



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on May 1st 2022 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our service today is led by Tim, as we continue our series on Spiritual Warfare.

Trevor plays the piano as we assemble for worship, and Tim welcomes everyone to Bethesda Chapel,

"Good morning everybody, lovely to see you, and welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church on this (I was going to say lovely spring morning, but it isn't really!) but its May 1st and it is a spring morning, and we're grateful for all the weather God sends, we need the rain and everything else as well, so its great to see you here, whether its for the first time or the 101st time! You're really welcome here this morning. We're continuing today, as you can see upon the screen, our current series, looking at the topic of Spiritual Warfare, and remembering how Jesus has freed us and enlisted us on his side, which is such a privilege for us. And it's always good, I think, when we come to the beginning of a service to remember just how much Jesus has done for us, what great things he has done for us. How much do we deserve the wonderful things God has done for us? We don't really, the short answer is not a lot, but yet God has put this amazing rescue plan in place for us, this amazing plan of salvation, and that's what we're going to focus on as we sing our first song this morning, which we're going to see on the screen. Its called Loved before the dawn of time - God had this plan before the dawn of time to save us, its a lovely song and we're going to join in and hopefully sing it together - we've had it a few times before, so let's join together with this song and enjoy singing it together."

The congregation were invited to stand if they so wished as, shown on the screen, was **Loved Before the Dawn of Time (Salvation song)**

Loved before the dawn of time, chosen by my Maker, hidden in my Saviour,
I am His and He is mine, cherished for eternity.

When I'm stained with guilt and sin, He is there to lift me, heal me and forgive me;
gives me strength to stand again, stronger than I was before.

So with every breath that I am given I will sing salvation's song;
and I'll join the chorus of creation giving praise to Christ alone.

All the claims of Satan's curse, lifted through His offering,
satisfied through suffering;
all the blessings He deserves poured on my unworthy soul.

So with every breath that I am given.....

(Singing glory, honour, wisdom, power to the Lamb upon the throne;
Hallelujah, I will lift Him high.

Singing glory, honour, wisdom, power to the Lamb upon the throne;
Hallelujah, I will lift Him high.)

So with every breath that I am given...

Stars will fade and mountains fall; Christ will shine forever, love's unfading splendour.
Earth and heaven will bow in awe, joining in salvation's song.

<https://youtu.be/WWehzQbQ6IA>

Authors: Stuart Townend & Andrew Small CCLI SONG # 5109630

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Tim led us in a brief opening prayer:

"Lord, indeed we do bow in awe before you this morning, for all that you've done for us. We recognise what a wonderful thing you've done, in Christ, for us. Lord, that song reflected on our unworthiness. Lord, we know we don't deserve your favour; we don't deserve your love, we don't deserve your mercy, we deserve just the opposite, we deserve your judgement, because we've rebelled against you, we've gone our own way. We've ignored you and your good plans for our lives, but Lord we thank you that from before the dawn of time you made a way of rescue, a plan of salvation, that involved such great cost to you, sending your only son, Jesus, into our world to die for us so that we could know new life, so that we could know peace with you. Lord we thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts for all that you've done for us. We pray that you would impress it upon us once more today, just how much we have to be thankful to you for. So be with us now we pray in our service, help us to learn more of you and your ways, and how we can enlist on your side and be bold in the battle to bring more people into your kingdom. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Tim continues: "We started our service by remembering what Christ has done for us, and we're going to continue in that vein now as we come to our time of communion. As an introduction to that, we're going to sing another song together, another modern song or hymn, reflecting on the meaning of what we're about to do, as we engage in this Communion service together".

We join together in singing (or reading) the Song: Behold the Lamb, which Trevor plays for us.

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away, slain for us: and we remember:
the promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross.

So we share in this Bread of life, and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of peace around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, torn for you: eat and remember
the wounds that heal, the death that brings us life, paid the price to make us one.

So we share in this Bread of Life....

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin, shed for you: drink and remember
he drained death's cup that all may enter in to receive the life of God.

So we share in this Bread of Life...

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise to respond: and to remember
our call to follow in the steps of Christ as His body here on earth.

As we share in His suffering, we proclaim: Christ will come again!

And we'll join in the feast of heaven around the table of the King.

