterfeit the miracles of God. So when you see some of these bamboozling preachers that are begging for money and they supposedly have miracles, not all of them are real. I believe in miracles, you know that, because they're in the Bible. But don't be fooled just by miracles because the devil's agents can do that too. We could say more about that.

Revelation chapter 13:13 - I just really quoted this to you. It says, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from Heaven on the earth in the sight of men." And the devil holds people captive. He enslaves people. He enslaved the whole nation of Israel. He didn't want to let them go. The pharaoh said, 'I don't know who the Lord is and I'm not going to let Israel go.' And that's like the devil - he says we're his slaves and he doesn't want to let us go.

You know, every one of us is born a sinaholic. What I mean by that is, we were designed by God with a part of our natures, our lives, our minds, to be addicted and in love with God. If you are not in love with God and God is not the center of your life, then you only need to ask the question, 'What is your other addiction?' Because it's something else. If you are not worshiping God as the supreme center of your life - I mean, when you think about it, if He made us - if we're going to live with Him eternally, what would be more important than God? I can't believe it.

I talk to some of my neighbors sometimes and when I bring up God they say, 'Doug, let's be friends but let's not talk religion.' I think, 'How can we be friends and not talk about the most important thing in life? We may be acquaintances but we're not friends, because what is more important than God?' Why are people afraid to talk about God? If God is real, what in the world would be more important than that? The Maker of all things, the One who keeps you alive, the One who gives you eternity. Let's not talk about God. But if you're not worshiping God - if He's not the center of your life, you just need to ask 'What is your addiction?' The devil's got people enslaved everywhere. Is it - could be food, could be

drugs. Some people are addicted to their work. They're workaholics. We kind of praise them. Some people get in these addictive relationships - it's sex for other people. Some are addicted to shopping. I know people that buy things - they don't even open them and they go buy something else. It's true. I know this one person that had a garage full of things they bought online. They were in debt and they hadn't even opened them. It's an addiction and all of us struggle with our addictions.

So some of you might say, 'I don't have any drug problems. I've got my life together.' If you don't have God you have an addiction. Yeah, I don't know what it is - you might be hiding it - but there's something. And the devil is holding you captive and only Jesus can set you free. And a lot of people, they've got socially acceptable addictions. But the only way to really be free - Jesus said, 'If the Son'll make you free then you'll be free indeed.'

Answer D - and this is Revelation 2, verse 10 - the devil is called "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." The devil is constantly accusing those who follow God. Have you read the book of Job? Book of Job begins by the devil coming before the Lord and he's accusing Job. And he said, 'Oh, the only reason Job serves You is because You hedged him in. You protect him with Your angels.' You know, God protects us. The devil said, 'Take away his angels, he'll curse you.' And whenever - the devil will tell you to do something wrong and then he'll turn you in for doing it. He's pretty bad. The Bible says, in John 8:44, furthermore it says, "He was a murderer from the beginning..." - He would have pulled God from His throne if he could have. He's the one who inspired Cain to kill his brother Abel. Not only is he a murderer, "he is a liar and the father of it."

Now the reason this lesson is so important, friends, is because there is no Switzerland in this war between good and evil. There's no neutral country. You cannot say, 'Well, Doug, this is interesting. You know, I'm not really ready to give my life to God and I don't want to serve the devil, I'm just going to be neutral.' If you believe what Jesus said - Jesus said, 'If you are not with Me you are against Me.' To vote not to be with Jesus is to vote to be with the devil. And that doesn't mean - some people think, 'Well, I'm not demon possessed.' If the Lord's got your mind and you're living for yourself, selfishness is a type of possession.

Question #6: 'When is the devil most dangerous?' The answer is in 2 Corinthians, verses 14 and 15. It says, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." The devil wants to come and look like a messenger. You remember when Jesus was in the wilderness tempted by the devil and He's hungry? He'd fasted forty days. Do you think when the devil first appeared to Jesus he plopped down on the ground? How do most people - oh, I'm going to test you right now.

