

Monthly Study

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Father, we are grateful for the time that you've allotted us. Thank you for the presence of each one here this morning. And thank you most of all for their desire to be here, to feast upon the word that you have provided.

We ask your blessing upon those ordinarily with us but absent today. Thank you for being with them and meeting their needs as much as you are with us right here, meeting our needs. We are grateful for the truths that are set before us, although there is so much about this subject.

That we do not understand. Yet we commit to you to gain or are gaining the understanding that we need for this time. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Well, this morning's session is going to be decidedly different. And I have here something that I'm going to send around. If you will just take one and pass them on around, I'm quite sure there's enough for everybody.

And what we have done, we have photocopied a section from a couple of pages of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.

[1 : 12] And here it is. This is not just a book. This, in the language, is called a tome. T-O-M-E.

It is a tome. Now someone might be thinking, but isn't that something that you bury people in? No. That's a tome. T-O-M-E.

But the spelling in the English language and the pronunciation is a trip. And I pity any poor foreigner coming into this country trying to learn the English language.

It's just absolutely amazing. So this is a tome. It is known as Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. And it is called exhaustive because it lists in it every single solitary word that is found in the King James Version of the Bible.

But you need to remember that this is only linked to the King James Version. And there are multiple other versions that have come out since for which this would not be connected.

[2 : 23] So what I'm going to do is just send this around. You don't have to heft it. You can just slide it along the table. I just want you to get an appreciation for this because it is a work that required the efforts of 100 people for 30 years.

It took 30 years for 100 different people to construct Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. And every word, so just kind of thumb through it generally, every word that is listed in there.

It's listed, of course, alphabetically. And including in that list is the word angel. And that is what we are going to look at this morning from which we have lifted a page from Strong's Concordance.

And tell you a little story about Strong's Concordance. Many of you are already familiar with my testimony of how I came to the Lord on my wedding day.

And how suspicious people were that I really made a genuine profession. Because I must admit, looking back on it, it looked very much like I went along with what the preacher required in order to get the girl.

[3 : 49] If that's the game you play, okay, I'll play your game. Yeah, I received Christ as my Savior. So, anyway, the truth of the matter is, I really did. And when he asked me if I wanted to know what it meant to become a Christian, my first thought was, well, of course, who wouldn't want to know that?

And he told me. And I made my confession of faith right there in that little empty Baptist church, Main Street Baptist church in Ellensburg, Washington. December 8, 1956.

And everything changed after that. And I don't know, I honestly don't know if the preacher ever thought that maybe it was a little shady.

But I know Barbara did. And what's more, Barbara's mother did. And that's why when she was told that I made a decision for Christ, all she could say was, that's nice.

And I thought, anyhow, let me get back to my story. That was in January, in December. December, of '56. But when we got back to, got back to Springfield, after I was discharged from the Army there at Fort Lewis, Washington, we started attending a church.

[5 : 04] And I was really looking forward to it. Actually, we attended church out in Washington, too. And I was really looking forward to it and just eating it up and drinking in the sermons and couldn't get enough. And I was studying the Bible on my own.

I was enrolled as a freshman in Cedarville College. It was Cedarville College then. They had a total, I think, of five full-time faculty members and about six or seven part-time.

And now the school has absolutely exploded since that time. And they've got over 3,000 students. Anyway, I was a freshman there with no biblical background at all.

I mean, I didn't even grow up with the Bible stories of David and Goliath and all of that. It was completely foreign to me. Didn't know the Old Testament from the New. In fact, my ignorance was so great, the questions I asked, they thought me to be a smart aleck.

Because, well, everybody knows that. Well, this dummy didn't. But I was really getting into it. And a year later, for our first Christmas, away from Barbara's family and mother, we were here in Springfield.

[6 : 14] And they were still back in Seattle. And she was talking on the telephone to Barbara, trying to get some ideas for Christmas gifts for the family.

And, of course, grandmas always buy clothes for the kids. You know, that kind of. We didn't have any kids at that time. But anyway, she wanted to know what would be. And I said, well, what I would really like to have is Strong's Concordance.

And there was a long silence on the other end of the line. And I said, is that okay? Did you hear me? She said, you want a Strong's Concordance?

And I said, yes, yes. She said, all right. I'll see that you've got one. And she did. She went to the bookstore there in Seattle and had them mail me Strong's Concordance.

