The Kingdom of God, Part 2: The Kingdom of Darkness

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INTRODUCTION

> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6:12 - KJV).

Many people conceive of the battle between good and evil as a contest or competition for men's souls. This is an unfortunate characterization because it misses the point in two significant ways.

First, people - men's souls - are merely pawns in this great battle, not the ultimate goal. I know it's a difficult concept to grasp, but it's not all about *you*. From the Devil's perspective, people are simply a means to an end. He wants to rule the world, and in order to do this, he needs people who are willing to serve him (knowingly or unknowingly), and to die for him if need be (and many millions will die). In other words, the Devil needs *pawns* - useful idiots, really - to help him achieve his goals, which He simply cannot achieve by himself.

From God's perspective, unlike the Devil, He actually loves people and cares for them, and wants to live with them. *Nevertheless*, the disposition of men's souls has never been a numbers game. The salvation He offers has never been calculated to generate more followers than the Devil. "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Mt. 7:14). God has known from the beginning that the vast majority of people will not be saved. He is in no way threatened by the fact that the Devil will accumulate the most followers. That is not what the battle is about.

Second, the battle between good and evil is mostly a contest between two kingdoms - the kingdom of God vs. the kingdom of darkness. Yes, the battle is between God and the Devil, but it is entirely kingdom related: Who will ultimately sit on the throne of heaven and rule the entire world going forward? God has always been on the throne until now, of course. For the Devil's part, he wants to unseat God, usurp the throne of heaven and earth, and establish himself as the supreme God.

For His part, God is not worried about the outcome - He knows with absolute certainty that the Devil's rebellion will ultimately amount to nothing. He knows the Devil's efforts will fail miserably, and the Devil will not only be imprisoned and suffer for eternity, but he will also be humiliated and put to shame in the process. Nevertheless, God is content to let the process play out in history, as it provides a suitable context for people to come to a decision about whom they really want to serve and follow.

The Devil has no choice but to play along, since God has defined the game and set all of its rules. On the other hand, people are dumb and easily deceived. So the Devil's strategy, among other things, is to make things appear as though the outcome of this great contest has not been predetermined, but is up for grabs. He also deceives people into thinking that the rules of the game can be rewritten in order to change the outcome. He even deceives people into thinking that God's overthrow would be a good thing for them in the long run.

What I want to do here is examine the manner in which the Devil's kingdom - the kingdom of darkness - has been laying the groundwork for thousands of years to bring about this grand rebellion against God, and to make a play for the throne of heaven which will ultimately fail. And how most of the people around you will get sucked in to choosing the wrong side. To avoid getting sucked in yourself, it might be profitable to see what the Devil's game plan is.

THE TWO FACES OF EVIL

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil." (Dt. 30:15).

I talk about the battle of good vs. evil as a clash of kingdoms for a specific reason. A kingdom is, by definition, a form of sovereignty ruled by a leader (a king) who sits on a throne, issues commands and leads his forces into battle. A kingdom requires a king, and a king requires a personality - an identifiable person in charge. Forget about evil being merely *the dark side of the force*, or *dark magic* as opposed to light magic. On the side of good is God the true king of the world, whose word is law. On the side of evil is the dark one, the Devil who is the wannabe king of the world, and whose every action and intention is lawless.

In biblical terms, evil is disobedience or rebellion against God's laws. However, the Devil is not the only person who violates God's laws. Every person who is or ever was, was born lawless. Anyone may of their own free will participate in lawless behavior, and is quite frankly unable to restrain themselves. In other words, people sin, or are lawless, not because the Devil made them do it, but because they are predisposed to sin ever since the original Fall into sin. However, this human tendency to sin is ***not*** the only kind of evil there is.

Evil is not merely a personal choice, nor is it merely haphazard and random. There are forces - personalities - which the scripture calls *the rulers of the darkness of this world*, who are encouraging, manipulating, orchestrating, and plotting the increased lawlessness of human behavior. Therefore, evil has two components: an internal predilection, and an external inducement. This external component not only has a global leader with specific goals and methods, but also in fact an organizational structure designed to bring about the kingdom of darkness. This is what I wish to examine.

You may not believe in the Devil as a real person. If so, that is your choice. But the Bible speaks very clearly about the Devil, also called Satan, Lucifer, the serpent, the dragon, and several other symbolic names. I will simply assume the scriptures are true and accurate in this regard, and see what else they tell us about the kingdom of the Devil, how it operates, and what its main goals are. What you do with this information is up to you.

The Devil's Backstory

First, a little background on the Devil and his origin story. It used to be, 50 or 60 years ago, that most churchgoers knew this information because they were taught it in sermons, Sunday School, or even in Bible studies. However, this is information that is rarely talked about anymore, if at all. So,

let's do a brief review to make sure we are all on the same page.

The Devil was created as a guardian cherub, an angel of high position within the heavenly host, called Lucifer, Day Star, or Son of the Morning, depending on the Bible translation. (Isa. 14:12). Apparently, he was very much like the guardian cherubs assigned to guard the Garden of Eden once Adam and Eve were cast out of it. (Gen. 3:24). Now remove any picture in your mind of cute, chubby, cuddly, baby-faced cherubs with little bows who shoot arrows of love at people on Valentine's Day. We're talking about warrior angels in battle dress who wield flaming swords of death, here.

> "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering... On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. ... Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. (Eze. 28:12-15,17).

In other words, the Devil was initially made perfect, like the rest of God's creation. He was blameless until he became prideful and corrupted his wisdom. The extent of the Devil's pride and corruption is described in Isaiah, where it is made obvious that his ambitions were to sit on the throne of heaven and to be like God. Small wonder then, that he tempted Eve with the desire to be like God. (Gen. 3:5).

> "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'" (Isa. 14:13-14).

When the Devil became corrupt, he apparently convinced a third of the angelic host to defect, or rebel against God, along with him. (Rev. 12:4). This is the first angelic rebellion, which would have occurred prior to the temptation of Adam and Eve.

> ... God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment. (2 Pet. 2:4). And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day. (Jud. 6).

These *fallen angels*, that is, the participants in the angelic rebellion who were then cast out of heaven, are what are now known as *demons*. The Devil is the leader of these demon hordes. (Rev. 9:11). Again, put out of your mind any mental pictures of demons that you have seen in movies or TV shows. Also forget about *personal demons* in this context. We're not talking about your internal struggles, we're talking about rebellious angels - beings who are separate from us.

For his part, the Devil is variously called the *god of this world* (2 Cor. 4:4), the *ruler of this world* (Jn. 12:31; 14:30), and the *prince of the power of the air* (Eph. 2:2). According to 1 Jn. 5:19, the whole world lies in the power of the Devil.

However, in all of this the Devil has only one primary goal - the same one he has always had - to overthrow God and to rule over the earth in His place. Consequently, when we see the Devil's dominion described in scripture, it always relates to the kingdoms and governments of the world, as we will see next. Why else would the Devil have a throne? (Rev. 2:13).

THE DEVIL'S DOMINION

> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. (Col. 1:13).

In this verse we see contrasted the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. But the Devil's dominion is not like our dominion. Many people incorrectly assume that because the Devil is said to be the ruler of this world, he has taken over the dominion of the earth originally given to mankind in Eden. Or that somehow because of the fall of mankind, we forfeited our God-given dominion and it defaulted back to the Devil. But of course, the scriptures nowhere say any such thing. These are unmerited assumptions contradicted both by logic and the fact mankind's dominion was reaffirmed long after the fall. (Gen. 9:1*ff*).