Close your eyes - I'm not going to hypnotize you, just close your eyes. Picture what you think the devil looks like. Alright, how many of you saw red leotards? Come on, 'fess up. How many of you saw a goatee? Anyone see horns? Even some of the pictures we put up - you know - these are just artists' conceptions. Black cape anybody? Was he - did he have, like a pitchfork? A trident? He, I guess, uses that to make sure sinners are evenly cooked in Hell or something or like a barbeque? I don't know what that's for.

Most of people's concepts of the devil, they come from mythology and we all see these pictures of the red devil - it doesn't say he's red. He wants to look like a hideous monster. But when he came to Jesus there to tempt him, do you think he plopped down on the ground and he had his pointy tail and his goat feet and his horns and his beard? I used to have a goatee and then someone came up to me afterward and said, 'You know, that kind of makes you look like the devil?' A sinister minister, someone said. I said, 'Oh, that won't work.' And I shaved it off. So when the devil appeared to Jesus, he obviously looked like an angel of light. 'I've come from the Father and if you're the Son, turn these stones into bread.' He appears as an angel of light. The devil is the most effective in fighting against Christianity by going into the church. He has his Judases just like Jesus did - that are on the inside. They're hypocrites. All of us play the part of the hypocrite sometimes. Do not be surprised by that. And the devil will often do something

and he'll point everywhere else and blame everyone else and he is the author of it.

You know, an amazing fact: the most destructive and deadly arsonist in history was a man by the name of John Orr. He's been convicted. The FBI figures he was responsible for as many as 2,000 fires. Between '84 and '91 - out setting fires everywhere. Many people died. The incredible thing was he was a fireman. He was in charge of fire investigation and arson investigation and here he is helping everybody solve arsons and he's out starting the fires. And that's what the devil will do.

He's often right in the middle causing all the problems and pointing everywhere else. He uses diversionary tactics and he's the author of so much of that confusion. That's what Judas said when Mary was anointing his feet. Judas said, 'Oh, if that money had been given to the poor. We could have done so much more with that money that Mary wasted on ointment for Jesus' feet.' And Judas was stealing the money and he's the treasurer. You've heard that happen before, right? So the devil - Jesus said in Matthew 7:15 - is often a wolf in sheep's clothing.

And so, friends, don't ever say, 'I'd be interested in Jesus and Christianity, but I met these Christians and they were such hypocrites.' That is exactly what the devil wants you to say. That's his plan #1 is offend them by somebody who is a bad representative. Have something happen in the church that hurts their feelings and say, 'I'm never going back to church. And God, it's your fault. I'm going to go to hell and it's all your fault because there were mean people in the church.' That's not going to make you happy when the lake of fire comes. The devil - that's exactly what he wants people to do. Don't - a Christian is not a follower of Christians. A Christian is a follower of Christ, amen? Jesus will never let you down. Follow him.

There are many lovely, good people in the church, but we all know that sometimes they fail. Don't look at people. The devil has wolves in sheep's clothing and some of them quote the Bible. That's our next question - #7 - 'Does satan know the Bible?' Yeah, you read about when Jesus was tempted again - and that's in Matthew chapter 4, verses 5 and 6, "Then the devil... saith unto Him, if thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." And the devil is now quoting from Psalm 91, but you know what he did? He left part of it out. The part that says 'to keep you in all your ways.' He left that out. He misquoted the Scripture but you can't fool Jesus. Jesus quoted the Scripture right back to the devil. What is our best defense against Satan's temptations? Every time Jesus was tempted he said, 'It is written. It is written. It is written.' And he fought the devil off with the Word of God. That is our best safety, friends. That's why we need to read our Bibles.

I read my Bible every day, first thing. I do it on my computer now. Wake up, drink hot water, turn on my computer, and I read a section of the Bible every day and then I study the Bible for sermons and writing. And it's the Word of God that keeps me just like you. The Bible says, 'Thy word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin.' There is a supernatural transforming power in the Word of God. Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.' There's something different about it. It really - that's why it's the best-selling book. It really does make a difference. The devil trembles when we pray and he flees when we quote the Scripture. The Bible says 'Resist the devil; he'll flee from you.'

