

Rebellion Against God

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[0:00] Well, today we're going to look at the fall of Satan and the glory of Christ. And the theme last week was Christ is sovereign over all hostile powers.

! So this morning we're going to begin with a hymn that talks about those two things, Christ's glory and his power over Satan.

So let's turn in our hymnals to number 81 in our Trinity hymnals. Amen. Well, someone was at my dinner table last week and they asked, when are we getting to the sinning?

And today we are getting to the sinning. And we're getting to the sinning with one of the most spectacular sins of all, the fall of Satan.

The rebellion of God's own angels. The insurrection that brought war to heaven and earth. In the biblical framework and understanding, what goes on here is only a theater in the much wider conflict.

[1:20] And what goes on here might be in some ways the smaller of the two theaters. The one is far away and powers and authorities that really are beyond our imagination in a lot of ways.

Not long ago in a sermon I talked about World War II and how the conflict on the Eastern Front between Germany and the Soviet Union, it's hard for us to appreciate how devastating and how large that conflict was.

We're very U.S. centric in our thinking. And so we imagine the war on our own scale and the scope of it on our own scale and the price that we paid.

And this is what I'm getting at, that some things that are unseen can be much bigger than what we're even experiencing here that we don't even know about. But just to put things into perspective, the bloodiest war for the U.S. in World War II was the Battle of the Bulge.

And in one month, 19,000 Americans died. But the war on the Eastern Front was on a totally different scale. At the Battle of Stalingrad, so for this one city in the Soviet Union, the Soviets lost 479,000 men, 25 times more than what we lost in the Battle of the Bulge and more men than we lost in the whole war all put together.

[2:56] That's hard for us to comprehend, even those numbers. But it's even more hard for us to grasp the sheer size of the entire conflict because it didn't directly involve us.

It was in a different theater. It was on a totally different scale. And the Bible teaches that this conflict that is on the earth, that's in our own hearts, is part of a greater battle going on than what we see here.

And the conflict that we face here didn't start here. Instead, it started over there and it spilled over into our world.

And what is strange about it is that it did not begin in the pit of hell. It didn't begin in the darkest, hottest hole in hell.

It didn't begin in the fire and the brimstone of those dark places. It began in heaven. And it began with one of God's closest courtiers.

[4:02] It began with one who was created to guard the holiness of God. To guard the holiness of God. And now he turns against the holiness of God and wants to besmirch him in every way possible.

And we should let that grip us and feel how devastating and spectacular this sin really was. How great was that first rebellion and insurrection?

Because it didn't begin in the darkness. It didn't begin with someone who had been mistreated. It didn't begin with someone who was born in a hole in the ground and never knew God who was abused and looked over and put to shame.

It began with one who had the one who had the highest privileges of all creation. One of the most trusted. One of the most honored of all.

In the epic poem from the Middle Ages, Dante's Inferno, Dante, the poet, travels through hell, down the nine circles of hell.

[5:11] And as he goes down, down, he finally reaches the ninth circle, the bottom one. And at the very bottom are the treacherous. Those who had been entrusted with something.

Those who had been trusted and yet turned on the ones that trusted them to hurt them, the traitors. The first were those who had betrayed their families.

So Cain says, Abel, let's go for a walk. And Abel, unexpected, goes for a walk and Cain kills him.

There are those who betrayed their community.

Leaders who turned against their own people. There are those who betrayed their guests. So you invited them in to give them hospitality and turned against them and killed them.

And then the fourth and at the bottom are those who betrayed their lords. And that's where Dante finds Judas. And at the very center, the center of it all, the most treacherous, the greatest traitor of them all, is Satan.

[6:15] And so that's what we want to talk about. We want to talk about that. And then we also want to talk about what is Christ's, what is God's purpose in just allowing Satan to continue to exist.

To allow the rebellion. And then also just to not instantly snuff it out and put an end to him. So we want to talk about where did this rebellion, what happened.