It probably costs \$50 postings now. But it didn't then. Anyway, and when we visited with her later, she said, you know, I had my doubts all along. But they were kind of confirmed when you enrolled in Christian college and were studying the Bible.

[7 : 23] But when you said you wanted a Strong's Concordance for Christmas, I knew it had to be the real thing. Because nobody's going to want a Strong's Concordance unless there's something serious going on.

And indeed there was. So now I have no idea what I did with my notes. Oh, you've got to love old people.

Oh, well, who needs notes anyway? What? What is it? Oh, is that it?

Did I say that out of the way? You've seen them have them all along. Thank you. Okay. Okay. Like I said, you've got to love old people.

Okay. We're going to be talking about something that we know so little about. And I must confess that I am with you on this. I begin to scratch the scratch on the surface.

[8 : 34] There's a saying about walking in and going into areas where angels fear to tread. Well, we're going to tread in and about the angels this morning.

So how's that for a warning? These are beings that, that's not mine, but it does remind me to turn mine off.

Okay. That's all right. Better you than me. I told you, did I tell you one time about, I was, I was preaching a funeral.

And I was sitting back there waiting for the funeral director to motion me up to start. And I looked at my phone and I said, I need to turn my phone off.

And then somebody distracted me right at the moment. And, uh, yeah, it was like that. And, uh, and I'd just gotten into my message.

[9 : 37] About five minutes into my message. And my cell phone went off. And I was like, oh, good grief. So I reached in my pocket and apologized. And I hit the button.

But I didn't hold it down. I just hit the button and put it back in my pocket. And went on with it. A minute later, went off again.

I'm sure I turned eight different colors of red. And I apologize again. And fortunately, the deceased, as well as the attendance, the personality and everything of the deceased, almost really fit the situation.

And the audience was very understanding. And, in fact, they got a little chuckle out of it. And it kind of lightened the somberness of the situation. But, uh, I thought, boy, never again.

So, um, we are talking about spirituality.

[10:50] And when I talk about, when I mention spirituality, I am not thinking in terms of godly living. Although that's one use of the word spiritual and spirituality.

Believers need to appeal to their spiritual side and live spiritual lives and so on. But when we discuss spirituality, we're talking about spirit beings.

And it is a subject that completely escapes us. Because we do not have any real first-hand knowledge of the subject.

We are limited to what we read in the scriptures. And when I say limited to what we read in the scriptures, that's really the truth of the matter. You will not find any authoritative information in any secular encyclopedia that deals with the issue of spirit beings.

Um, it is, it is a subject that just absolutely, um, confounds us. And yet, in this book, the Bible, we find the presence of these beings who obviously occupy a higher order than humans.

[12:12] Yet, at the same time, have certain limitations that humans do not have. They are immaterial beings, which causes many, particularly of the scientific community, to dismiss their reality altogether.

Because a very definition of science has to do with materialism. It has to do with weighing, evaluating, probing, measuring, etc.

Things that can be subjected to a laboratory experience and defined on that basis. And you cannot do that with anything that is of an immaterial nature.

And that's what angels are. It appears, although we do not know this for sure, but it appears that angels were created before humans.

And we are familiar with the creation of Lucifer and his fall as recorded in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14.

[13:19] We are familiar with his interaction with Job in the book of Job. We are familiar with his interaction with our Lord Jesus and the temptation in the wilderness that's recorded in the Gospels.

But we are still bereft of any real, um, real solid knowledge. I like to say hands-on, but you're not going to get hands-on to something that is spiritual.

It is only in the mind that we can comprehend this. And we can't grab it and feel it and measure it. Even though some thought that maybe they could.

Do you remember when Jesus appeared to the disciples, the apostles, in a locked room after his resurrection? They saw that it was Jesus and they didn't grasp the fact that he had a physical body. They didn't know if it was a spirit being or something. And Jesus said, handle me and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bone as you see me have.

[14:34] This is the resurrected Lord. And then there is that account in the book of Acts when Peter was in prison. And the angel rescued him, let him out.

And the prison doors opened. And the text says, and the angel just vanished. After he got out, the angel just disappeared.

And Peter goes to the house of Rhoda. At least Rhoda was the one keeping the door. She answered the door there in Jerusalem.

And when she saw it was Peter and knew that he was supposed to be in prison, she got so excited that she turned around and ran back to the people and left poor Peter standing there.