That's what happened with Jesus. He resisted the devil with the word. #8 - 'Whom on earth does the devil hate the most?' Answer: Revelation chapter 17 - I'm sorry, chapter 12, verse 17, "And the dragon was wroth with the" - now what did we say a woman represents in prophecy? A church. He's enraged with God's bride, the church - "and went to make war with the remnant" - or the remainder of her descendants - "of her seed," - two outstanding characteristics - "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." They've got the law and the prophets - the Word of God - and that should be a characteristic of God's people: the Word of God is in our hearts and our minds.

Question #9: 'What two deadly animals does the Bible use to portray Satan?' You can read the answer to this in 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring

lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The devil is out to destroy and to harm as many as he can and Peter tells us we need to be sober - be aware, be vigilant. How do - how do we behave in a vigilant way? Jesus said, 'Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. We need to spend time in prayer with God, give ourselves to God, ask for His protection - every day and God will do things for you when you pray that He otherwise will not do if you don't pray. Prayer does make a difference. That's why Jesus said, 'Ask and you will receive.' That means don't ask, you may not receive, right? And so we need to be praying - be vigilant. Lions can be pretty ferocious and God kept Daniel in the lion's den. The lions didn't hurt him because God was with him. God can keep you from the lion if you trust in Him. Lions use deception too.

Revelation 12 - what's the other animal that the devil is sometimes compared to? "And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." No question who the serpent represents, it tells you right here. It represents the dragon - the serpent - he is the devil. He is Satan. Those are the terms in the Bible. Matter of fact, you'll find some Psalms in the Bible - it says God'll give you victory over the lion and the serpent. And those are metaphors for the devil in the Bible.

And so, now I know, someone's thinking right now, 'Pastor Doug, I thought Jesus was a metaphor of the lion also?' You know, there is a place where, because of the majesty of the lion, Jesus is called the lion of the tribe of Judah. And so, that's one of those interchangeable examples in the Bible. But you can see the work of the devil everywhere in the world. He's trying to cause as much woe and suffering as he can.

Now, if you want to hurt somebody, what's the best way to hurt them? To tie them up; put bamboo shoots under their fingernails; take away their property, defame their name? There's a lot of things you can do to hurt somebody. I hope you're not plotting right now. But you know what hurts a person the most is when you hurt what they love the most. What does God love the most in this world? What did He pay the most for? People - His children. Wouldn't it hurt you the most if something happened to your children? The devil wants to hurt God; that's why he messes with us.

The devil is much more powerful than us but he hurts us and he tempts us and he torments people because he hates Jesus. He hates God. He knows his end is coming. He wants to take as many with him as he can. He is just like a rabid vicious dog, right now, that is biting and snapping and snarling and growling in every direction. He's trying to spread rabies. The Bible says he's got great wrath because he knows his time is short.

Number 10: 'What's the only way that we can successfully resist Satan?' James - and this is in your Bible - James chapter 4, verse 7 and verse 9 - I quoted this to you earlier - answer: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Now, if you want God to protect you from the assaults of the devil - and some of you, if you haven't submitted your life to the Lord, you're being assaulted. Some of you in your family, some of you in your health or your finances - there's a variety of ways. The devil wants to curse you. God wants to bless you. The Bible's really clear about that. He can't bless you until you give yourself to Him. He can then activate those blessings and mobilize His goodness in your life, and work miracles for you and answer prayers. If you say, 'Lord, answer my prayers while I live for the devil' that's not fair. It doesn't work that way. God is good. Sometimes He'll even answer the prayers of the lost. Jesus said He sends His blessings on the just and the unjust just because God is good. But if you really want to claim the promises in the Bible, you must submit yourself to God, then He gives you power to resist the devil and the devil will flee from you. It goes on to say in that verse, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

You know, as you're coming to these meetings, whether you're watching or you're here, you are taking steps where you are drawing close to God. He is going to touch your heart with His Word. He will draw close to you. He will bless you. You'll find yourself thinking about the things you're studying during your day and that's God drawing near to you.

Number 11: 'How did Jesus fight the assaults of the devil?' Answer: It's found in Matthew chapter 4, verse 10, "Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence, Satan: for it is written." And I touched on this already but I can't overstate the importance and the power of the Word of God. The Bible tells us that the Word of God is compared to a sword and you can read that in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 17. It says, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." What is a sword typically used for? It's in battle, right? You know what David used to kill Goliath? Two things: a stone, which is a symbol for the Word of God - Jesus said 'He that hears these words of Mine and does them is a wise man building on the rock.' Right? Stone - Jesus is the rock. In Daniel 2 it was a rock that destroys the image.