And we find a clue in Ezekiel 28. So I'd ask you to turn there to Ezekiel chapter 28. Ezekiel 28.

Incidentally, if you want to have a good Old Testament preview of the book of Revelation and chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, Ezekiel 26 through 29 is a really great place to begin because there's very, very many similarities.

You can see that Revelation is reflecting on what Ezekiel writes about in these chapters. But Ezekiel 28. And you notice in verse 1 that the word of the Lord comes to the king of Tyre.

And the king of Tyre, Tyre was north of Israel. It was on an island off of, just off the coast. And it was very powerful, very rich, influential.

[7:43] And the Lord is speaking to the king of Tyre. And you see the king's heart in verse 2. In the pride of your heart, you say, I am a god.

I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas. So there's pride. And there's a desire for divinity or a mistaken idea that I am a god.

That I rule my own destiny. And that all people are going to be subject to me. And so that's the king's heart. And that's why the Lord is going to judge him.

And then look down at verse 6. Again, speaking about the king of Tyre. He says, because you think you are wise. As wise as a god, I am going to bring foreigners against you, the most ruthless of nations.

They will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom and pierce your shining splendor. They will bring you down to the pit and you will die a violent death in the heart of the seas.

[8:42] Will you then say, I am a god in the presence of those who kill you? So there you have the king of Tyre. And his attitude.

His heart. He thinks he's wise. He thinks he's beautiful. He thinks he's powerful. He thinks he's a god. And then you see what God will do.

But now, in verse 11, the picture begins to change a little bit. And we start to see a person, a character, who is greater than this king of Tyre.

They have the same heart. The same spirit is in both. But what you see, beginning in verse 11 and going on through verse 17, or at least the rest of, maybe down to verse 19, is you see the dark hand who is guiding the king of Tyre.

You see the one standing behind and pulling the strings of his puppet. So let's look at verse 12. Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him, this is what the sovereign Lord says.

[10:04] You are the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You are in Eden, the garden of God.

Every precious stone adorned you, ruby, topaz, and emerald, crystal light, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold.

And on the day you were created, they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God.

You walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade, you were filled with violence and you sinned.

And so I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.

[11:11] And so I threw you to the earth, and I made a spectacle of you before kings. That's where we'll stop reading. So you see someone who's obviously bigger than the king of Tyre.

He's in Eden. He's in the garden of God, and he's probably talking about a heavenly Eden there, which the earthly Eden was a reflection of.

He was on the mount of God. And so he's there not as a serpent, but as a beautiful cherub. And a guardian cherub.

And the Bible paints cherubs not as those little fat babies. I'm sure they don't appreciate being portrayed like that. They're portrayed as guardians of God's holiness.

And so when Adam and Eve are driven out of the garden, God puts two cherubim, two cherubim on the way, and they have flashing swords to protect the way back.

[12:19] They're guardians of holiness. And above the mercy seat where the Shekinah glory was on the Ark of the Covenant, there were these two statues of cherubim.

And above the most holy place in the temple, against the wall, were two statues of cherubim. They were pictures of angels guarding God's holiness.

Angels who lived in the very presence of God. And were tasked with keeping unholiness out. They were given this trust to not only live with God, but to protect God, so to speak, from unholiness coming to him.

And so that's where Satan started. Not at the bottom, but at the very top. Not in the lowest place, not in the darkness, but the first sin came in the presence of God.

And it was his pride. It was what happened was clearly something like this. He turned his eyes off of the Lord. And he started looking at his own beauty.

[13:31] And he was taken with his own majesty. And he saw how beautiful he was. And his wisdom was corrupted. And sin was found in him. And in his pride, he began to desire to be God.

And so he made war against God and the other angels. And that war continues to this day. Isaiah points to the sin of Satan and alludes to it in Isaiah 14.

You can turn there to Isaiah 14. Isaiah 14. In verse 12.

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn.