Authors: Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend, CCLI SONG # 5003372

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Tim introduces our time of Communion

"Brothers and sisters in Christ, we're coming today to receive communion, the body and blood of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. As we've thought already, we can only do this because of his great love for us. Although we're completely underserving of that love, in order to raise us from the darkness of death and the dominion of the evil one, to everlasting life as God's children, Jesus Christ humbled himself to share our life and to die for us on the cross. Because of that, his life, his power, can come into our lives, and we take in the bread and wine as a symbol of that inner change in us. So in remembrance of his death and all he's done for us, as a pledge of his love, he instituted this remembrance meal which we're now about to share. All of us who would eat the bread and drink the cup should examine ourselves and where we need to, we should seek to amend our lives and our ways. We need to come with a repentant heart, with sincere faith, and above all we must be thankful, we must give thanks to God for his love towards us in Christ Jesus. Let's just pray a brief prayer of thanks:

Once again Father God we thank you so much for Jesus, for all that he's done for us, that he was prepared to humble himself and take the form of a servant, was prepared even to humble himself so far as to go to that cruel death on a cross. Thank you that there in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed - not yet my will but your will be done - he was willing to go to the extreme for the joy that was set before him and to be

able to bring us into his family, what an amazing that was, that he was prepared to do for us. So Lord we just give you our heartfelt and humble thanks this morning as we reflect on all he has done. Amen.

So since Jesus has opened that new living way into God's presence for us, into his very family, by the shedding of his own blood, let us all draw near to God, with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we profess, for he who promised to us is faithful, and let us also consider how we may spur one another on to live, and to good deeds. We invite everyone who is here this morning who knows and loves the Lord Jesus to join with us in this remembrance meal.

And it was Paul who, in writing to the church in Corinth, reminded us why we do this. He says: 'For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and he said - This is my body, which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.'

So now we're going to take the bread, remember all that Jesus did for us as his body was broken there on the cross, as he suffered for us. We'll take it as we receive it, and eat it individually, recognising that he died for each of us individually. So let's take now the bread."

(Colin and Janet bring the bread to the seated congregation as Trevor plays In heavenly love abiding on the piano, to the welsh tune Penlan.)

Tim continues: "The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, goes on to say, 'in the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me, for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.' We aren't going to do this forever, but we'll do it until the Lord comes back to take us to be with himself. So let's now take the cup, remembering the shed blood of the new covenant, that Jesus shed for us. Let's wait till all have been served and then we'll drink together as a sign that he's brought us together in oneness as part of his body.

(Colin and Janet distribute the wine whilst Trevor plays the Lord's my shepherd, to Crimond)

Tim: So let's take this cup now. Let's drink together with thankfulness in our hearts.

We all drink together.

(Colin and Janet collect the empty cups and plates)

Tim thanks Colin and Janet, then invites Brenda to lead us in our Prayers of Intercession:

"Our Heavenly Father, following our time of Communion, we know that You will continue to be present with us and we give You thanks for this. We now offer to You our prayers of intercession and ask You to listen to our concerns about the needs we see around us today.

Lord, there is so much happening in the world, but first we bring before You all who are suffering in many ways with all sorts of problems. Some are caught up in evil wars, which are not of their doing, in various parts of the world. Please protect those who just want to live in security and safety, and comfort those who have lost loved ones and who fear for the lives of themselves and their families. Lord we continue to beg You to change the hearts of those set on violence and aggression particularly the Russian leader. We ask that the leaders of all countries and of the United Nations be filled with wisdom that leads to peace and do what they can to bring this about. We ask again for Your presence in Ukraine, where there is so much horror. May there be rescue for those trapped underground and others who have been deported and imprisoned. We ask You to be with those who have fled to places for safety, but are desperately worried about loved ones fighting for their country's freedom or working to rescue people, deliver supplies and treat the wounded. Lord God, be with them all.

Now we bring to You our own country and all the people of its cities, towns, villages and countryside. Many are struggling at present as everything is getting so expensive and it is harder to pay the bills and feed the family. May help be available where it is needed. Others need medical care which is not always readily available and we pray for the success of new initiatives to help with this. We remember all who have mental health problems and those needing a home or who are struggling in other ways with all sorts of problems. We pray that the Government may be challenged to improve things for everyone and to set a good example in their own personal behaviour. We ask that people may vote wisely in the upcoming local election this week.

Lord God, we bring this town of Blackburn and the area around it to You and pray for harmony here amongst all and we remember all the churches here as they continue to work together in their communities, to bring the Gospel to those around.