And then he took the sword of Goliath and so it's compared to a sword that defeats the giant. The word of God is that sharp - double-edged sword - not just a sword, a double-edged sword. Why doubled edged? The Word of God is often given in plural of two witnesses - the law and the prophets. Go to Revelation 11 - we'll talk about the two witnesses some night or you can ask a question. It's representing the dual nature of the Word of God - the new and the old testament.

It's in the mouth of two witnesses everything will be established. Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount to Jesus, representing the law and the prophets - so it's dual. God gives you two eyes so you can have perspective. You've got two ears so you can sense direction. Two nostrils so you can find dinner, right? I guess. Notice he only gave you one mouth. Okay, Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12, "For the Word of God" - and this is additional - "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Jesus, in Revelation, comes - one of the symbols - He's coming with a sword coming out of His mouth.

Number 12: 'How will the final fate of Satan resemble that of Absalom?' Going back to the story where we began - you remember, it says that after Absalom was slain they took him down and they found a pit in the woods and they cast him in this pit and that's in 2 Samuel 18, verse 17, "And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit." Now I'm emphasizing that because I want you to notice what the Bible says is going to happen to Lucifer. Absalom is cast into a pit. They don't mark his grave. Absalom wanted to be remembered. If you go to Jerusalem, in the - I think it's the Kidron Valley - there is this monument of Absalom's, and you can read about this in 2 Samuel 18:18, "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale:" He was afraid he'd be forgotten so he made a monument to himself and that's supposedly the monument to Absalom. What happens to Lucifer, according to the Bible? It's very similar. You can read - it says - Isaiah 14, verse 15, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit." God is going to bring forth a fire from the midst of him and devour him.

Number 13: 'Will Satan ever reappear to tempt God's people again?' We don't have to worry about after he's destroyed. The Bible says we'll not have to worry through eternity about the devil coming back or escaping somewhere or going on a rampage. Ezekiel 28:19, "Never shalt thou be anymore." Won't that be nice to be in Heaven and never worry about that again? Will we have to worry about sin ever happening again? No one will ever doubt God's love again because of this terrible experiment that was instigated by the devil. The book of Nahum chapter 1, verse 9, "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." It's not going to happen again.

Question number 14, 'How does God feel about the destruction of the wicked?' You know, God is love and even though He must deal with Satan and sinners, it's not something He enjoys. He doesn't want anyone to perish. You read in Ezekiel 33, verse 11 - I'm glad - I love to hear you turn your lessons and write the answers down and I hope you share these with others. "Say unto them, 'As I live,' saith the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.'" God doesn't want us to die. He doesn't want us to be lost. Jesus came to save us from Satan and from sin. They go together. But He says that the wicked turn from his way and live. 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways. Why will you die? Jesus wants to give us power against evil. He wants to set an angel hedge about you to protect you.

Now some of you are thinking, 'Now Pastor Doug, you don't know. I am so bound by habits and temptation and my life has been so out of control and such a mess.' It's no problem for God. You know the Bible says 'All things are possible with God.' Don't underestimate how the Lord can give you a new birth and make you a new creature. Yes He can. Don't give the devil more credit - don't make your devil stronger than your God. The Bible tells us 'Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.' Yes, he can save you. When Absalom died, how did king David respond? When David got the news, even though his son was trying to kill him, when he got the news that this beautiful son had died - you can read in 2 Samuel 18:33, "And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, o Absalom, my son, my son!'"

Look at the love of this erring earthly father for his rebellious son - how his heart was broken. How much must God love you in that He willingly gave His son? That's because Jesus doesn't want any of us to perish, friends, amen? He wants us all to have eternal life. The devil wants to destroy us. He is a thief. He is a villain. He has no heart. He wants to bring suffering. But Jesus came because He wants to save us.