You have been cast down to the earth. You who once laid low the nations. You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God.

[14:43] I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly. On the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high.

But you were brought down to the grave. To the depths of the pit. So in each case. In Isaiah and in Ezekiel.

In a way they're portraying human rulers. But then they're also showing us the hand that is guiding. The nations of the world that have their fists raised up against God.

And so in the words of Jude 6. The angels didn't keep their own positions. Their own places of authority. God gave them places of authority. Places to rule. And they didn't keep those places.

They rebelled. And it was treachery. It was betrayal. They were given a certain authority. They were given certain trust. They were given a certain thing to do. And instead of doing those things for their Lord.

[15:46] They turned and they used those things for themselves. They did it for themselves. And they didn't want to serve any longer. And what is most striking again. Is that it was not.

This betrayal was not against. Harsh. A harsh cruel tyrant. It was someone who had honored them. It was someone who had honored the Lord.

And so we ask why. Why? Why? Why did they do it? And I mean we could say pride.

But we ask well why were they proud? How did that get there? And we don't know. God looked on everything that he had made. And said it was good. It was very good.

But then how did someone who was good. Become evil? Well some people will say. It was free will. God gave them free will.

[16 : 47] But to be honest. That really doesn't answer the question. That doesn't solve the dilemma. Because why would a perfectly holy angel. In the presence of the infinitely beautiful God.

Who could satisfy him in every way. Use his free will to suddenly hate God. So that really isn't a free will. That's just an unhinged.

Disconnected from reality will. And so free will really isn't an answer. It's just another word for the mystery. We don't know. And so today we're not going to ask.

How did this happen? Because we don't know. We hardly even know sometimes why we sin. So I'm not sure why we would think that we could understand.

The mind of an angel or the mind of God. It's in our own pride. In our high esteem of ourselves. We would demand that reality makes sense to us. And we would demand that we have all the answers.

[17 : 45] Before we would believe it. But again our box is this big. And reality is bigger. And we don't understand everything that there is.

And so we're not going to ask. How did this happen? We're going to instead ask. What does the Bible say. About God's power over Satan? Now obviously God gave Satan.

Some measure of something. That we would call freedom. To do something right. Right? He has freedom to act. Somewhat. But we're going to look and say.

And see that. You know what? God's sovereignty is over that freedom. Satan does a lot of what he wants. He has some measure of freedom. But Satan. And he does have some measure of power. Because he took that freedom and that power. And he rebelled against God. But the Bible is. The Bible's point is not to say. Well how does that. Come together with God's sovereignty.

[18 : 44] And how do we make sense of that? It says. This is what you need to know. Satan does have power. We sang about it. His power is great.

But God is sovereign over Satan. And so we see this. We just see God's sovereignty over Satan. In seven. Seven really quick ways. First. The Satan is called the ruler of this world.

Or the God of this age. And it's definite. It's true. He didn't say that about himself. The Apostle Paul said that about him. That's true.

He's the ruler of this world. Of this fallen world. The God of this age. But Daniel 4.17 says. The most high God rules the kingdoms of men. And gives it to whom he wills. Authority.

God has greater authority. So. He is the God of this age. But our God is the God of gods. The king of kings. And so God has given him. Astonishing latitude.

[19 : 43] Astonishing freedom. To work sin and misery in the world. But he is not. Satan is not. The ultimate king. And so. In this world.

You will experience. Satan's rule. You will experience it. But the Bible says. God rules over all of that.

Second. Though evil spirits exist. And are exercising. Their tempting and hurting powers. Probably more than we can ever imagine. They exist. And they are. They are doing things. Yet.

Jesus Christ has authority. Over them. He has authority over them. Mark 1.27. Some people were. Were so amazed. That they asked each other.

What is this? They are talking about Jesus teaching. And his miracles. What is this? A new teaching. And with authority. He even gives orders. To evil spirits. And they obey him.