Didn't even invite him in. And she went back and told the apostles gathered there, it's Peter. And they couldn't believe it was Peter.

[15:32] And one of them came up with the brilliant idea that has plagued humanity ever since.

And they said, maybe it's his angel. And there is a mistaken notion on the part of a lot of people that when you die and go to heaven, you become an angel.

Well, you don't. But that is something that has prevailed for a long time. And you all remember Clarence from It's a Wonderful Life and the old Jimmy Stewart movie.

Clarence had to earn his wings, you know. That's just so much Hollywood stuff and nonsense. But it made it kind of a cute plot and it was a little bit amusing. And it does show the value of a life that is lived as opposed to a life that is cut short.

Exemplified by Jimmy Stewart in that movie. So there's a lot of misunderstanding about angels. And the very first thing that I have on my list is what is most difficult for us to grasp.

And that is the very existence and nature of these beings. And if you want to count them, I already have. In the sheet that you have, which is a photocopy from Strong's Concordance, you will find 250 times angels are mentioned in the Bible.

[17 : 03] Old Testament and New. And 50 times, that is 20% of those times, they're found in the book of the Revelation.

There's only 22 chapters in that book. And there is the presence of an angel averaging one time in about every chapter.

And when we went through the Revelation, you'll recall some months ago, we made an issue of the fact that angels are going to play a very dramatic role in the 70th week of Daniel.

They are going to be principal players, as well, of course, as the Antichrist and his minions. So, they occupy a very strategic place in humanity.

And I am of the opinion, and I don't know that this can be what you would say proven in a concrete way, but if you'll turn to Ephesians, I hadn't planned on bringing this text, but it just now occurred to me, so we probably ought to go there.

[18 : 14] In Ephesians... Ephesians chapter 3 is probably the most definitive portion in all of the Bible that really specifically spells out the apostleship and the primacy of the Apostle Paul.

But that's not what we are after. We do want to just jump in, if we may, in Ephesians chapter 3 and talk about what he is describing regarding the mystery.

And we'll just jump in in verse 4. And by referring to this, he talked about the mystery in verse 3.

And be advised that a biblical mystery does not mean something that is a secret that cannot be known.

But it contains the idea of, well, it is a secret that cannot be known unless it is revealed. It's kind of like getting a message in code and you cannot interpret the code.

You cannot interpret it unless you have the key to the code. And when you apply the key, then it becomes very, very understandable.

[19 : 58] And you will recall, as well as I, the importance that was attached to the breaking of the Japanese code in the East, as well as the Germans.

And, of course, they were always trying to break our code. And we were trying because they would send secret messages back and forth. And so did we. But they were coded. And you had to have the key to understand them.

That's kind of like what a biblical mystery is. It doesn't mean it's something that can't be known, but it means it's a secret. And unless it is unopened, you'll never get it.

You'll never even know it's there. And in verse 4, by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations, and this is very, very important.

Look what he says. Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of Ben. That means they didn't know this. And the other generations, in those past, Paul has to be referring here to the Old Testament prophets.

[21 : 13] And all he is saying is, in essence, in the Old Testament, you find a whole lot of prophecies that are given by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets.

They all prophesy different things. They are predicting different things. But, Paul says, none of them predicted this. Nobody mentioned this.

Nobody even thought of it. Never entered into anyone's mind. The mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of Ben, as it has now, see the contrast, before and now, been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

And here it is. This is the essence of it. To be specific, what I'm talking about is that the Gentiles, that is, non-Jews, are fellow heirs, and the word fellow there conveys the idea of equals on the same level.

They are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me according to the working of his power.

[22 : 54] To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

Now, we must stop there for just a moment. And, and I have to emphasize this. You and I have absolutely no appreciation at all of the great gulf culturally, religiously, that separated the Jew from

the Gentile.

And this goes all the way back to Genesis. If there was any characteristic that distinguished the Jew more than anything else, it was their separateness from the world.

They had their own diet. They had their own God and only one God. They had so many things that were peculiar only to the Jew that the Gentiles had no appreciation of at all.

And the typical Jew, quite frankly, and I do not say this as a compliment, rather, it is, it is, it is an act of arrogance because the Jew had a reputation for being arrogant when it came to their supposed superiority because they were the chosen people of God.

