

FIVE LEVELS OF PRAYER**Level 5 -- Spiritual Warfare****SPIRITUAL WARFARE 3**

The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are the same. Compare Matthew 3:2 with Mark 1:15. Matthew always used the term "kingdom of heaven," while the other gospel writers all used the term "kingdom of God."

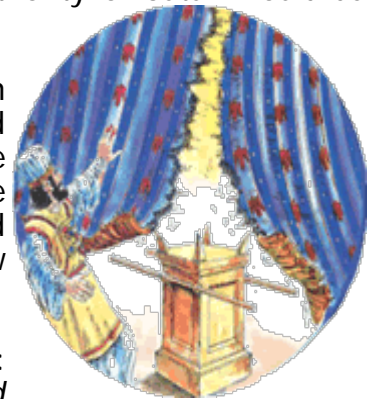
The kingdom of God is none other than the church of Jesus Christ, over which He rules as the Head (Colossians 1:18). Entrance into the kingdom is by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-5 and Acts 2:38). All people who have this experience have power to overcome Satan and the demons under his command. The power of the Holy Spirit also assists us to become witnesses for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

Although God's plan which would bring salvation and deliverance to mankind is clearly pictured by types and shadows throughout the Old Testament (that a sinless man would die for the sins of all mankind), evidently God had blinded the eyes of Satan. It was he who took possession of Judas, placing in his heart the strong desire and will to betray his Lord for a paltry thirty pieces of silver (Luke 22:1-4).

Before Jesus died on the cross, Satan still had power and authority over the great majority of people on earth. That is why Jesus called him, "the prince of this world." However, as time for Jesus' death on the cross drew near, Jesus gave us some good news: *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die"* (John 12:31-33).

According to these words, Jesus would win a big victory over Satan by His death upon the cross, and many of the multitudes under the authority of Satan would be loosed from their bondage and drawn to Jesus Christ.

Right before Jesus died, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). What was finished? The price of salvation and redemption had been paid! When He died on the cross, the veil in the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, signifying that the way into the presence of God was open to every person, not just the high priest (Matthew 27:51).



Jesus' death on the cross brought a great defeat to Satan: *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham"* (Hebrews 2:14-16).

*"And (Jesus) having *disarmed principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it"* (Colossians 2:15). *Bible margin

Who were these "principalities and powers?" Satan and his kingdom. What is done in the natural world effects the supernatural or spirit world. Daniel fasted and prayed, and his prayers enabled a victory to take place in the spirit world. When Jesus died on the cross, the greatest victory of all was won. He did not just pray. He did not just fast. He, the sinless One, took upon Himself the sins of the whole human race and died for us, giving His all! This great sacrifice gave birth to the spiritual kingdom of God on earth, and a great victory over Satan:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

Many people mistakenly place this event immediately before the millenium, but the next verse makes it plain that it is an event which took place shortly after Jesus died on the cross, which shows us that it was Jesus' death on the cross that enabled Michael and his angels to fight and defeat Satan and his angels:

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (verses 10-11).

Salvation, spiritual strength, and power have already come--and so has the spiritual kingdom of God: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

At the cross, Satan lost access to the throne of God. He is now limited to the earth and its atmosphere (Ephesians 2:2). He no longer has the ability to accuse us before God, as he did Job. Instead, when we have sinned he comes whispering to us, "You just as well give up. You'll never make it. God will never forgive you!" He is still the accuser of the brethren, but he has changed his tactics. But we can overcome him with the blood of the Lamb! We can say, "Devil, in Jesus' name I rebuke you and command you to leave me alone. I have repented of that sin, and the blood of Jesus Christ has already cleansed me!"

Satan is angry with God and the church and he knows that he has but a short time (Revelation 12:12). He is like a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

THE WORKS OF SATAN AND HIS ANGELS (DEMONS)

1. He is the chief influence for evil in this world (Ephesians 2:2-3).
2. He blinds the mind of people who do not believe, so that they do not understand and obey the gospel (II Corinthians 4:4).
3. He steals the Word of God from the hearts of those who hear it (Luke 6:12).
4. Evil spirits (Satan's angels) search for people they are able to enter and make them like themselves (Matthew 12:43-45; and Mark 5:1-15).
5. There are many types of evil spirits. For example:
 - a. lying spirits (I Kings 22:22)
 - b. spirit of divination (Acts 16:16)
 - c. deaf and dumb spirit (Mark 9:17-25)
 - d. spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7)
 - e. spirit of jealousy (Numbers 5:14)
 - f. perverse spirit (Isaiah 19:14)
 - g. spirit of adultery (Hosea 4:12-13)
6. Evil spirits hinder the prayers of God's people (Daniel 10:1-14).
7. They try to hinder the work of God (I Thessalonians 2:18).
8. Satan still acts as "the accuser of the brethren."
9. Satan and the spirits below his authority try to cause the Christian to backslide (Ephesians 6:10-16).

If we are filled with God's presence, we need not fear, because: *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).* ds