Lord God, we thank You again for our Church Fellowship here and we ask that all here today and those who are watching online or reading the script have been brought closer to You in this shared time.

We pray for Your presence with our Pastor and for his safe journey back to England. We thank You for him and those, who with Your guidance, share the responsibilities here. May our sharing of outreach with the nearby churches lead to bringing more to follow You. We offer to You all that happens in this building and ask for Your continued presence here.

We now remember, Lord, the needs of some here today and their family and friends and bring their names to You in our hearts as each need is mentioned.

We ask for Your presence with those in hospital, those who are ill and the ones slowly recovering, those who are in pain or struggling with mental problems.

We ask for comfort for those who are worried and have difficult decisions to make and the ones who are sad and mourning the death of loved ones.

We pray for Your presence with the lonely and those in care homes and some anxiously awaiting appointments.

We remember those struggling with financial or domestic problems and who are missing family members far away and ask for care and protection for the young ones we know in this difficult world.

We bring to You those who have not returned here since the Lockdown and pray that we will see them here soon.

All these names and problems and many more we bring to You our Heavenly Father.

So we commit ourselves to You once more. We ask You to keep us from doing wrong and to forgive us when we do. May we be strong in our faith and commitment to You as we go through each day and may we have peace and joy in our hearts. We offer our prayers to You in the name of Jesus. Amen "

Tim thanks Brenda, and announces our Offering Song, once more emphasising the theme of Spiritual Warfare and acknowledging that we are in a battle, as we sing a hymn written by Charles Wesley - one of the 6,500 he wrote (Tim says he'd be pleased to write one good one!) : **Soldiers of Christ, Arise**, again played by Trevor on the piano, and during which Jane accepts our financial gifts for the work of the church.

Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armour on,
strong in the strength which God supplies thro' his eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts, and in his mighty pow'r,
who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

Stand then in his great might, with all his strength endued;
but take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God.
Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul;
take ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace, and fortify the whole.

To keep your armour bright, attend with constant care;
still walking in your Captain's sight, and watching unto prayer.
From strength to strength go on; wrestle and fight and pray;
tread all the pow'rs of darkness down, and win the well-fought day.

Authors: Charles Wesley, George Job Elvey CCLI SONG # 185924
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As Tim accepts our gifts, he prays: Father, thank you that you provide all that we need to take part in the battles to which you called us. Thank you for your provisioner us in every area of our lives, and Lord we thank you that we have this opportunity to give a little back to you of the great bountiful gifts that you've given us. So we thank you for these gifts; we pray that they will be taken and used wisely for your kingdom in your service. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

Tim invites Jane to share our Bible readings for this morning, firstly;
Isaiah 14:12-15,

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!
You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.
I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.'

But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.

And secondly: John 8:39-47

'Abraham is our father,' they answered.

'If you were Abraham's children,' said Jesus, 'then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father.'

'We are not illegitimate children,' they protested. 'The only Father we have is God himself.'

Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.'

Tim begins his talk: Spiritual Warfare 2: Who Is Satan?

Introduction

"We're currently looking at a series on Spiritual Warfare, which we started last week. As a quick recap on what we looked at last week, we saw that:

- *We are in a war* – it's the kingdom of light versus the kingdom of darkness, Christ leading his church against the powers of Hades – and we saw the marching orders that we have been given in this fight from Matthew 28. To make disciples, bringing people out of the enemy's camp into Jesus' kingdom, and to teach them then to obey all Jesus' commands
- *We need to know our enemies* – in a war, there are enemies – and we need to know them and their tactics, so we can counter them – that's going to be our focus this week and next
- *We need to know and use the resources at our disposal* – we are well-equipped for this battle by God – and we'll look at this further later in the series
- *We need to keep the end in mind* – we can be confident, because we are on the winning side! Jesus, our commander in chief, has already won the victory

The focus for today in our second look at this important subject is our enemy, Satan – who is he and what is he like? You know, I think we can make two opposite, equally bad mistakes when it comes to Satan:

- The first is to pay him *too little* attention. He is very happy when we disregard him completely, or even don't believe in him. Then he can carry on his business and his opposition in our lives undisturbed and undetected. We do need to be informed.
- The second, opposite mistake is to pay him *too much* attention. Some people get too obsessed with him and take their eyes away from where they should primarily be focused – and that is on Jesus. As the author of Hebrews puts it in chapter 12 verse 2: '*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*'. If we do that, then we get things in their right perspective – realising that Satan, although dangerous, has no power at all over Jesus, who defeated him through the cross.