You know, I remember hearing a story a number of years ago. I used to live in Miami, Florida and in Southern Florida there was a family that lived outside of town by a lake. There's more rural area - there were some farms - and one hot day this boy wanted to go out and go swimming and he told his mother, 'I'm going to go swim in the pond.' She was always a little worried because, you know, they have alligators in that country, but they hadn't seen any in the vicinity and so she said, 'Okay.' And he just - he couldn't wait - on his way out to the lake, right outside by the house, he threw off his clothes and just left a trail of clothes and just went jumping off into the water - made a big splash. But, evidently, there was a large alligator that was resting in the other side of the lake - in the grass - and he heard the commotion. And the mother looked out the window, as they often do, there by the sink and she saw that telltale sign of a large gator leaving a wake across the lake going towards her son that was now swimming out. She dropped what she was doing. She ran out of the kitchen, crossed the grass, and yelled 'Alligator! There's an alligator! Turn around! Swim!' The boy saw the frantic face of his mother and he made a U-turn and swam as quick as he could back to the shore.

But right about the time he got to the bank, the alligator got to him and latched onto his legs and began to pull him off, as they do, into the water. But about the same time, his mother got to him. She stepped off into the shallow water and grabbed his hands and there was this awful tug-of-war between the mother and the alligator for the child - ten-year-old boy. And the alligator was starting to win and then the mother wouldn't let go and she began to pull and the alligator would start to spin and she'd lose his grip and she'd grab her son again and she'd pull. And there was so much ruckus and yelling and screaming, a farmer than lived next door, he knew exactly what had happened. He grabbed his rifle, he ran out, and he shot the alligator.

Well, the boy had to go to the hospital. His legs were badly cut and some really nasty scars and just hundreds of stitches. After he recovered for a few days the local newspaper came by and the reporter asked him about his ordeal and the boy seemed pretty cheerful. He said, 'Do you mind if I ask to look at the scars on your legs?' And he showed him the scars on his legs and the boy smiled and he said, 'I've also got scars on my arms because my mother wouldn't let go of me.' And he was very proud of the scars on his arms.

There's a battle over your soul, friends. There's only two roads in life, you surrender your life to Jesus and God's plan for you or you let it go and that Leviathan, the devil, will take you down, yes he will. Your only hope is Jesus. There is no other way. I'd like you to listen and pray about what your decision might be tonight and I want to invite John to come out and Jaime - they're going to play and then we're going to pray.

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord.

A wonderful Savior to me.

He hideth my soul in the depths of the rock where rivers of pleasure I see.

He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock that shadows a dry thirsty land.

He hideth my life in the depths of His love and covers me there with His hand.

And covers me there with his hand.

Friends, the Bible's very clear that God has a plan for your life. His plan for you is that you should live forever. He said, 'I've gone to prepare a place for you. He's paid an incredible price that you might have that gift of everlasting life. And God gave His Son - what more could He give to show His love for you? There's a battle between good and evil, but each of us needs to make our own decision.

And, you know, before we close this meeting tonight, I just think it's so important that we have an opportunity to say, 'Lord, I want to surrender my life to you.' Don't worry about how you're going to live tomorrow. Don't worry about what struggles or temptations you might face, you just come like you are and say, 'Lord, I want to choose Jesus. I believe You love me that much.' And even if you're in doubt, do the safe thing. When I first came to the Lord I said, 'Lord, I don't know, but I'm willing to try. If You're real, reveal Yourself to me.'

What have you got to lose? We're talking about eternal life. Try it. Look at the Bible. Study it. What could be more valuable than that? And I know there are some of you who are watching and you're struggling. Maybe you feel this battle in your heart. That battle is between your Savior and Satan and you have the tie breaking vote. You get to make the decision. God wants your willing heart - your love. He won't force you.

If you'd like to make that decision I'd like to encourage you to just pray with me right now. Could we all bow our heads? Loving Father, we thank You for the message of Your Word that warns us that there is a war in this world - that the devil is out there and he's seeking to destroy. But we're so thankful for the good news that Jesus came into this world to save and that there's greater power in You than there is in the enemy. Bless these people, Lord. Help them to experience Jesus in their lives.

Transform us through the remainder of this seminar. We thank you and pray in Christ's name, amen. God bless you, friends. Thank you. Do not forget, tomorrow night we have another meeting. It's 'the ultimate sacrifice.' We'll look forward to seeing you then. You have a good evening. Drive safely.