

***The Theology of the Unseen Realm:
How God Uses Angels, Demons and the Holy Assembly***

“Closing Thoughts”

I. Readdress of lesson #10 in regard to the function of female hair:

A. There are three texts that were not dealt with in this lesson and questions have been raised about them.

1. John 12:1-3 Lazarus' sister Mary anointed Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.
2. Luke 7:36-38 An unidentified woman, probably a prostitute, also anointed Jesus with costly ointment and while weeping wiped Jesus' feet with her hair.
3. Num. 5:12-31 A woman suspected of adultery must let her hair down (Vs. 18) before drinking the mixture that would prove her innocence or guilt.

B. Jesus allowed these acts.

1. How do we understand these acts of the two women? If they are displays of worship, how are they appropriate if women's hair is part of their genitalia?

C. Below is additional research on this topic which was not covered in the class.

1. John MacArthur states in regard to the Luke text "... What would have shocked onlookers more than the woman washing of Jesus' feet was her letting down her hair. For a Jewish woman to do so in public was considered indecent and immoral" John MacArthur, *Luke 6-10*, p. 173.
2. Restated in Robert H. Stein, *The New American Commentary: Luke*, p.172.
3. Kent Hughes adds "This was socially unacceptable, because a woman was to loosen her hair only in the presence of her husband. The Talmud says that a woman could be divorced for letting down her hair in the presence of another man. So grave was the offence that the rabbis put a woman's loosening her hair and

uncovering her breasts in the same category. The guests and onlookers were in intense shock.” Kent Hughes, *Luke, Vol. 1*, p. 277

4. Phillips offered similar remarks as Hughes. See Richard D. Phillips, *Reformed Expository Commentary: John Vol. 2*. p. 75
5. Green is far more descriptive: “Hair down equated to going topless. She would have been viewed as fondling Jesus’ feet” Joel B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 310.
6. The Talmudic interpretation is also supported by Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 101-103.
 - a. All of the above supports the contention that female hair was considered sexual within the first century and supports Dr. Martin’s argument on I Cor. 11.

D. So how do we understand these outward displays by two females?

1. In both case, the women desired to present a costly offering.
2. They both intended to only anoint Jesus, but became overcome with emotion and a sense of profound devotion. In fact, the woman in Luke’s account was weeping and kissing Jesus’ feet. The original language indicates continual action.
3. Using their hair to wipe Jesus’ feet was not predetermined. It was a spontaneous event. Their hair was likely nearest to them to perform the wiping task.
4. Paul’s concern in I Corinthians 11:3-16 is for the public practice of worship within the church. Keep in mind that the proper exercise of worship is the context for chapters eleven through fourteen of I Corinthians. Proper decorum for when the church assembles for worship must be maintained i.e. Exodus 28:40-4. Angels within the unseen realm are on notice that women are covered and submitted.

II. A second area that needs to be examined concerns the Lord's Prayer.

A. Consider the following texts in view of the course content.

1. **Ephesians 3:8-10** Speaking of himself, Paul writes: "To me, the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

2. How do we understand the acknowledgement of Scripture that, at least, part of heaven is out of order in the present and must be remade (Revelation 21:1)? How do these facts jibe with the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"? How do the Ephesian texts jibe with the Lord's Prayer?

a. The answer is apparent when a distinction is maintained in understanding God's will. The distinction is made clear when noting the difference between the "revealed will of God" vs the "Hidden or Sovereign will of God". The revealed will of God is disobeyed every day on earth and in part of heaven too (Ps. 82). The revealed will of God entails all of the commandments not only in the Decalogue, but also all of the commandments of Christ and His Apostles made clear within the pages of Scripture. The Hidden or Sovereign will of God is never disobeyed. God, the Most High, is so great that he can even carry out His sovereign will through the disobedient decisions of his creature both in heaven and on earth. Paul states: "... who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph.:1:11).

1. Moses neatly notes both aspects of God's will: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law." (Duet. 29:29)

The "force" of *Star Wars* does not apply to God the Most High!

b. Jesus' model for prayer, as taught to His disciples, conveys our asking that God's revealed will that is executed in heaven (the divine counsel) may be done the same way on earth. When we pray this prayer, this is what we are asking God to do. The sovereign will is being carried out every day without any hint of resistance. However, the revealed will of God is being resisted every moment of each day on earth as well in parts of heaven.

III. God's absolute control of all things

A. John Newton (1725-1807) was a slave trader who became an Anglican minister. He also wrote the endearing hymn *Amazing Grace*.

1. He offered remarks about the trivial nature of earthly powers when contrasted to the Most High. However, I think his comments also are appropriate for the evil powers of the unseen realm, too.

He writes: "The kings of the earth are continually disturbing the world with their schemes of ambitions. They expect to carry everything before them, and have seldom any higher end in view, than the glorification of their own passions. But in all they do they are but servants of this great King and Lord, and fulfil his purposes, as the instruments he employs to inflict prescribed punishment upon transgressors against him, or to open a way for the spread of His gospel. ... They had one thing in view, he had another." John Newton, *The works of John Newton*, Vol. 4, 429.