[24 : 22] Now, all Jews were like that. There were Jews, of course, who had a humble spirit about them and they knew they were recipients of the grace of God. But let's face it, anywhere people, a group of people are set aside for any reason, there is always that tendency to take on an air of superiority, that we're better than everybody else.

Just like Buckeye football is better than anybody else's football. You know that. that's a good one. I mean, that's not a, that's not a, you know, that's not, that's not an opinion, that's a fact, okay?

So, anyway, this is how arrogance, and Adolf Hitler got into this, Aryan supremacy, kind of. Well, many of the Jews had that kind of an attitude and they looked upon you as the Goyim, Gentiles.

And the typical Jewish prayer upon rising in the morning with God, I thank thee that thou hast not made me a woman, a slave, or a Gentile. How's that for arrogance? And, of course, that's the kind of arrogance that honest Jews are ashamed of today.

But that, that's the attitude that they had. And I don't know that, well, it may be, it may be, a faulty assumption on my part, but my guess is that Saul of Tarsus might have been one of those arrogant Jews.

[25 : 50] It's easy to believe because we know how he treated his own people when they came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. He saw them as a cancer growing on Judaism and it must be stamped out.

And this is one reason why we say you think God has a sense of humor? This is probably the least likely person in the universe for God to call to be the apostles of the Gentiles.

And let me insert this too. Paul says, I do not do this thing willingly. I think he wrote that to the Corinthians where it escapes me.

But a good concordance like strong is going to find it. And he said, if I did this thing willingly, I would have a reward. But I'm not doing it willingly. And what he was saying in effect was, I was drafted.

God called me and when I realized that this Christ whom I had opposed with every fiber of my being was indeed the Messiah and he had come back from the grave after three days and three nights not eating anything, not drinking anything, I came to the reality that this was all true.

[27 : 18] And even though God called me, my response to God was, you drafted me. Okay. I'm yours for the duration.

Sign me up. Must have been such a climactic thing and so powerful. And that was Saul of Tarsus getting his start.

And he is going to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Are you kidding me? To the Gentiles?

Pray tell me what in the world would God want with the Gentiles when he's got us, the Jewish people. What would he want with the Gentiles? Well, this whole issue is tied to God's ultimate purpose and I think it is in dealing with the cosmic conflict, the angelic conflict that exists.

We talked a little bit about angels, spirit beings, when they might have been created, probably beforehand. God has something to prove. So let's read on in the text if we may. In verse 8, to me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light the and the suggestion is, the inference is, that it is not in the light now, but it is his responsibility to bring it to the light, that is to declare it and show it openly, what is the administration of the mystery?

[29 : 03] And I really like the King James using the word dispensation, but it doesn't communicate because it just scares people. They don't know what is a dispensation. Administration, as it is used here in the New American Standard, is a far better word.

And it's the word, Greek word, autonomia, and it has to do with the ordering of a household, the way business is conducted in the household. Who runs a household? Who pays the bills?

Who makes the decision? Who buys the things that are necessary for it? Who dispenses them?

And it's related to the word dispensing, which means to give out. That's what an administration

does.

When a new administration comes into power, politically, whether it's local, or state, or federal, because it is a new administration, very often, the way things are done gets changed with the new administration.

And very often, the priorities of a new administration may be completely different from the previous administration. administration. So the emphasis is upon the fact that there is a change that is taking place.

[30 : 15] That's what this administration is all about. The administration of the mystery. And it is this Jew and Gentile thing, which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.

Now what he's saying here in this brief context is God has revealed to me content that was never revealed to anyone else before.

And yet, it was always in the mind and heart of God waiting for its launching at just the right time. And this is the right time. It's similar to the concept in Galatians where Paul says that God in the fullness of time sent forth his son to be born of a woman under the law.

That means at just the right, precise, strategic moment, that's the time that God selected for his son to enter the world via incarnation as the babe in Bethlehem.

[31 : 31] He wasn't an hour early or an hour late. Strategic time. That's exactly the kind of context what this context is demanding. At this particular time, which for ages been hidden in God who created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God, manifold means variegated, means manifold means it is, its splendor is multiple, that it is many faceted, that there are a lot of elements to this thing that need to be explored and understood.