The Devil isn't interested in subduing the earth (as in owning property, working the land, etc.), ruling over the animal kingdom (by using them for domestic labor, or keeping pets), or starting families, making babies and raising children. Oh, he uses property and people to achieve his purposes, but *other* people's property, *other* people's families, and *other* people's money. He isn't merely trying to secure a better future for his family and friends.

And the fact is, mankind's dominion has continued unabated ever since creation. People still make new families and have children, own property and transform the surface of the earth, work the land and rule over the animal kingdom. Nothing in the original Dominion Mandate (Gen. 1:28) has changed. I mean, if people stopped having babies, I must have missed it.

So when it is said the Devil rules this world, it means that at the same time people rule the world for *domestic* purposes, the Devil rules the world for some other purpose. Eph. 6:12 tells us that our spiritual warfare is directed against (depending on the translation), thrones, dominions, principalities, rulers, powers, and high places. All of these have one thing in common: they all pertain to *governments*. Not heavenly government, and not angelic government, but the real life governments we all deal with here on earth. What would you expect, given that the Devil's chief ambition is governmental in nature, *i.e.*, to rule the earth? He doesn't just want to boss other angels around.

This is made manifestly clear in the Devil's temptation of Jesus.

> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, ***for it has been delivered to me***, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." (Lk 4:5-7).

Now, the Old Testament scriptures never tell us that God gave the Devil authority over the kingdoms of the world. This has led some people to conclude that the Devil was merely lying when he claimed to have been given this authority, and he doesn't really have it at all - he just wants people to think he has it.

But I argue the Devil *had* to have the actual ability to deliver the world's kingdoms in order for Jesus to be genuinely tempted. If the Devil was lying, Jesus would have known he was lying, and that he could not actually deliver the kingdoms of the world. In which case, the Devil's empty promise would not have tempted Jesus at all, and to say that it was a temptation would be disingenuous. If the Devil was lying, Jesus would have seen right through it and laughed at him. Therefore, I take the Devil's claim to be a true statement.

Plus, there are several instances of things revealed in the New Testament about people in the Old Testament, that the O.T. itself never reveals. For instance, that Abraham was looking forward to the New Jerusalem. (Heb. 11:10). Or the fact that Moses was 40 years old when he fled Egypt, and 80 years old when he encountered God at the burning bush. (Acts 7:23, 30). So the Devil's statement would not be out of character compared to other N.T. statements.

Yet, there is still more evidence that the Devil does indeed have authority over the governments of the world. Namely, that the scriptures at various times refer to the Devil as being the king over a real world government. Thus, the Devil is referred to as the king of Tyre in Eze. 28:12, a real city along the Mediterranean coast. But in the next few verses, the king of Tyre is described as being made perfect as a guardian cherub, who was present in the Garden of Eden. Undoubtedly, the city of Tyre had a real human king, probably several of them over the course of history. But were any of them angels present in Eden? No.

The indication is that whoever actually occupied the office of the king of Tyre, the Devil was the one who was the real power behind the throne, and the human king merely served the Devil's pleasure. Another example is Isa. 14:4, where a taunt is raised against the king of Babylon, but later verses make clear the taunt is directed to Lucifer, who fell from the heavens. (Isa. 14:12). Now again, there were normal human beings who were king of Babylon in history - Nebuchadnezzar being one of them - but the clear indication is that the Devil was really running the Babylonian government.

Similarly, Isa. 14:25 is part of a prophecy directed against the Assyrian - not Assyria (the nation), or the Assyrians (a group of people), but one man. Which man? The Antichrist, the chief instrument of the Devil in waging war against God. And who is the Antichrist? He will be the leader of nations, specifically the ten nation confederation referred to as the beast kingdom in the end times. (Rev. 12:3; 13:1). Meaning that right up until the very end, the Devil will be exercising

dominion over the kingdoms and governments of the world. This is his *modus operandi*. This is who he is.

PROGRESS OF THE DEVIL'S KINGDOM

> Thus he said: "As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces." (Dan. 7:23).

When it comes to dominating the nations and governments of the world, the Devil is a man with a plan. You see, it takes time and effort to organize a global rebellion against God. Getting the fallen angels on board is one thing - but how can he get the people of the world to commit to his cause?

As we will see when we look at the Devil's need for infrastructure, especially the need for advanced global telecommunications and weaponry, it wasn't exactly feasible for the Devil to execute this rebellion any time in the past. So he been carefully laying the foundations, building the human networks and chains of command, and amassing the resources necessary to carry out the rebellion. It should be no surprise that these efforts will have manifested themselves in various nations in history.

Although the Antichrist, the False Prophet and the mark of the beast tend to grab all the attention, the many scriptures about end times prophecy tend to focus on the rise and fall of nations, kingdoms and empires. It is the movement of kingdoms and governments that really animates the greater part of end times prophecy. Movements which are, for the most part, orchestrated and controlled by the Devil. The one giant exception, of course, is the preservation and restoration of Israel, which is controlled and orchestrated by God, in spite of the Devil's best efforts. But even that is the movement of a kingdom.

The movement and control of the Gentile nations by the Devil throughout history and in end times prophecy is what makes up the kingdom of darkness. Thanks to two primary scriptures, Dan. 2 and Rev. 17, we have been given a pretty clear picture of what the kingdom of darkness has looked like in the past, as well as how it will appear in the future. Putting these scriptures together, we can see how the kingdom of darkness has morphed over the years, and track its progress even now. In fact, prophetic scriptures give us a lot of details concerning these nations.

The Great Dragon of Revelation

> And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. (Rev. 17:3).

The overall scheme is given to us in the word picture of the scarlet beast having seven heads and ten horns, mentioned in Rev. 12:3; 13:1 and 17:3. All of the *heads* and *horns* are symbolic of nations, governments, and rulers. The key to understanding the symbolism is to realize that the seven heads

refer to *past* world empires, and the horns refer to *future* nations and their leaders. Together, they give us a picture of the kingdom of darkness at its climax during the Tribulation.

Rev. 17:9-14 gives us the basic explanation of the symbolism. The scarlet beast, or red dragon, represents the kingdom of darkness throughout history, opposing the kingdom of God at every turn. The dragon, of course, is representative of the Devil, and symbolizes the fact that this final beast kingdom is his creation, and is under his leadership. (Remember, the beast kingdom is the kingdom of darkness when the Antichrist is put in charge of it.) The color red indicates that the chief characteristic of the kingdom of darkness is bloodshed, it being responsible for the deaths of countless people.

"This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings ..." (Rev. 17:9-10). So let's exercise a little wisdom. The seven mountains on which the woman sits *are not the seven hills of Rome* or any other city. They are not literal hills or physical mountains at all - they are seven kings, or kingdoms. This is *symbolic* language. **Heads = mountains = kingdoms**.

Don't waste your time looking for cities or places built on seven hills to understand this prophecy. The woman is the mother of harlots, that is, the source of all false religions in the world, tracing back to the Tower of Babel, and she sits on - or rules - all seven historical manifestations of the kingdom of darkness. Thus, none of the kingdoms of the world ruled by the Devil are informed by true religion. No surprise there.

The seven heads represent seven historical kingdoms, or world empires, that the devil has used to build his own empire of rebellion against God. When the book of Revelation was written, five of those empires had fallen, that is, were in the past as of 68 A.D. - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The sixth empire "now is," which is to say that from the viewpoint of John the Revelator, it then existed in 68 A.D. - the Roman empire. The seventh empire was future to John ("has not yet come"), *but is now in the past*.