So let's make sure we get that balance right, understanding our enemy but not paying him undue attention. We looked briefly last week at some of what the Bible has to say about Satan, but we'll take a closer look today, in particular, at:

- His origin
- His relationship to God
- His character
- His final destiny

Next week, our pastor, Alec, should be back with us and we'll be looking then at the strategies that Satan uses to oppose us and the resources that he draws upon to do so.

Satan's Origin

So who is Satan? Or, to put the question another way, where does he come from? The Bible reveals some things about this, but perhaps not everything we might like to know. Often the Bible doesn't tell us enough to satisfy all our curiosity, but we can be sure, because it's the perfect word of God, that it tells us all we really need to know! The things that we do know on this subject largely come from two Old Testament passages, one in Ezekiel and one in Isaiah.

In both cases, the passages start by talking about a human ruler from one of Israel's enemies, but then, as we read both passages, we realise that the prophet turns his attention part way through away from the human being to someone else. Let's look first at the Ezekiel passage, from Ezekiel 28. It starts in the first verses of the chapter with a prophecy against the king of the nation of Tyre: 'The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas." But you are a mere mortal and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.' And the passage continues through to verse 10 with words of condemnation and warning against this human king. But then things change in verse 11 onwards. 'The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' At face value, it's still talking about the king of Tyre, but then we read on and see it says: 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you.' This is clearly no longer speaking about the king of Tyre at the time of Ezekiel's writing. So what's going on here? Well, we get some clues from the book of Daniel, where we get some insights into the very real, but unseen spiritual world, in particular in chapter 10, where we learn that behind wicked human rulers sit spiritual powers. The angel speaking to Daniel in chapter 10 talks about the 'king of Persia', referring to a powerful spiritual evil force against whom he was battling, not the human ruler of Persia. So, we get the same sense in Ezekiel 28 that the attention of the prophet has shifted from the human ruler of Tyre to the power that was really behind him – and in most Bible scholars' view, that power here is none other than Satan himself, so the prophet sheds some light on the question of Satan's origins. We learn from these verses that:

- Satan is a created being (verse 13, 15)
- He was created good and beautiful (verses 13, 15 and 17)
- He once had a key role in God's presence – as a guardian cherub (verse 14)
- However, at some point, as it says in verse 15, 'wickedness was found' in him and he became 'corrupted' – and this was because of his pride in himself (verse 17)
- He was consequently expelled to the earth from God's immediate presence (verses 16 and 17)

There's a legal principle in the Bible about a matter being established on the testimony of at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15) and I think it's a good thing to apply when we're looking at the Bible itself, too – when we see a teaching in more than one place in the Bible, we can be strongly certain about it. And that applies here, because we see a very similar picture emerging in the short passage in Isaiah chapter 14 that Jane read for us. Again, here, Isaiah is talking at first to a human king, the king of Babylon (verse 4) – 'you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon', but then in the middle of the chapter, we read words once more that make us realise that the focus has changed: 'How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I

will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.' So here again, we see Satan's pride leading to a great fall – because his pride actually led him to ambition to replace God. [This fall from his once high position may well be what Jesus is referring to in Luke 10 verse 18.]

So what can we learn from this? Well, first of all, that Satan's motivations are all about himself – unlike God, he doesn't care about anyone else. But also there's a warning here to us, isn't there, about the dangers of pride? It truly does come before a fall. It's interesting that this is backed up, too, in the New Testament, where Paul warns Timothy in 1 Timothy 3 verse 6 against appointing someone to leadership in the church who may be prone to this problem of pride: '**He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.**'

We can note in passing that several Bible passages indicate to us that Satan wasn't alone in his fall, but actually took many other beings along with him in his rebellion – what we would now think of as demonic forces. I think we'll be looking more at that next time.