Manifold wisdom of God might now, was it before, but now, be made known through the church. And remember, this church, this is the body church he's talking about, and what is it that characterizes it? Jew and Gentile. in the rulers, might be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Who are these? These are spirit beings. These are not humans. These are spirit beings. And the impression that I think is being given here, and I would appreciate your input on this as well, is that the text is saying that God has a bone to pick with those beings who were created prior to humans, prior to Adam and Eve in Genesis.

something took place in the cosmic universe, something took place by way of conflict in the heavenlies involving these spirit beings, and it remains to be resolved.

[33 : 46] And God is going to use inferior beings, that is the B team, not the A team, the B team, to confront and resolve this cosmic angelic conflict, that we are strategic players in this whole thing.

And because this involves spirit beings and spirituality, what is it that God wants to utilize and commandeer in our lives, but our human spirit.

And your human spirit dictates and motivates your physical body. It is your spirit, believe it or not, it is your spirit that determines where you are going to go, and what you are going to do when you get there.

It isn't your body, and it isn't your brain, it is your mind working with your spirit, and the spirit animates the human body, just like it did when God created Adam and he was nothing but a lump, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul.

In other words, that breath of God into Adam energized that animated him, and gave him life. We call this the life principle. And without this life principle, you're dead.

[35 : 26] You're just a corpse, because the body without the spirit is dead. So it is the spirit element that is going to be utilized in believers that is going to manifest this wisdom of God through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose, which is saying, go back as far as you want into eternity. This is the purpose that existed there in the mind of God, which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That means that Jesus Christ is the very core, the very essence of this whole operation. And we operate in and through him as believers in Christ, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in him.

And then Paul goes on and talks about the riches of his glory and so on. So I think what this whole theme is getting at is that God is going to utilize humans to, and I don't know what other word to use, but humans to resolve the angelic conflict.

And when we look at this, it actually gives a primacy, a priority, if you will, to the spirit, immaterial, non-physical part of our being, and that is the key.

[37 : 11] In other words, it is our spirit that has the primacy. And when we take in the word of God, we are edifying, building up, strengthening, our immaterial person, our spirit, the real you.

and the more that real you, that spirit, is fed and nourished, and it is, of course, the truth of God that is our nourishment, the stronger that spirit becomes.

And the more glorifying to God the objectives and the agenda of that spirit becomes. This is called growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, whereby we are becoming more and more like him.

This is yielding our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God. This is the Romans 12 thing, where we dedicate our bodies to him, and we are a living sacrifice to him.

This is all spiritual. It has nothing to do with the physical body, although the physical body is the outward expression of what's going on inside. So this dynamic comes into play, and apparently one of the chief protagonists to the whole thing are also spirit beings, and these are the angels.

[38 : 34] And they are antagonists protagonists. There are fallen angels, and there are unfallen angels. And that's a subject that we hope to explore as we get into this a little bit more.

And this session will probably be the first of maybe, I don't know, four or five, one. And I'm going to use you as a kind of a research team, and we're going to be looking into this and see if we can't pool our ignorance and come up with some conclusions.

I think you will find it helpful. So there is the existence of the spiritual and their origin and purpose. We cannot attribute this to anything but to that text that I've made much use of in Revelation 4.11. it provides the only place that I know in all of the Bible for God's rationale for having done anything. And the text says in essence that glory and honor and wisdom and power is to be given to our Lord because for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure, by thy pleasure, they were and are created.

And that says nothing to me other than the fact that we have a world, we have universe, we have people, we have angels, we have cats and dogs, we have everything because it pleased God to bring these things into creation.

[40 : 07] That's the only rationale that God and this is the only place where I know of that it is actually spelled out like that. For thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure, by thy pleasure, they were at our pleasure.

The word pleasure, of course, is related to pleased. It means God was pleased to create all things. Now, what it was that prompted him to please that, we have no idea. That's the mind of the almighty.

But God is responsible for having created all things. Now, let me ask you this question. Think about this. We have the existence of good because we have the existence of God.

evil. We have the existence of evil. Unless you want to be one of those individuals who denies the reality of evil, like Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, who created Christian science and took the position that really was in concert with Eastern mysticism, that evil does not exist.

you get into some philosophical nonsense there that cannot be sustained, but nonetheless, we do have evil, don't we? Where did it come from? Is there anyone who can seriously read the Bible and charge God with having created evil?

[41 : 32] He is the one in whom there is light and there is no darkness at all? Yet we have the reality of evil on every hand, and in many respects it has gained the upper hand, particularly over humanity for millennia.