[20 : 39] So the kingdom of God. Advances over and through. The kingdom of Satan. Evil spirits obey him. Now. Does Satan and the devils.

Obey God's law? No. But we are not talking about that kind. This is a different kind of authority. When Christ says go. Satan goes.

It's decisive. It's absolute. It's effective authority. We saw this last week. And we said this last week. Christ is sovereign over all hostile powers. And that's what we're saying.

Christ holds sway over Satan's will. Whenever he pleases. So he says depart from me. And he departs. And that means that anytime demons are doing something.

Satan is doing horrible things. It is because Jesus is commanding them not to do otherwise. And not commanding them to do otherwise.

[21 : 38] And not telling them to stop. Or do this. Or go there. He obviously has reasons for letting them carry out. What they wish. What they're doing. Third. Satan is a roaring lion.

Seeking to. Seeking those who he can devour. But Peter says resist them. Firm in your faith. Knowing that the same experiences of suffering. Are being experienced by your brethren throughout the world.

So. Satan is a devouring lion. And that devouring. I think in this place.

Is talking about. He's inflicting suffering on the saints. He's causing the saints and Christians to suffer. He wants to devour them. But in 1 Peter 3.17.

Peter says. It's better to suffer for doing good. If it should be God's will. So. Who has the ultimate authority. Over our suffering.

[22 : 40] Over our persecution. It's God. So. Whether the lion bites you. Or does not. That is decided. By God. Ultimately. If the Lord's.

If the Lord wills. We will suffer. Or not. If the Lord wills. Satan will get permission. Or not. So. The angel of the Lord. Remember in Daniel. The angel of the Lord.

Shuts the mouths. Of the lions. In the lion's den. And then the other people. Are thrown in. And they don't even touch the ground. They are devoured. So quickly.

The Lord opened the mouths. He shut the mouths. Of the lions. Satan is a lion. But whether his mouth. Is opened. Or shut. Is not ultimately.

Decided by him. It's decided by. God. God. Fourth. Satan is a murderer. From the beginning. But has Satan.

[23 : 35] Wrestled control. Of life and death. Away from God. He's a murderer. But Deuteronomy. 32. 39. Says. See. I kill.

And I make alive. I. I wound. And I heal. And there is none. That can deliver. Out of my hand. That's the Lord. And James says.

We should say. If the Lord. Wills. We will. Live. And go here. And there. And do this. And that. And make money. And so on. If the Lord. Wills. So we are immortal.

Even in the face. Of Satan's. Hostility. Until God says so. There's nothing. Satan can do. Until the Lord. Says so. God.

Makes. All. The final. Choices. And Satan. Is not absolute. God is. Fifth. When Satan. Aims.

[24 : 33] To destroy. Job. He has to get. Someone's permission. Doesn't he? He has to get. God's permission. And we think.

Too often. That's the end. Of the story. It was Satan's doing. And God was just. Letting him. But. That's not the whole. End of the story. If we go all the way. To the end. Of the book of Job. Job 42. Says. That after it was all finished. Job's brothers and sisters came. And comforted. And consoled him. Over all the trouble. The Lord. Had brought upon him.

So who was the ultimate hand. In Job's sufferings. It was the Lord. Satan meant it. For harm. But God.

Meant it. For good. Satan wanted to destroy Job. Destroy Job's faith. Humiliate. God. And yet. God. Used it to bring Job.

[25 : 32] To a bigger. A closer. And bigger realization. Of who he is. Seventh. Satan blinds.

The eyes of unbelievers. But. Second. Corinthians 4. 14. A couple verses after. It says. Satan has blinded the eyes of unbelievers. Second.

Corinthians 4. 4. Says. But God. Who said. Let light shine out of the darkness. Has made light shine in our hearts. Satan blinds. And yet. Just like that.

God says. Let there be light. And there is light. God. So do you see the Bible's picture? Do you see what we need to understand? This is so important.

There are things that we would like to understand. There's things that we really. We wish we could understand. But those are not the things that we need to understand.