Satan's Relationship to God

Our second question is where Satan's massive fall from grace left him in relation to God. Well, obviously in opposition to him, but it appears that, although he had fallen from his initial position, Satan is not currently barred entirely from heaven or from God's presence (although, according to the book of Revelation, that will happen at some point in the future). Our primary source for this is the early chapters of the book of Job, where Satan is seen twice coming before God and reporting to him. Job 1: 6,7: '**One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"** Satan answered the LORD, **"From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."**' Then, when God points out Job and his faithfulness to him, Satan says what he wants to do to Job and God says (Job 1:12) '**The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, them, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger"**'

We haven't time this morning to go fully into the story of Job, but for now, let's just note that this should really encourage us, because it shows us that:

- Satan has to report his doings to God
- Satan is under God's ultimate authority – he can only act within bounds that God allows. Another good example is in Luke 22 verse 31, where Jesus tells Peter: '**Simon, Simon, Satan has asked (literally 'demanded permission') to sift all of you as wheat.'** The key point is that Satan had to ask permission
- Although we might be tempted to think of Satan as in some way being God's equal and opposite, God wants us to know that Satan is a mere creature – we should not over-inflate his importance or authority

Satan's Character

We've been referring so far to this enemy, this being, as 'Satan', as that is the most common title for him, used throughout the Bible. But that is not really his personal name –

we have no clear indication from the Bible what that is – and it doesn't concern us. What does concern us and is important for us to learn from is the various *titles* by which he's known in the Bible. They are important because they all reveal to us his character. And if we understand the character of our enemy, we know what to be on the lookout for and we'll be better prepared to counter what he throws at us in the battle. So let's have a look at some of these names and their meanings:

- *Helel*: This is the term translated 'morning star' in the passage we read from Isaiah. In the King James version of the Bible, the Latin equivalent word for 'light bringer' is used in this verse – 'Lucifer'. Whilst it was appropriate to Satan in his original condition, as we've seen, he no longer merits it and it's really a title that belongs to Jesus (and is used of him in Revelation). But beware, because as we saw last week, Satan still likes to pretend he still is an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) – we should realise that he's deceptive and tricky. In 2 Corinthians 2: 11, Paul says, '*in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes'*
- *Satan*: Then there's the title 'Satan' itself – this is the most used title for him, coming over 50 times across both the Old and New Testaments. It just means 'adversary', 'opponent' or 'the enemy' – and we should make no mistake that Satan is completely opposed to us and all God wants to do in us and through us and he will throw everything he can at us to disrupt it
- *Father of Lies*: Another important title is the one that Jesus gives him in the other passage that Jane read to us from John's Gospel. Jesus pulls no punches at all in how he describes Satan: '*He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*' It's so important that we understand this – Satan is a murderer – he basically destroys lives. And he is a liar – that is his fundamental character. That's how he deceived Adam and Eve in the garden originally – with lies and half-truths. And it's still his approach today. So when Satan puts a thought in our minds, we know it's wrong. And we need to counter it with the truth of God's word.
- *The Devil*: Another title, of course, is 'the devil' – this is only used in the New Testament – the Greek word is 'diabolos' from which we get the word 'diabolical'. It means 'slanderer' or 'false accuser' and it goes right along with Satan being the father of liars – he loves nothing more to discourage us than to bring false accusations against us. Although the word is only used in the New Testament, we see Satan in exactly this role of accuser in the Old Testament as well, such as in the story of Job that we've already referred to. Don't listen to his accusations when they come at you!
- *The Tempter*: Another description of Satan in the New Testament is 'the Tempter', particularly in Matthew 4 verse 3, where he comes to Jesus in the desert to tempt him. Again, Satan's temptations are really another form of lie, as what he's really saying to us is: 'It would be good, in your best interests, for you to do this thing that's against God's will'. He's allied here with the other enemies that we looked at last week, the world and our old human nature – Satan's saying, 'follow the ways of the world, follow your human desires, that will be good for you.' But it's a lie – God's will is always what is best for us.

- *The Evil One*: He's also referred to often as 'The Evil One' in the New Testament. We live in a world that likes to make out that good is bad and bad is good, but the Bible calls a spade a spade – Satan is evil – he has no good intentions towards us, no matter what he makes out – as we saw last week in 1 Peter, he wants to devour us!
- *The Dragon or the Serpent*: The ferocity and cunning of Satan is reinforced by some of the animal imagery that is also used for him – in Revelation, he's referred to as 'the dragon' and also the 'serpent' referring back to his guise in the garden of Eden. We see several titles for him come together in one verse in Revelation 12 verse 9: '**The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.**' He might be big, fierce and scary like a dragon – but note here that he has got hurled down by God's command against his will – he's powerful, but only within the limits set by God!
- *The God of this World / the Prince of this World*: Finally, he's also referred to in several places as the 'God' or the 'prince' of this world. Satan is in temporary charge of the world – even Jesus did not dispute this when during his temptation in the desert the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and said '**I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.**' (Luke 4:6). Jesus knew that one day the world will be snatched back from Satan's control, but thankfully he wasn't about to take the short-cut offered by Satan. And because Satan's the ruler of this world, it sadly means that people in the world are under his control, too. Jesus had to tell the Pharisees this in the verses from John that Jane read for us: '**You belong to your father, the devil**'. Strong language, but this is, sadly, the truth. If we're not in Jesus' kingdom, we're in Satan's – and that is why we're engaged in this war, to call people out from under Satan's control.