And we see humans engage in brutality upon other humans, and we label those things as inhuman and evil, and where does it come from?

God cannot be charged with evil, neither tempts he any man to evil, but what?

It's inevitable God, now hear me well, because the key word here is going to be, God indirectly has created evil.

I don't see any way around that. The key word is what? Yeah, indirectly, indirectly. God has to be, I see no alternative logically, God has to be charged ultimately with the creation of evil.

[43 : 00] Even though there is no evil in him, it is apparent that he created beings with the capacity for evil, and that capacity is utilized, and we have evil in our world today.

What is the alternative? Pardon? Yeah, that's the only alternative, unless you can think of a third.

I've certainly racked my brain, and I've read a lot of philosophy, but I've never been able to come up with a third. That's where you have to be.

Either God creates everything, and everyone that is just pre-programmed, and runs smoothly, just like you build a clock. In fact, this is the deist position, you know, Ben Franklin was generally thought of as being a deist, which says God created everything, and the whole world, the whole world, the whole universe, is just like a clock, where God built this clock, and wound it up, and then took hands off, and let it go, and had no further inaction with it, or involvement with it, at all.

So, it's just a clock that's running down. This is a world that's running down. Question or comment, Molly? I was looking at Genesis 2, 17, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[44 : 43] So, the good and evil is being a tree in Genesis. So, I think that certainly supports your theory that God indirectly came in the evening.

Yeah, and I don't see any other way, any other conclusion that we can reach, and I have no idea what this tree looked like, what it was about it. Completely mystifies me that there could have been anything in that tree, chemically, that could have resulted in a radical change of the individual who partook of it.

That is completely over my head. I have no idea what that could have been. But, whatever it was, however God engineered this thing, it began with a prohibition that was violated, with adequate warning ahead of time, change, and when Eve partook, somehow, some kind, some way of a change occurred in her human spirit.

spirit. That would also eventually impact her human body. In her human spirit, it resulted in a separation from her authority, which was God.

And I don't know how to describe that, but her attitude and demeanor toward the Almighty was altered. And when Adam partook, his was altered, and they became a pair of altered individuals from what God created.

[46 : 41] And I cannot go beyond that, it just completely escapes me to understand how anything like that could have affected their psyche and their being, but apparently it did.

And it became a permanent part of their being, was inbred in them, and it became part of what they were, so that when they contributed the sperm and the egg, the sperm and the egg was also involved with whatever that element was, and it was reproduced in the human spirit of the offspring, and we see it played out in the first man born by the name of Cain, where evil really got the best of this man, and it resulted in an evil act.

And the human race is off of them. This is, of course, what we've always called the fall. And there is no one who has ever escaped the fall except our Lord Jesus, and he escaped it only because of the virgin conception.

That's the only reason he did, or he would have been as contaminated as we are. So, what we are talking about, Scott, oh, Eve's action by eating the fruit in the garden, would that be considered evil or a deception?

well, I think it was both. Paul wrote to Timothy, he talks about Eve being deceived, and how many times have you heard me say, it's all about authority, always has been, always will be.

[48 : 28] And we find the first example of that in Genesis 3, when Eve is confronted with the decision. She has been given an authoritative prohibition not to partake of that tree.

And the consequences are spelled out if she does. Now, some say, well, this poor girl, she didn't have any idea what death was.

She didn't know what death, well, no, that's true, she didn't know what death consisted of, but at least she had the warning ahead of time not to do it, and it came from the authoritative source, the creator.

And when Satan came on the scene, he countermanded that order. And Eve effectively changed the authority from God to Satan.

It was a transfer of authority. And it is true, she did so because she was deceived. Satan, we know, is the ultimate conman, and he was obviously able to present whatever it is very attractively.

[49 : 44] In fact, he is referred to, and his minions are referred to as ministers of light. How about that for deception? So, she changed her authority from God to Satan, and she took upon him by partaking of this forbidden fruit, whatever it was, we don't know, and it completely altered everything about her.

And whereas, as I pointed out before, whereas, prior to doing this, Adam and Eve's focus was on the creator.

everything centered upon the creator. And they walked with him, we are told, in the cool of the day. And I think this is a Christophany, but I don't want to go there.

But there was a fellowship there. There was a camaraderie between creature and creator. And when the fall occurred, and this different nature was taken upon them, it resulted in guilt.