[26 : 25] Yes. Satan has power. Yes. He has authority. But not ultimately. And we need to remember that. God and Satan are not equals. Fighting it out over the control of the earth.

So go to. The beginning of Job. And what is the picture? The Lord is on the throne. And the angels. Including Satan. Have to appear before him. So all the freedom he has. Is the freedom that God gives him. And so that makes the rebellion.

His insurrection. Ultimately. Pointless. And purposeless. Without any purpose. It's completely ineffectual. It's a rebellion where they have to report to the one they're rebelling against.

It's a rebellion where the one who's sitting on the throne decides whether they attack or whether they don't attack. It's a completely ineffectual rebellion. And so our memory verse says who is like

the Lord our God the one who sits enthroned on high.

[27 : 30] And the answer. No one. So finally. So finally. We want to ask. Well if that's true.

If the rebellion is completely pointless. If God has ultimate authority. If he could just change the situation instantly. And he does sometimes. And he will. On the last day.

He has the right. He has the power. To wipe Satan out. To totally dismantle and remove his kingdom.

To totally take away all of his power. He's going to do that one day. You will see Satan thrown into hell. Well. Why not now?

Why wait? And we ask those questions sometimes. And really those aren't intellectual questions at this point.

[28 : 28] Those are questions that here we are suffering. And we say God you could take this away. But why don't you? You could change the situation.

You could take away his power. You could pave the way for complete righteousness and justice.

Right now. But why don't you? And again the ultimate answer is Colossians 1.16.

Saw it last week. Satan exists by Christ. And for him. And for him. You will never be satisfied.

Until you come to grips with the fact that God is Christ centered. And he is shaping history. And he is shaping history. For Christ. This isn't about us and our comfort and our answers.

This is about Jesus Christ getting the glory. And as he gets the glory. As we are with him. We're satisfied. And we're glorified.

[29 : 31] So God foresaw everything that would happen. And he created Satan. And permitted him to rebel. And it was all by Christ and for him. And so as we end.

I'm going to ask. What glory comes to Christ through Satan? What glory comes to Christ through Satan's existence?

And through Satan's ongoing existence? And his power and authority? What glory comes to Christ? Because of Satan's ongoing existence and power and authority?

Roger. Well we can give greater glory to God. Here on earth. In a way that we can't give him glory in heaven. Because when we do things that are totally against our nature.

Totally against the way Satan has raised us up his children. We can give glory to God. And with all that resistance going against us. Where in heaven.

[30 : 33] All the resistance has been removed. And so God gets greater glory here from us than he does up there. Yeah. In a certain way. Yeah. Derek.

When Satan from the world's perspective. Seems to win. In the wars of righteousness versus unrighteousness.

And that believer stands strong in their faith. That God alone has given them. That brings far more glory to God. Because they're standing and everything looks lost like Job.

Than if they had had the victory in this world. Yeah. It's very much what Revelation is talking about. I keep referencing that. But Revelation is showing us it seems all lost.

But what's reality? How do you live in the midst of when it appears that Satan is winning? And we glorify him. Even in the midst of Satan's apparent victories.

[31 : 38] When we stand. What else can we say? Charlie. The passage that you brought up from Peter. Says. And the God of all grace.

Who called you to his eternal power in Christ. After you have suffered a little while. Will himself restore you. And make you strong, firm, and steadfast. To him be the power and glory forever.

Amen. So he ties that. Right to the. Suffering. And enduring through suffering. And God restoring us. As he does that.

That gives him glory. Yeah. So. As he makes his restorations now. But. Ultimately. When we. Walk away.

From all of this. And completely restored. And completely safe. Then we will say. Wow. Wow. It was all because of him.

[32 : 33] I had no idea what I was up against. What else? Pastor John. When Satan does his worst against Peter. One prayer from Jesus. Restores.

Fall. It keeps him from. Completely fall. Amen. So again. You. You see the power. Of Jesus Christ. Don't you? If it was all.