We need not identify the seventh empire here, but suffice it to say the Roman empire could not have been *both* the sixth and seventh empires, and then *also* come back as the eighth empire. (Rev. 17:11). That interpretation would make Rome appear as *three* of the eight empires, when the scripture clearly indicates the eighth empire will be one of the first seven empires come back for only a second time. So whether you think Rome will reappear as the final empire or not, it cannot also be the seventh empire. Somewhere in history, after Rome, there is another key player.

Thus, one of these seven past empires will make a resurgence, that is, it will come to power a second time. Rev. 17:11 counts this empire as an *eighth* kingdom, but in reality it is still one of the original seven, which is why the beast only has seven heads, not eight. All of the seven heads must be *different* empires. Again, people often interpret this scripture so that Rome, as the sixth empire, returns as the "final" seventh empire, but this can never be right, because it is one empire short of what the scripture requires. There will be *eight* historical manifestations of the kingdom of darkness, not seven.

On the other hand, the ten horns are not to be taken historically, but are ten future kings (*i.e.*, ten nations) which will form a confederacy in order to revive one of the prior world empires. Rev. 17:14 tells us that this last empire in the kingdom of darkness will make war against the Lamb (Jesus), but the Lamb will conquer them. This is a word picture of the Second Coming of Christ, when he will destroy the kingdom of darkness in its entirety at Armageddon.

The Great Statue of Nebuchadnezzar

> "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay." (Dan. 2:31-33).

The same story (in abbreviated form) is told 600 years earlier, through Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a mighty statue. In that dream, the statue had five layers, representing five world empires, but beginning with Babylon as the top layer. The next three layers of the statue represent the empires of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and the bottom layer jumps to the final version of the kingdom of darkness. Notice that Nebuchadnezzar's dream tracks with the word picture of the red dragon in Rev. 17, but it only covers five of the eight total empires. Egypt, Assyria and the seventh kingdom are ignored in the dream.

From Daniel's perspective in 600 B.C., Babylon was the world empire then in power, and all the other kingdoms were still future. The vision ended with a stone cut from a mountain by no human hand (the stone, or rock in scripture is always Christ) which destroys the statue and *all* of its layers by smashing them into dust. A mountain is almost always the symbolic representation of a kingdom in prophecy, so the stone cut from a mountain by the hand of God represents the kingdom of God and His Christ. The kingdom of Christ will utterly destroy the kingdom of darkness, which the mighty statue represents.

Notice that Christ does not merely conquer the bottom layer of the statue, or the final version of the kingdom of darkness. Rather, by smashing the statue in its entirety, Christ will destroy the very foundation of the kingdom of darkness, eliminating even the historical remnants of that kingdom wherever they may be found. All the governmental structures, systems, networks, methods, instrumentalities and war machinery that the devil has carefully developed over the last few millennia will all be rooted out and destroyed.

Not coincidentally, the ten toes of the feet of the statue represent the ten kings (or nations) of the final empire in the kingdom of darkness, the beast kingdom ruled by the Antichrist. Of their destruction, scripture says,

> And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. (Dan 2:44).

This statement, that the kingdom of darkness will *be brought to an end*, and the kingdom of Christ *shall stand forever*, effectively means that when the kingdom of Christ comes, it will be the last kingdom on earth. The kingdom of darkness will never rise again on the face of the earth, and it will have no new iterations. This is the full extent of the governmental destruction which will pave the way for a kingdom of righteousness.

What Makes the Kingdom of Darkness So Evil?

> Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; ***sin is lawlessness***. (1 Jn. 3:4).

Now, you might wonder what it is that makes the kingdom of darkness, or the Devil's kingdom, so evil. Is it the fact people will reject Christ as Savior, or that they will suffer from the sin of unbelief? What do the scriptures say?

Paul tells us that when the Antichrist appears, he will be the *man of lawlessness*, or the *lawless one* - not The Man Who Would Not Be Saved, nor The Man Who Would Not Believe. He further said that *the mystery of lawlessness is already at work*. (2 Th. 2:3-9). In other words, the Devil has been using lawlessness to entice people from the beginning, and when his kingdom reaches its zenith, the man who leads it will be characterized by lawlessness.

Lawlessness is what makes the kingdom of darkness so evil - it is not merely that people yield to temptation or refuse to accept Christ. Instead, the kingdom of darkness is all about fomenting a rebellion against the laws of God and commands of Christ. This is what the Psalmist wrote about:

> Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." (Ps. 2:1-3).

Many commentators see this text as referring to the crucifixion of Christ, but I suggest there is a latter days component to this prophecy, as well. Every aspect of this scripture is being fulfilled at this moment.

The nations are indeed having Days of Rage, and are generally in an uproar. The leaders of nations, as well as the unseen powers behind the thrones, are taking counsel together against God and His Christ, particularly the laws of God and the commands of Christ. What are the *bonds* (shackles) and *cords* (ropes) the world is trying to get out of and away from, if not the constraints and restrictions of God's laws? To the nations, God's laws are the problem, and lawlessness is the solution.

Thus, when we look at the progression of kingdoms represented by the great statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as the kingdoms move from gold to silver to brass to iron to iron mixed with clay (the beast kingdom), each kingdom becomes less worthy, or more sinful and lawless, than the prior one. Each version of the kingdom of darkness becomes more morally corrupt than the prior

version. However, from the Devil's perspective, he is gradually perfecting the organization and structure of a kingdom of evil. To him, increased lawlessness is progress.

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (Col. 1:16).

When it comes to understanding the nature of spiritual warfare, Col. 1:16 is often linked with our principal theme verse, Eph. 6:12 ("For we wrestle not against flesh and blood," etc.). It's easy to assume, looking at the language of these verses, that the battle between good and evil is happening *up there*, in heaven. AS IF you and I are actually going to wrestle with angels in the heavens. Or, alternately, that the only thing we can do to engage in this battle is to pray about beings who are otherwise unreachable. *Spiritual warfare is not mainly about angels.*

If you have ever studied traditional *angelology* (the doctrine of angels), do yourself a huge favor and ***forget it***. Unfortunately, there is a long church tradition misconstruing Eph. 6:12 and Col. 1:16, treating words like *thrones, dominions, powers* and *principalities*, not in the normal sense of the words, but as the specific names of distinct classes (or orders) of angels. Such a reading of these verses is completely unsupported in the scriptures.

But some guy, writing around 500 A.D., and claiming to be Dionysius the Areopagite, a person mentioned in Acts 17:34 and therefore who lived around 62 A.D., laid out a hierarchy of nine orders of angels, based largely on non-biblical sources. Here is his hierarchy:

1. Seraphim	4. Dominions	7. Principalities
2. Cherubim	5. Virtues	8. Archangels
3. Thrones	6. Powers	9. Angels

This author, whose true identity is unknown, also gave detailed descriptions of the primary duties of the nine orders of angels. I find fault with this angelic hierarchy for a number of reasons: 1) much of it is based on non-biblical sources which are, by definition, non-authoritative; 2) five of the nine titles ascribed to a class of angels have nothing to do with angels at all; 3) the structure and organization of the hierarchy is completely fictitious (consisting of three "choirs" of three orders each); and 4) the most importance is given to angels serving a hyper-spiritual purpose as opposed to those serving a material purpose.