2. Daniel notes: "The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men" – Dan. 4:17.

3. Paul adds: "...who works all things after the counsel of His will." Ephesians 1:11
4. We have noted many times, God's overall control of the Unseen Realm even though hostile lesser *elohim* resist His revealed will. In this sense, noncompliance with God's directives within the seen realm is the same. Yet both realms are completely under his sovereign control.

IV. The sensitivity to temptation and the powers who work against us.

A. Paul's admonishment to be careful.

1. **Ephesians 6: 11-12** "Put on the full armour of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" I think these are ranks of authority, but expositors are divided.
 - a. Bryan Chapell writes: "Our natural, and yet physical orientation does not normally allow us to perceive this unseen realm world, and yet the Devil is so clever and able that he operates on both the worldly and spiritual plane in his endeavor to destroy God's kingdom and people." Bryan Chapell, *Ephesians: The Reformed Expository Commentary*, 335.
 - b. John Stott adds: "Moreover, there will be no cessation of hostilities, not even a temporary truce or cease-fire, until the end of life or of history when the peace of heaven is attained." John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, p. 262.

B. How do the powers of darkness wage war on us?

1. I am not concerned so much about the macro (world forces influencing the earthly elites) as I am with the micro (the battle over personal sin).
2. Here is how I think this takes place within our lives. We are all susceptible to temptation because we are sinners. We are saved though faith because of grace

and there are no good works that help us into the kingdom, nor do good works help maintain us in the kingdom. In addition, we all have moral weaknesses that are particular to each one of us. The following list is not exhaustive. We are capable of all of these sins and much more, but some are more appealing to our particular nature.

- a. Some of us are more susceptible to worldliness.
- b. Some of us are more susceptible to prideful thoughts.
- c. Some of us are more susceptible to monetary gain from compromise.
- d. Some of us are more susceptible to gossip.
- e. Some of us are more susceptible to rebellion toward authority.
- f. Some of us are more susceptible to lying.
- g. Some of are more susceptible to sexual sin.

3. The powers of darkness know all of the above. They will exploit these areas by testing our determination to resist sin. The presence of sin comes in many shapes and sizes, but evil entities have one main objective. **Their objective is to for you to develop a secret life where sin may be fomented.** Remember, they cannot make you do anything.

- a. Beware of the seven “R” of spiritual deterioration (not original to me).
 1. **Right relationship**
 2. **Roaming hearts and roaming minds** – Remember David on the roof top
 3. **Repression**
 4. **Regression** – We think like our old self (the old man) Eph. 2:1-3.
 5. **Rationalization** – We can be deceived and also deceive ourselves.
 6. **Rebellion** – I do not need the whole apple. I just want one bite.
 7. **Regretful acts** – We do things that we cannot take back or fix.
- b. **I Corinthians 10:13** “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond

what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

1. I believe the way of escape will always have something to do with the church. The more integrated you are into the church, the better you will be able to resist temptation. Stated differently, the more transparent you are with the saints about your own sin patterns the more you will be able to resist temptation. **You must have people in your live who can tell you what you do not want to hear.**

V. Death is the final enemy.

A. It looms within each one of our lives.

1. We experience it in the death of loved ones
2. We are reminded of it each passing day as our bodies change while giving way to age and disease.

B. The powers of darkness will use anything against us including the process of death.

1. Paul notes that “... if there is no resurrection from the dead, not even Christ has been raised and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith is also vain.” – I Corinthians 15:13-14
2. Peter O’Brien writes: “The last and greatest enemy to which humanity is exposed by Satan and his lieutenants is death. Men and women, through fear of death are in lifelong bondage to him who has the power over death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). Death is, accordingly, the supreme focus of these enemy forces. They smell of death. They revel in it. They spread it”. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 469-470
3. With each new grey hair, wrinkle, ach and pain, we must remember that our destiny is not fully realized in this life. It is only completely known in the next life. Do not let bitterness creep into your soul because of failing health or the loss of

someone significant within your life. Watch out for becoming short tempered, critical of those around you or even let anger define your final years.

a. While facing anxiety and fear of the unknown remember to look over your shoulder and ask yourself this question: When was God ever not faithful to me?

B. We die, but we win! Comfort yourselves with this thought.

VI. Preach the gospel!

A. The nations have been loosed from the powers of darkness in order for them to hear the truth.

1. **Luke 24:45-48** “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

B. It would be a shame if we failed to do so.

1. We all have a basket of seed to sow. May we enter eternity with an empty basket.

VII. It's all about God!

A. Remembering the objectives for the class. This study.....

1. It causes wonderment of God.

2. It causes appreciation for God's plan to redeem man while also realizing there is no plan to redeem fallen divine beings.

3. It causes greater sensitivity concerning the nature of temptation.

4. It cause worship for the Most High.

B. God will look after His people.

1. Remembering Psalm 91: God protects His people from the evil one.

Ps. 91:11-13 “For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the Lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down”.

a. **Luke 10: 17-20** “And the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

C. Rejoicing in our salvation

1. Eph. 1:3-23 (recite)

Things to listen for:

Paul’s desire for worship

Our adoption into His family

We have redemption

We have an inheritance with the Holy Spirit’s pledge

Paul’s prayer –power-working-strength and might

Christ seated in the Heavenly places and above all rule

All things are put under His feet

You were dead, but now made alive

Seated with Christ in the heavenly places

Your salvation is grounded in grace through faith with no works

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