Daffodils. And daisies. Jesus. Wouldn't have an. Opportunity. To pray. An opportunity. To exercise his power. Anyone else?

Mark. I just think. You know. We talk about these mysteries. Why. God has done what he's done. And all of that.

And. I think. When we reach. Heaven. And everything's. Unveiled. It'll be the. The ultimate. Aha. [33:31] Moment. You know. Yeah. I think. The secret things. Belong to the Lord. And we can guess. How he's glorified.

By some of these things. Yeah. Some things are revealed. But. It's like. It's like Sam Gamgee. You know. At the end. Of Lord of the Rings. When. Everything's turned around.

You know. Everything bad is. Reversed. And comes out good. And. It's just going to be. So. Glorious. Yeah. That. Sam Gamgee.

He says. He says. Every. Bad thing. Has now come untrue. And that's what we'll say. Every bad thing. Is now untrue. Yeah. Roger.

There. Think of. Let's say. The necessity. Of Satan's. Rebellion. And what happened.

[34:29] After that. That made. For the. Provision. Of the. Greater. Display. Of God's. Grace. And mercy. Which.

Otherwise. Say. In our. Thinking. And understanding. Would not have. Had reason. To be displayed. Yeah. So the necessity. Of that. For the greater display.

Of God. And for us. To know him. Yeah. In his greater. Own. Right. And I guess. This is what I want to say. Hold on a second. This is what I would want to say. Is that. No. No fall of Satan.

No fall of man. At least. Theoretically. No cross. And where do we see. The greatest glory of God. It was at the cross.

It was through Jesus Christ. It was through God. Becoming man. And suffering. And then we realize. Oh. This is what love is. Not that we loved him.

[35:25] But he loved us. And gave him. Yeah. Virgin. When the Lord died on the cross.

He made. A public spectacle. Of Satan. Yeah. He's a defeated father. Mm-hmm. Amen. He also gave us the authority.

To rule over these. Powers. And principalities. Mm-hmm. We have that authority. As Christians. Mm-hmm. The Lord. We're overcome.

By the blood of the Lamb. And by the word of our own testimony. We're not to fear him. He's a defeated father. He also gave us weapons.

Our armor. Mm-hmm. Our helmet of salvation. Our breastplate of righteousness. Our belt of truth. Our shield of faith. Our shield prepared with the gospel of peace.

[36:22] And the lethal weapon is his word. So he has no power. Yeah. We want to say this. He has power. And yet.

As we are with Jesus Christ. We do have authority over him. We do. We can resist him. And he will flee from you. I said I'm going to finish.

So I'm going to finish. One. Two last things I want to say. One is. I think what. One. Refrain that we're seeing here. Is that. The Lord is not playing for.

A short term. Gain. Or. He's not playing a short game. And what I mean by. He doesn't need the victory. Immediately. He's.

He's playing for the long. Game. He's playing for the. Aha moment. What Mark was talking about. And. So you see.

[37:23] The wisdom of Jesus Christ. You see. The power of Jesus Christ. In. Allowing Satan. To do what he does.

Then secondly. Second Corinthians chapter 12. Remember Paul. He has the thorn in the flesh. A messenger from Satan. Where do you see the glory of Christ?

It's in the face of that messenger of Satan. And that's where. Jesus says those words that are so precious to us. My grace is sufficient. It's enough.

So Jesus Christ comes with compassion. And he comes with. My grace is enough for you. Well. When are we going to experience that my grace is enough?

Well it's when those thorns of Satan. Are in our side. And we're begging for relief. And he says. It's okay. And he comes to us with compassion.

[38:22] And grace. And mercy. And then that's how we see how deep and how full his grace is. And then ultimately. We'll see the glory of the lamb.

As he throws Satan. Into the deepest pit. And then that day. It will be crystal clear. And we will worship him.

While we are dismissed. Thank you.