The scriptures do indeed use the words, *seraphim, cherubim*, and *archangels*. But no indication is given in scripture that *angels* is anything other than a general reference to all angels. In other words, *angels* is nowhere treated as a lesser form of angels than seraphim, cherubim, and archangels. One big clue as to how far this guy was from the truth is that *by definition*, archangels (if there is indeed an angelic hierarchy) are at the top, not the bottom. The prefix *arch-* means "chief, principal," and God knows this, too.

Further, the words, *thrones, dominions, powers* and *principalities* clearly refer to kingdoms and governments. *Throne* refers to the seat of a government's chief ruler, and *dominion* to the territory of a kingdom. *Power* refers to the rulers of a kingdom, and a *principality* is the jurisdiction of a king or prince. So when these words are used in Eph. 6:12 or Col. 1:16, it means that God not only created individuals, He also created nations and kingdoms and their dominions as well. And that's all it means.

> When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, *he fixed the borders of the peoples* according to the number of the sons of God. (Dt. 32:8). And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, *having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place*. (Acts 17:26).

In other words, national dominions (borders) are not accidental, but are fixed by God. When any of these words are used in Eph. 6:12, it means that the primary location of the battle between good and evil is to be found in and around the kingdoms and governments of the earth. All of which is completely consistent with the ambitions and methodology of the Devil.

So the battle is very much going on *down here* on earth. The key phrase is the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, or the *world forces of this darkness*. That is, these spiritual beings or dark forces aren't winning any converts or gaining any ground in the heavenly places. The angels are not killing each other in the heavens, or recruiting each other to switch sides. The only place they can gain people or territory is here on earth, so they are bringing darkness with them from the heavens to assert power and authority on the earth.

Which means that these forces of darkness are participating in, and to a large extent controlling, the civil governments of the nations of the world. When the scripture says *our struggle is not against flesh and blood,* it is not talking about angels. We are of course fighting against other people who oppose God and His laws, but not merely the people themselves. Rather, we struggle against the ideas and spiritual forces that control and direct these people. We have to always realize that merely defeating this or that person will not kill the ideas and forces animating them. The mantle of darkness will simply be picked up by someone new, as long as the forces of darkness are free to roam the earth.

One of the chief tactics of the devil in building his kingdom is to not merely encourage individual people to sin - to commit lawlessness, but to organize and orchestrate lawlessness on a global scale. In other words, to corrupt organizations and systems, especially governments, to create an environment of sin that is inescapable. It is almost impossible to participate in any of these systems without - at some level - participating in, or aiding and assisting, the overall lawlessness of the system. If you try to infiltrate the system and be a beacon of light, they will root you out and expel you.

So when Jesus defeats and destroys the kingdom of darkness in the future, one of His chief objectives will be to remove all systemic inducements to commit lawlessness. Which is why every

organization and institutional structure created by man will be entirely wiped away as a result of the Tribulation and the Second Coming. It is also why new structures, systems and organizations will need to be put in place to make sure lawlessness is never institutionalized again.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of people in your nation, state, community and neighborhood are simply going along with the system in order to get along. They are compliant and complicit with evil, even if they don't know that is what they're doing, because they believe it will make their lives easier in some respect.

> The coming of the lawless one is ... with all *wicked deception* for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a *strong delusion*, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Th. 2:9-12).

Thus, the true nature of spiritual warfare is not that we will physically wrestle with angels or cast demons into the abyss. Nor is it merely to pray for our leaders, that "God may help them see the truth and make right decisions." *Gag me*. (They cannot see the truth, because they are strongly deluded.) Rather, ***our primary role in this battle is to pierce the veil of wicked deception created by the Devil, and to see through the delusion which blinds the lost for ourselves***. Only God can remove the veil for others. "And he [God] will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations." (Isa. 25:7).

If this sounds vaguely familiar to you, it's because you've seen the movie, *The Matrix (1999)*: "The matrix .. is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." "What truth?" "That you are a slave. ... Like everyone else, you were born into bondage. Born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch - a prison for your mind." It sounds pretty much like the Fall, doesn't it?

The scriptures tell us that the spirit of the antichrist is now in the world already. (1 Jn. 4:3). And the Devil is working hard to recruit as many useful idiots as he can, in order to help him execute his plan. They are all around you - your family, your friends, your neighbors. Don't be alarmed - they're all just captured by the matrix. And you cannot free them unless they want to be freed.

NOTHING BUT A PAWN

It's Not About You

> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Col. 1:17).

God doesn't need you. He doesn't need you, me, or anyone. God is all sufficient by Himself, and needs nothing from us. God is not like Tinkerbell, who needs people to believe in Him or else He will perish. Everything we will ever have came from Him, so there is nothing we can ever give Him that He didn't already have while we possess it, and nothing He can't get back from us if He wants

to use it elsewhere. [Note: I never said God doesn't *love* you. But He doesn't *need* to love you, or for you to love Him, in order for Him to be fully God.]

People in churches talk about giving money and things to God all the time, but this is a complete fallacy. Sure, I can use my earthly possessions for the honor and glory of God to do His will, but I can't actually give anything ***to*** Him. Whatever I have ultimately came from God and He gave it to me by one means or another. Thus, He had everything I have before I had it. Even the things I invent or make were made or invented by the mind and hands God gave me, without which I would have been unable to invent or make anything.

When I take any of the money or other things God has given me and give them to my church or any other person, God owns those things the church or other person possesses, because they are no different from me. And whoever they distribute those funds or things to, God owns them too, and He can take them away from any of those people and redirect them to another use or person at any time without notice.

Meaning, God owns everything of mine equally before I transfer it to someone else, and afterwards. *By my transfer, I have not increased God's assets or holdings by one atom.* He already owns the whole earth, and everyone and everything on it. (Ps. 24:1). So I can truly give nothing to Him, and if He wants to redirect the use of any assets, He doesn't need me to do it for Him. He is perfectly capable and willing to do that on His own initiative. If, in fact, I could actually give anything to God, then He really wouldn't be All Sufficient, would He?

What goes for possessions also goes for people. God does not need more followers than the Devil, or more followers tomorrow than He has today. Contrary to what you may have heard, God is not waiting for the ultimate number of believers to be complete, or for the Church to be filled up. There is no filling point - no magic number of ultimate believers. *God gains absolutely nothing from having more believers rather than less.* As I said earlier, the gate and the way to salvation have always been narrow, and the number of people who find it will always be a distinct minority - a mere remnant. That's the way God planned it.

There is absolutely nothing you, I, anyone, or all of us can do to change either the timing or the manner of the coming of the kingdom of Christ. We can not hasten its coming, and we cannot delay it. Nothing we can ever do will enable or empower the kingdom in any way. When Jesus returns and the saints accompany Him as the Antichrist and the Devil's armies are destroyed, all the saints will do is look on and observe. They will fight or kill no one - they will not engage in battle. Nothing about the manner or extent of the outcome will depend on the saints who are there. (2Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:14-15).

So you see, God doesn't need you or me. He doesn't need our things, our belief in Him, our conversion, or our minds, our power or our strength to do whatever He wants in the world. He desires our love and fellowship, of course - but He does not *need* it. Everything you have, and everything you are, came from Him in the first place. And if you believe Reformed teaching, even the faith that you have comes from God, so He never needed that either.

Devil Spawn, or Devil's Pawn?

> And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. (Rev. 20:7-8).