Guilt. And an awareness, of all things, of her nakedness. Now you wonder, what's that about?

[51 : 06] And I still am looking for a firm handle on that, this business of nakedness. And we hid, where are you, Adam? Where are you? And I said, you're hiding there in the bushes with this ridiculous apron of fig leaves.

It must have been some sight. I can imagine God looking at them, seeking. This is not going to work. Who told you you were naked?

And they were afraid because they knew they knew they had violated the standard. And I don't know exactly where the conscience comes into this, but obviously God created them with an ability to experience guilt.

And when they took on this feeling of guilt because they knew they were aware that they had violated a standard from the Creator. And guilt, what does guilt produce?

Fear. Fear. We fear, first of all, we fear discovery. So they hid. Didn't want to be seen. and they feared punishment.

[52 : 26] Just like a little child that's done something wrong, you know, and they know how displeased mommy's going to be, and they run and hide in the closet because they know they're going to get a lick of it or whatever. Same principle.

Same principle. And prior to that, God was their center, and now everything was ricocheted from God back to themselves.

And our first parents are cursed with the same thing that you and I are cursed with, and it's called self-centeredness. Self-centeredness.

We all are partakers of that. And we have to work deliberately of taking the focus off of ourselves and placing it on others.

because you do not do that naturally. You do that supernaturally. You do that because your human spirit has been conditioned and grown and developed to the place where you begin to understand that your obligation is to Christ and to others rather than yourself.

[53 : 46] The greatest commentary on that, of course, is Philippians 2 and the example of our Lord. Well, we've gone a whole lot of places I didn't plan to go, but sometimes that's better than what I had planned.

But I want to hear from you. Our time, we've got a late start, remember? We've got a late start.

Carol? I asked you a question. Can you say that when God created each one of us, it's kind of very normal as the one that kept the one, that the kind of within us is knowledge that he is good each one of us.

And so we are without excuse. Okay. So when God created human being, we're not created us with ability with three sorts.

There's like first human division, and you can Profit do that was the deception.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, it does.

[55 : 13] I think that's precisely the essence of Romans chapter one. And this this knowledge is planted within every human heart. And despite the fact that when when when Bertrand Russell, as I mentioned before, as an illustration, when Bertrand Russell, a world famous philosopher and obviously a very brilliant man, was asked one day as an atheist.

What if you're wrong, Mr. Russell? And what if what if your atheism is not valid and there is a God and you stand before him one day and he asked you why you didn't believe?

What will you tell him? And Russell's famous answer was, I would tell him that you did not give me enough evidence. But according to Romans one, the text says God did give enough evidence that these things are clearly seen so that man is without excuse, including Bertrand Russell.

So you have to determine which one of those authorities you want to believe, whether it's Bertrand or whether it's the book. So Eve and Adam with their with their self-centeredness pass this on.

And like I said, it all goes back to authority. And what they did, what they did was they transferred their authority from God to the serpent, made that their authority, discounted or overruled what God

said earlier.

[56 : 44] And you know something? We humans do this all the time. Any time you behave and act contrary to what God has revealed in his word, you've just transferred your authority.

You've made something else your authority. And it's all about authority. Always has been, always will be. And it's what God wants from us more than anything else is to be believed and obeyed.

That's it. And that may sound simplistic, but you know what? It is simplistic. If God made it hard and difficult, we'd complain about that.

But it's simple. So we've got no basis for complaint. God has required, he's made quite clear what it is that he requires of us. Other comments or questions?

Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Sure. Again.

[57 : 54] which is I don't know yeah I can understand that and I can sympathize with that but then the age old question comes up that doesn't it look like sometimes a guardian angel dropped the ball or wasn't on duty or sleeping on the job or something I don't know I just don't know there used to be a little ditty and I had it memorized back in my more frivolous days and it had to do with a guardian angel being provided to you and he will keep you alive even as you drive but be advised that he exits a car at 85 or something like that I don't know guardian angel with limitations well anyhow can I trust you this is a big item especially for us seniors can I trust you to hang on to this maybe put it in your bible and bring it if you will next time because believe it or not you're going to need it eventually we'll get there we didn't get where I planned to go this morning but anyway thank you for your kindness and thanks again for the delicious meal and we're already a little bit past our time but you all have a have a great day and enjoy enjoy the goodness of God