Satan's Final Destiny

So we've learned about Satan's origins and hopefully we are better prepared for his schemes, because we know something of his character – what about our last question – where we end up? Well, the great news is that this is already decided and sure. He's going down to ultimate defeat. He's still fighting, but the decisive battle in the campaign has already been fought at the cross. God, through Jesus, has already won the victory and now we're just seeing the final moves being played out before the end of the game, before his final, complete downfall. Paul puts it like this in concluding his letter to the Christians in Rome: '**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet**' (Romans 16:20). The book of Revelation tells us how this will turn out in God's plan. Satan will finally be expelled completely from heaven (Revelation 12: 7-9), will take out his fury at this for a time on the earth, but when Jesus returns to our planet, Revelation 20 describes how he will be chained and made helpless for 1000 years, whilst Jesus reigns. Then, after one brief final release and rebellion, he will be consigned forever to the frightful place called the 'lake of burning sulphur'.

In the meantime, though, whilst his power is broken and his ultimate demise is sure, he is not yet powerless and, for now, he will do all he can to distract, disrupt, weaken or frighten us, making us ineffective soldiers – and our subject for next time is how he will try to do

this. So let's be on our guard, equipped with what we've learned about him, but definitely not afraid!"

As we bring our service towards a close, Tim announces our final song, one written by Graham Kendrick in 1983, but perhaps not very familiar - **Let God arise!** It begins with a spoken declaration, with an echo from the congregation, then the declaration is sung by everyone, before a verse is sung by the men and echoed by the women, and finally everyone sings the declaration again! It sounds complicated, it is really very short and straightforward but probably needs to be heard a couple of times to enable everyone to fully engage! The congregation at Bethesda did their best, as it was played twice through and shown on the screen.

[Spoken declaration]

Let God arise (let God arise)

And let his enemies be scattered (and let his enemies be scattered)

Let God arise (let God arise)

And let his enemies be scattered (and let his enemies be scattered)

[Sing all together]

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered

And let those who hate him flee before him

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered

And let those who hate him flee away

Men: But let the righteous be glad

Women: ...the righteous be glad

Men: Let them exult before God

Women: ...let them exult before God

Men: Let them rejoice with gladness

Women: ...O let them rejoice

Men: Building up a highway for the King

Women: (*in unison*) ...for the King...

Men: We go in the name of the Lord

Women: Let the shout go up in the name of the Lord

Women: (*in unison*) ...in the name of the Lord

[Sing all together]

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered

And let those who hate him flee before him

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered

And let those who hate him flee away

(<https://youtu.be/gnCmq9Xhku0>)

Author: Graham Kendrick CCLI SONG # 222863

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CCL No 5664

Tim shares our

Notices for This Week

- Today – refreshments after the service
- Coffee Morning – Tuesday 3, 10.00 – 12.00
- Ladies' Bible Study – Tuesday 3, 10.45
- Self-help cleaning – Thursday 5, 10.00 – 12.00
- 'Orbit' Youth Drop-In – Thursday 5, 18.00 – 19.30
- Fellowship Meeting – Thursday 5, 19.30 – 20.30 (Prayer meeting)
- New Life International Church: Bible Study & Prayer – Friday 6, 20.00
- Movie Morning – Saturday 7, 10.30 – 12.00
- New Life International Church: Service – Saturday 7, 17.00
- Sunday Communion Service – next on Spiritual Warfare – Sunday 8 May, 10.45
- Sunday 15 May – Discussion on proposed Church Constitution, 13.00 (after service)
- Tuesday 17 May, Church Members' Meeting, 19.30



Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement from May 26th till June 5th that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

Everyone is encouraged to pray for 5 people during that time

We close as we say together:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.