The Devil, however, desperately needs you. Everything we have and are, did *not* come by his hand. He needs as many people as possible to help him accomplish his goal of overthrowing God by force, so the Devil can sit on the heavenly throne and rule the world. He needs you to help give him the advantage he did not have in the first angelic rebellion, namely, the military might of the world. After all, when the armies of the Antichrist gather against Jerusalem to overtake it at Armageddon, the Devil will have the same number of angelic forces as he did in the first angelic rebellion in the past. The only difference will be the human forces aligned with him as well.

However, the Devil's need for people is always temporary. Unlike the saints, none of whom will die in battle, the human armies of the Devil will die by the millions. Their only purpose is to die for the Devil and put him into power, if possible. After that, they will be of no use, except perhaps as slaves. To the Devil, his many followers will merely be pawns used to gain an advantage for himself. There will not be any rewards, honor or glory for the Devil's followers, for all of those are merely an illusion, a grand deception based on empty promises.

Which means that in every generation of mankind, the Devil is constantly recruiting people who will follow his lead, wittingly or unwittingly. (And the more dimwit, the better.) You see, that is the only way he can gain followers. It's not as though the Devil is capable of having any actual offspring in order to carry out his wishes. Neither the Devil nor his demons ever did, or ever will, go around impregnating women for the sake of creating unholy offspring. God never gave any of the angels the ability to reproduce. There are no Devil spawn walking among us.

(**Aside:** Gen. 6:2, "the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive, and they took as their wives any they chose" only refers to ordinary, everyday men and women, regular people. This is not a reference to angels mating with humans. If you're curious, I explain why this particular language was used in Gen. 6 in *Lonang Law of Inheritance: Adam and Eve*, at https://lonang.com/commentaries/foundation/law-and-religion/lonang-law-of-inheritance/.)

Of course you, me and everyone has the power to escape the Devil's hand at any time, simply by accepting the salvation that God offers through Christ. But the Devil needs people to ignore that option, meaning that he needs spiritually ignorant people who can be more easily duped. Multitudes of dupes who either don't know, or don't care, that the Devil needs them to help wage his war against God, and die for him. Billions of dupes who are ultimately expendable. Ironically, those condemned dupes will eventually mock and humiliate the Devil in hell forever. But that will be a small comfort to those who will be there.

Everyone, it turns out, is merely a pawn in the battle of good vs. evil. Yes, you can pick a side, and that choice is *extremely* significant, but absolutely nothing you do will change how or when the

battle will be joined, or its outcome. Ultimately, it's not about *you* at all.

THE DEVIL NEEDS INFRASTRUCTURE

The Times of the End Are Near

> "Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" (Rev. 12:12).

It is a perfectly logical and natural question to ask, *Why hasn't the Devil launched his all-out attack against God before now, and what makes anyone think the present time is the perfect opportunity?*

In the coming physical kingdom of Christ (the Millennial kingdom), people will be the ones who carry out the administration and tasks of its government. The Jews will handle the government of the land of Israel, the administration of the worldwide religion of Christ headquartered in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and mediate between Christ and the Gentile nations for religious purposes. The resurrected saints, meanwhile, will administer the government of the rest of the earth (*i.e.*, the Gentile nations). I explained this in detail in *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, and in *The Last Kingdom on Earth*.

Similarly, in the present age God also works through His people. (*See*, Jn. 14:12; Gal. 2:20; Php. 2:13; Eph. 2:10.) This is the case, even though God is infinite and all powerful. God is the ruler of His kingdom, but He delegates responsibilities to His people to carry out - He does not do everything Himself, personally.

Yet, while we wait for the kingdom of Christ, there is another competing kingdom on the rise. The Devil's kingdom is waiting for the right opportunity to pounce, to annihilate the people of God so as to prevent the kingdom of God from arriving. And the Devil, not being either infinite or all powerful, is even much more dependent on people doing his will than God ever would be. In raw terms, the Devil is just one guy - he can only be in one place at a time (he is not omnipresent like God is), he only knows the information he is given (he is not omniscient like God), and he only has the powers God gave him at his creation (he is not all-powerful like God).

Therefore, the Devil needs help, that is, infrastructure. In fact, he utterly depends on it. He is not able to read peoples' thoughts, nor to speak either in heaven above or the earth below and be heard many miles away. In short, the Devil needs established lines of communication, through which he can pass messages to his followers.

Remember, the Devil desperately wants to be like God. So he needs a mechanism which makes him *appear* as though he is omnipresent, that is, the ability to contact people anywhere around the globe instantly. An ability which modern telecommunications and the internet now allow him to do. And to appear omniscient, he needs a global network of information gatherers who can feed information to a central source, which the Devil can access. And to appear all-powerful, he needs an army of

followers who will carry out his instructions to the letter in a coordinated manner.

The Devil has, of course, been developing human networks, chains of command, and other various social structures to do his bidding, ever since the Tower of Babel and the beginnings of the earliest empires of darkness, Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, etc. But what he has been *waiting* for is the ability to send and receive communications globally across all of his networks simultaneously and instantly. *This* he has never been able to do until now. No, I'm not suggesting the Devil has a personal phone number where he can be direct dialed. All he needs are a few key people who do have phones who can send and receive communications up and down the network chain on his behalf.

Do you seriously doubt that such a network exists in the world? Check out this video on our website at https://lonang.com/wp-content/download/ThereIsNoConspiracy.mp4. The video shows that newscasters from 36 different broadcasters affiliated with the Fox, ABC, CBS and NBC networks, as well as several independent stations, all repeated in their broadcasts this exact language:

> "We are concerned about someone [unintelligible] irresponsible one-sided news stories plaguing our country. The sharing of biased and false news has become all too common on social media. More alarming, some media outlets publish these same fake stories without checking facts first. Unfortunately, some members of the media use their platforms to push their own personal bias and agenda to control exactly what people think. This is extremely dangerous to our democracy."

How is something like this pulled off? It cannot be purely random. This can only happen by way of a coordinated effort. But coordinated by whom? Newscasters at Fox, ABC, CBS and NBC do not all work for the same employer, and their employers are not all held under common control. Who has the power to dictate language across multiple "independent" broadcasters? Well, someone certainly does. These newscasters did not simply all come up with the same speech at the same time completely independently of each other.

In fact, not to be derogatory, but it is clear these newscasters are merely readers - people who read on camera language written by others. But think of all the people who this language must pass through - writers, teleprompter techs, producers, editors, managers, and probably some executives - at every single media outlet. All of whom must be predisposed to pass along this language without deviation, without comment, and without question. Do you not see *Pawns At Work* here? I've never seen a church prayer chain work this well.

As I see it, the Devil needs infrastructure to provide him with the effective means of doing three things: 1) establishing a global network of communications and chain of command; 2) propagating false religions around the world and infiltrating the organizational structures of institutional religion; and 3) establishing a mechanism for the continual recruiting of useful idiots to serve as his minions.

Globalism Is A Good Thing, Right?

> "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11:4).

Recall our previous discussion of the Devil's dominion over the kingdoms and governments of the world, and the temptation of Jesus relating to that. From the Devil's viewpoint, his dominion is *over and above* the nations of the world. He does not serve any political leaders - they serve him. But it's one thing to influence each nation and government separately behind the scenes - it's another thing entirely to formally organize them in a supra-national body for all the world to see and accept.

If the goal is to rule over all the nations of the world by exercising a universal (global) sovereignty - and that is the Devil's goal - then it only makes sense to advocate for a global body having supra-national authority, such as the United Nations, which is postured to be *over and above* the nations of the world. The more the U.N. increases in power, dominance and sovereignty, the more: 1) it becomes an efficient engine for implementing global political policy; and 2) people around the world will become used to global sovereignty and more accepting of an eventual one-world government.

Thus, the push for globalism in recent years is no accident. You think it merely coincidental that at this time there are multiple mass migrations of populations around the world? Whole population groups are resettling in new areas where they have never been before. Some of it is a result of regional wars, and some of it is being bought and paid for by sponsors of mass migrations who openly recruit, organize and transport illegal migrants. None of which is truly a result of "grass root" migration, but is instead being orchestrated at the highest levels.

Working hand-in-hand with the U.N. is the Council on Foreign Relations, a foreign policy organization with an extremely broad membership, whose main objective is to push globalization efforts. It is no coincidence that its members include key players in media, politics, education and even religion. If anyone could launch a coordinated global policy initiative, it is the CFR.

I'm not saying that every world leader is necessarily on board with this globalist agenda, but certainly the vast majority of them are. Because for one thing, many world leaders would never have risen up the ranks of national leadership in the first place, unless they had been not only approved, but groomed, for holding that position - either by their membership in the CFR or a similar group.

National borders are being systematically broken down and openly denounced, and like never before national leaders are doing everything they can to make sure border laws are not, and cannot be, enforced. Illegal immigration has been converted from a national security issue into a humanitarian crisis, and this is also not by accident - it plays on people's sympathies to be more accepting of illegal immigration.

Then add in the increased assertion of authority of the World Court, national laws being superseded by U.N. resolutions and U.N. negotiated treaties, and a gradual but relentless release of national sovereignties to the U.N. Altogether, we have a vast, coordinated effort to undermine, and ultimately destroy, the division of the world into separate nations and governments.

And thus we see everything coming in full circle. Keep in mind that nations were not created by people, but by God. He did that when He scattered the world's population by language and family group following the Tower of Babel incident.

> Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.... And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth.... Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. (Gen. 11:1, 6-9).

Thus we see that God created the nations specifically for the purpose of *preventing the world's population from being unified and acting as one people*. Because when all of humanity gets together, its primary purpose is to rebel against God.

All of which plays right into the Devil's plan. The world is much easier to control when all the people are coordinated and acting together, and it also makes it much easier to foment a rebellion against the God who split them apart in the first place. So you may think that the globalization effort is very new, but in fact it is very old. It is just that the forces of darkness never had the means to bring about a unification of the world since Babel until now. This is the moment they have been waiting for.

But just as the nature and intentions of the Devil have never changed, so human nature has never changed either. There they were, thousands of years ago, building a monument to their own greatness. A greatness built upon their own opinion of how magnificent they were, raised against the God who would restrain them.

So here we are now, trying to unify the world by obliterating borders and forming a one-world economic system of co-dependency. Global markets, global communications, global transportation, and global surveillance. Getting ready to present ourselves as one people eager and willing to make First Contact with an alien race, to finally figure out we are not alone in the universe. All while being completely oblivious of the fact that we have never been alone - God has always been with us. It is just the Tower of Babel 2.0. *Woohoo!*

The Truth About False Religions

> "And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth." (Rev. 17:18).

I mentioned earlier that the woman referred to here is the source of all false religions in the world, who has ruled over the kingdom of darkness from its beginning. In other words, this source of false religions is *over and above* the nations and governments of the world, because symbolically it ('she') sits on top of the kingdom of darkness. In this context, forget all about the separation of church and state, and any concepts of religion and government being equal. False religion is on top, and the nations and governments of the world take their instructions from it, not the other way around.

Now the propagation of false religions around the world is sometimes, but relatively rarely, the outright worship of the Devil, or Satanism. Yes, devil worshipers do exist, and they continue to press for acceptance in the mainstream, but they have always been *outliers*. And of course, there have always been huge portions of the world population who have been captured by idolatry, ancestor worship, worship of the sun, moon or stars, and the worship of other false gods. But such tactics only go so far. How is the Devil supposed to penetrate the Christianized part of the world?

Traditionally, inroads into Christendom have been made via *syncretism*. Syncretism is the attempted fusion of irreconcilable religious principles, typically by taking Christianity and adding an incompatible philosophy to it. For example, *Liberation Theology* is essentially a marriage of Christianity with Marxism. The book of Galatians was largely written to fend off the effort to merge Christianity with Judaism, that is, the idea that one could not be a Christian unless the Jewish law was also complied with. In fact, any merger of Christianity with works-based salvation principles is a form of syncretism, such as Mormonism. Similarly, Roman Catholicism has in many ways absorbed the teachings and practices of non-Christian cultures, and is syncretistic in many ways.

(I know some of you are convinced the Pope will be the Antichrist, and the Vatican/Catholic Church is the mother of all false religions. I urge you to take care, and see the bigger picture. Certainly, the Catholic church is not the *source* of Islam, or Buddhism, or many of the other false religions of the world. Regardless of the extent to which you believe Catholicism has accommodated itself to non-Christian religious practices, it is not old enough, nor has it ever been influential enough globally, to have spawned ***all*** of them. We are looking for something larger than Catholicism here.)

The main problem with syncretism is that people think they are participating in true Christianity, when they are not. And I don't want to give a free pass to Protestant churches in general or to Evangelicalism specifically, because false teachings are present in every religious environment. It is impossible to find a pure expression of Christianity anywhere. Of course, from the Devil's perspective, that is the whole point. Make everything partially corrupted, so people can't tell the truth from what is false. *Job well done!*

But as I look at what is happening in those arenas where globalism and/or universalism is being promoted, I see something slightly different - a variation on theme that I call *arch-syncretism*. Take Freemasonry, for example, which bills itself as a fraternal and civic organization, but has a strong religious component. Freemasonry promotes the belief that they have been able to collect, as it were, the best and most beneficial principles of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, etc., even going so far as to include the "best" principles of ancient Egyptian religion, and then put them all

together into a universal framework.

Thus, as a member of a Masonic lodge, each person can still consider themselves to be an individual Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, or whatever - *so long as they submit their personal religious preference to the principles of the universal beliefs of Freemasonry*. In this way, it is not so much that something else has been added to Christianity, as it is that Christianity is itself merely a smaller part of a larger system of beliefs that is *over and above* each of the component religions. Are you noticing a theme? That's why Freemasonry and globalism go together so well.

(**Aside:** Freemasonry is not the only belief system utilizing arch-syncretism. The philosophy of Carl Jung, based on his system of archetypes, is remarkably similar.)

Of course, strictly from a biblical Christian perspective, there are no *best principles* of ancient Egyptian religious beliefs or practices. There are no best principles of Islam worth collecting, and so forth. Christianity, like God Himself, is all-sufficient unto itself - it needs nothing from elsewhere. Every true principle of life is contained within it. The flip side is that biblical Christianity, as I explained earlier, is essentially non-globalist, because it sees the connection between the Tower of Babel experience and modern globalism. And that connection only means that big trouble is coming.

Yes, it can be argued that in Freemasonry, this arch-syncretistic belief system not only is of the Devil in its origin, it ultimately points to the Devil directly as "The Light-Bearer" - the ultimate source of truth. This should be no surprise, since scripture clearly indicates the Devil often disguises himself as an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14). But the vast majority of freemasons are never told this, of course. That's because they don't really *need* to know. After all, they're only pawns, and they were recruited for that exact purpose, as we will discuss next.

The Role of Secret Societies

> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Pet. 5:8).

The world is filled with secret societies, at every level of social status. Some are located on college campuses, such as the Skull and Bones, a/k/a The Brotherhood of Death, at Yale University. Other secret societies are only for the ultra-rich and influential, such as the Bilderberg Group, or Bilderbergers. There are also several groups connected with, or claiming to be, The Illuminati, including the Bavarian Illuminati, the Ordo Templi Orientis, and others. You could drive yourself nuts trying to discover the names and true purposes of these many secret societies.

Some groups claim to have secret knowledge handed down by Jesus Himself, but this is a false claim. You see, there is no secret knowledge or wisdom that is from God. All godly knowledge and wisdom is freely available to anyone. Don't be misled by Mat. 13:11, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." Jesus only meant that He gave the apostles the interpretations of His parables (which we have preserved in the

scriptures), but were not told to the public at the time. Jesus did not impart additional secret knowledge or wisdom to the disciples which was not recorded in scripture, but was transmitted through secret orders and societies - that is just a lie.

Truth be told, such claims are just a New Testament variation on the Jewish *Halakah*, supposedly derived from the oral traditions handed down by Moses apart from the scriptures. Jewish secret knowledge and Christian secret knowledge are the same in one key respect - they are both ***false***.

My purpose here is not to do an exposé on any specific secret groups, but merely to affirm that many of them do, in fact, exist - and that they all are part of the kingdom of darkness, unwittingly or (more often) with full knowledge. Some secret societies hide their existence (Illuminati, etc.), other societies exist openly, but merely hide what they do internally (Masonic Lodges). Recently, Freemasons in particular have allowed documentary films to be made showing what goes on inside their lodges, in an attempt to diffuse public speculation and conspiracy theories. However, these films reveal more than they realize, showing the extent of arch-syncretism within them.

Those who study secret societies tend to believe their members are pulling the strings of governments, the banking and financial system, and the media behind the scenes. Secret societies are often accused of having started wars, financial collapses, and similar social unrest. In other words, people who study secret societies tend to view the members of those societies as ultimately being *in charge* of causing major world events for their own private purposes (always contrary to the public good).

What I suggest is that the members of these secret societies are not actually in charge at all, which is to say, they are merely puppets of the kingdom of darkness. They are being manipulated by the rulers of the darkness of this world, the spiritual forces in high places - that's who is really in charge. For all of their wealth, their power and their influence, even these highly placed people pulling strings in the background are merely pawns.

With this in mind, secret societies serve two main purposes. *First*, to serve as the backbone of the Devil's communication network and chain of command that he needs for infrastructure. *Second*, to keep this network alive and functioning over many years (and many lifetimes), secret societies need to be constantly recruiting more pawns.

Secret Societies are portrayed as selecting the elite for membership, weeding out the chaff, as it were, and grooming members for a greater role in the world. They posture themselves as having the key to success, wealth, power, wisdom or fame in order to appear attractive to new recruits. They are able to place their members into high social positions. They watch out for each other's backs and help each other out in difficult situations. They build on the strength of loyalty and commitment to a higher purpose.

Secret societies are often characterized by initiation rituals that are (to most people) degrading or humiliating, as well as by secret signs, handshakes and symbols that are revealed to members as they advance in rank within. But have you ever wondered why they do these things? Or, who are these

societies really weeding out, and who are they really accepting?

They are really weeding out the nonconformists, *i.e.*, independent people who think for themselves. Who they are really accepting is the conformists, people who willingly submit their own wills to the will of another, and are willing to be manipulated because they thing they will gain something from it. That is why they are useful idiots, or dupes. They submit their wills to the will of persons often unknown, unseen, in locations undisclosed, to accomplish purposes that are untold.

Most of them are trading material benefits now in this life, and sacrificing eternal life in the hereafter. It is a shortsighted trade-off. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mk. 8:36). Yet, there seems to be no shortage of people willing to make this deal.

You see, the members of secret societies don't have to be *evil* to be useful. They can be nice, pleasant people who are good members of society and religious folk. They just have to be *willing and submissive* to be useful. And the people who are the most submissive are the ones who are the most ignorant of the kingdom of darkness and how it uses them as pawns. Nice, pleasant, submissive and ignorant - the exact qualifications of every ideal church congregation. I mean, what minister or priest wants a congregation full of unsubmissive, independent thinkers? I've never met one. Which makes your average church congregation a fertile ground for finding recruits, sadly.

Especially with Freemasonry Scottish Rite, going through 33 degrees of rank requires learning gestures, symbols, signs and code words specific to each degree. The gestures and signs are not themselves significant - but as one advances in rank, they must continually, and increasingly, conform to instructions without question, perform the ritual exactly as given to them, and submit to the will of others. The ultimate expectation, of course, is that at some crucial point in time they will be called on to follow instructions, without deviation, without knowing who the instructions originally came from, but most importantly of all, *without question*. They are merely pawns - useful idiots to carry out a coordinated effort.

It can be argued that dark and sinister forces are the source of these instructions, but the tenets of Freemasonry, and I suspect other secret societies as well, are specifically designed to hide the true meaning of things, even from the members of the society. Thus, even if the upper-most echelon of Freemasonry was engaged in devil worship, the masses of members wouldn't know it. They are mere pawns who are ultimately expendable, because members can always be replaced. Which is why recruitment of new members is continually ongoing. Every member of a secret society can be, and eventually will be, replaced. Only the dark purposes are permanent - the people are expendable.

GAME OF THRONES

> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and

pure, were following him on white horses. (Rev. 19:11-14).

The stage is almost set for the grand battle between good and evil, between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. The Devil has had time to put his plans into action, and aided by technology he is more ready than ever before to launch his final assault on the kingdom of God. We know scripture has a lot to say about the scenario that will play out in the end times. What will be the role of the Devil's pawns during that time? What do the scriptures say?

Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap

> As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray." (Mt. 24:3-5).

The very first thing Jesus says when He is asked when He will return, is *don't be led astray*. In other words, *guard against succumbing to the delusion that holds everyone else*, *i.e.*, *don't stay in the matrix that blinds the rest of the world*. Penetrate the deception, and break free from the matrix. People will try to fool you - don't you be fooled. The kingdom of darkness is not your friend - it only brings destruction.

And the Devil's tool of choice will be false religion. Do you want to know what to do? Don't follow the crowd. Don't seek political correctness or religious acceptance from the powers that control the world. Don't follow the influencers on social media. Only the chosen few, as it were, will see the truth and choose the path that leads to life. And who are these many people - the crowd - who do not find the way that leads to life? They are the Devil's pawns.

> "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains." (Mt. 24:7-8).

Aren't all of these things happening right now, with increasing frequency? Is there any doubt that this scripture has already been fulfilled, and the birth pains have begun? Truly I say unto you, the kingdom of darkness is on the move.

> "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake." (Mt. 24:9). "You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake." (Lk. 21:16-17).

Have you ever asked yourself (regarding Mt. 24:9), who is *they*? 'They' will persecute you, hate you, and kill you, *you who don't conform to the mass of humanity* in either political or religious matters (which of course will be one and the same). But who are *they*? Luke answers the question - *they* will be your family, your friends and your neighbors. Not merely government officials, or the

secret police, *per se*. But the people closest to you, who know the most about you, and who can easily observe (spy on) you. The people you think will protect you, won't. The Devil's pawns will be the civilians all around you. Think Nazi Germany, only ten times worse.

Notice the change in scope, as well. Jesus said the wars, famines and earthquakes will be *in various places*. But the persecution and hatred will be in *all nations* - in other words, everywhere. There will be no escape. Fleeing to another country will do you no good. This will all be made possible, of course, as a result of the establishment of a one world government and the practical eradication of national borders. Do you still think globalization is a good thing? Just wait.

> "And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold." (Mt. 24:10-12).

We started out this section by asking what role the Devil's pawns will have in the end times. Well, here it is. Every time you see the word *many*, just think of them. The Devil's pawns will fall away (leave true faith), and betray and hate one another. The Devil's pawns will be led astray (deceived and deluded). The Devil's pawns will become lawless and lose any love they had. Who are they again? Oh right - everyone you know, basically. Everyone wants to be on the winning side.

> "But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Mt. 24:13-14). "They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness." (Lk. 21:12-13).

"*This* gospel of the kingdom" - what gospel is that again? Well sure, it *might* very well include the good news of how to pierce the deception and leave the matrix by accepting the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ - *possibly*. But ***think*** about it. If someone does that, at that time, when world persecution of Christians means almost instant death, what would be the incentive to do that? No one will want to become an immediate target of persecution. However, people might very well be looking for an *escape*. Recall that Jesus is speaking here in Mt. 24 in response to the question, "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

In other words, the disciples are asking about, and Jesus is talking about, the Second Coming. The gospel of the kingdom *must* relate to the Second Coming. And what the gospel of the kingdom has to offer is ***hope*** - not merely a far-off distant hope in the indefinite future, but a certain hope in the near term. "This will all be over very shortly. Jesus is coming back and He will destroy all this kingdom of darkness nonsense and put everything right. And when He does that, very soon, you will be rewarded with eternal life and a place in his kingdom." *That* will be the incentive.

So when Luke says, "This will be your opportunity to bear witness," people will bear witness of what? *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. And this gospel will be proclaimed worldwide. However, this

does not mean anywhere near a majority of people will believe the gospel. At least four times in Revelation we are told that people, in spite of being told the truth, given an opportunity to choose Christ, and being stricken with severe plagues for aligning with the Devil, will *not repent*. (Rev. 9:20,21; 16:9,11).

> The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. (Rev. 16:12). "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. (Rev. 9:14b-16).

What we have here is a description of 200,000,000 unrepentant pawns of the Devil who, having seen the kingdom of darkness at its worst, and having been exposed to the gospel of the kingdom, will nonetheless choose the Devil rather than Christ, and choose to wage war on God and Jerusalem. It won't be because they haven't been told the truth. It won't be because of a lack of education or information. Instead, brutes that they are, "these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively." (Jud. 1:10). Not merely pawns, but minions, all.

Do Minions Have Dominion?

> "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 5:5,10).
>
> "And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once." (Lk. 21:9).

Have you ever wondered why international conflicts (wars) will be one of the earliest signs that the end times are near? This is not mere anarchy, where the social fabric disintegrates and chaos results. This is organized conflict, where armies and navies are sent against each other following orders from the top. Although, these wars are not likely to make very much sense - rather than resolving conflicts, they are more likely to prolong them, and rather than bringing peace, they are likely to provoke more wars. Resulting in an escalation of global hostilities, in other words.

I suggest what is going on here (in part) is that the Devil, who has long orchestrated and manipulated the actions and movements of nations and governments, is flexing his muscles. He is preparing the nations of the world for a larger conflict like a world war, by whipping them all into a fighting frenzy. He is getting them ready to wage the consummate battle against God and Jerusalem. All this will come before the Tribulation begins.

After the Tribulation begins, the Devil will also, through the actions of his chief agent the Antichrist, as leader of the beast kingdom, wage a calculated war campaign to achieve specific goals of conquest. I will not go into the details of these various battles and wars here. If you are interested,

the war campaigns of the Antichrist are described in Daniel chapters 7, 8 and 11, which I discuss in Part 4 of *Politics & Prophecy: A Lawyer's View of the End Times*. And of course, neither the Devil nor the Antichrist will fight on the front lines of any of these wars - the fighting will be done by the Devil's minions, who are expendable.

We already know from the prior section that a worldwide persecution of the people of God is coming. Yes, this will be carried out in part by relatives, friends and neighbors ratting people out to the authorities, but it will also take place via a concerted governmental effort. Thus, prophecy indicates that the Antichrist will make war against the saints and prevail over them, and wear the saints out. (Dan. 7:21, 25). Similarly, Dan. 8:24 indicates the Antichrist will "destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints."

You might think, and perhaps the Devil's minions will think, that because they will be able to prevail against the saints and destroy them, their chances of prevailing over God will be pretty good when they launch their final offensive against Jerusalem. Needless to say, they will be in for a bit of a shock. As scripture tells us, "You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you." (Eze. 38:9). But, it will not end well for them.

Just as the Devil's minions are ready to strike, disaster will befall them. "I will summon a sword against Gog [*i.e.*, probably the Devil] on all my mountains, declares the Lord GOD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur." (Eze. 38:21-22).

First, the Devil's minions will turn on each other. Then, judgment will fall from the sky. Finally, the armies of the Antichrist will be consumed by fire. (Eze. 39:6). And what eventually becomes of the Devil's minions? They will all become bird food. "You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured." (Eze. 39:4). Or, as Revelation says,

> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." (Rev. 19:17-18. *See also*, Eze. 39:17-20.)

Yes, they're all going to be killed, from the greatest to the least. No matter the minion, death is one size fits all. There will be no rewards for the wicked, not in this life, and there won't be 70 virgins apiece for them in the afterlife either. And it only gets worse for them. "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." (Rev. 14:11). The totality of their dominance will be a brief 3½ years, as compared to the eternity of their torment. So much for the dominion of minions.

GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE

> Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. ... For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land. In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. (Ps. 37:1-2,9-10).

The Devil himself won't fare any better than his many followers - in fact, his destiny will be exactly the same as theirs.

> And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ... Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:10,14-15).

Actually, since the Devil is exceptionally wicked, his torment will also be somewhat exceptional. Only of the Devil does the scripture tell us what will happen after he arrives at the lake of fire.

> "All [the kings of the earth] will answer and say to you: 'You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!' Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ... But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?' All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot." (Isa. 14:10-12, 15-19).

Wow - what an epitaph. To have aspired all of his life to be the ruler of heaven and earth, only to find out in death that he will be the object of ridicule and scorn by all of his followers for eternity.

And what of his legacy - what will become of his kingdom of darkness? Dan. 7:11 compares the final version of the kingdom of darkness (the one with "ten horns" ruled by the Antichrist) to a beast, whose body is destroyed and is given over to be burned with fire. Similarly, Dan. 2:35 says that all of the historic versions of the kingdom of darkness will be broken in pieces, and become "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found." In other words, a complete obliteration. The kingdom of darkness will have no legacy.

Thus, all of the goals and ambitions of the Devil will be overcome by the success of the kingdom of God and His Christ.

> I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. ... And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Dan. 7:13-14, 27).

This, again, is the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom of darkness will be utterly destroyed, and the kingdom of God will be established forever. No matter how dark the days become, no matter how much evil is prospering, no matter how much the Devil and his pawns appear to be winning, it is all a temporary illusion. God will never abandon His people, and He will never forget the earth. He will redeem them both, for as Jesus said repeatedly, *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." (Rev. 14:12).

Never, ever give in, or give up.

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