

## The Church Teaches Angels; Suffering Gives Opportunity to Use Problem-Solving Devices; Jim Wattenbarger's Poem: "Spiritual Mechanics in Verse"

68. Not only were the Jews and Gentiles kept ignorant of the Church Age, so was the angelic community, both elect and fallen. This is the subject of the next verse:

**Ephesians 3:10** - so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the conjunction **ἵνα, hina** which introduces a final purpose clause. Here it is used with the subjunctive mood to indicate a goal and is best translated, "In order that."
2. Next comes the temporal adverb **νῦν, nun** translated "now" and it references the task currently assigned to the church with regard to the Invisible War.
3. According to Ephesians 3:9 the Church Age is a mystery doctrine that was unknown in all previous dispensations. This ignorance was not only imposed on the human race but also the angelic community.
4. Therefore, if the angels are to learn about this aspect of the angelic conflict they must pay close attention to the church to acquire the understanding. In fact, Peter speaks of this angelic curiosity in 1 Peter 1:12, "the things angels desire to look into."
5. Here in Ephesians the curious are the demonic hierarchy, introduced next by the propositions **ταῖς, tais** translated "to," and followed by the familiar objects **ἀρχή, archē** and **ἐξουσία, exousia**, translated "to the rulers" and "to the authorities."
6. We have given this a modern-day translation in order to provide clarity to the arrangement of the angelic hierarchy: "to the general officers and to the commissioned officers."
7. This refers to Lucifer's officer corps, the ones whom he deploys in command of his demonic hordes that circulate around this earth. They constantly investigate the activities of Christians, learning about the church's function of representing Christ during its dispensation.
8. As they learn they are assigned the duty of counterattacking the success any believer might have in learning, applying, and promoting the doctrines, principles, and standards in the Word of God and thereby hindering their cause in the Invisible War.
9. We are again informed that the demonic armies of Lucifer populate not only the earth but the atmosphere around it. The prepositional phrase "in the heavenly places" has as its object the locative plural of the noun **ἐπουράνους, epouranois**.

10. This verse documents the church's testimony in the rebuttal phase of Lucifer's appeal trial. Believers are equipped with assets unknown to Old Testament saints, which is news to the angelic communities.
11. This testimony involves use of the power system demonstrated effective by our Lord during the Incarnation.
12. The system provides every believer with divine power to execute the plan of God by the inculcation, retention, and application of biblical truths.
13. Possession of these assets and this power presents a tremendous obstacle to Lucifer's campaign to be like the Most High. The Church has both the information and the power to demonstrate before the Supreme Court of Heaven that Lucifer's argument in his defense cannot stand.
14. His arguments contending he was unjustly punished for the angelic rebellion is two-fold: (1) Suffering: Satan's disputation contends the only reason man remains loyal to God is because he is blessed by God or hopes to be. "Put man in a situation of undeserved suffering," Satan argues, "and he will reject You." God put Job to such a test and Job passed it by remaining loyal to God and His Word. In the end Job was blessed twofold. (2) Prosperity: Lucifer asserts that the accouterments of this world are enough to cause man to ignore God. If given power, praise, possessions, wealth, fame, and honors then he will see no need for divine assistance. This is how Satan challenged Christ in Matthew 4:1-11.
15. These challenges are offered to every believer who makes the advance in the Christian way of life to the level of spiritual maturity. Suffering in one of these two categories constitutes evidence testing.
16. The testimony of the believer who undergoes undeserved suffering either advances or detracts from God's argument for the prosecution in the appeal trial.
17. The only way a believer can deal with undeserved suffering is by knowledge, recall, and accurate application of biblical principles. Thus, Bible study and the application of it to life and circumstances is the only way the believer can contribute in any meaningful way to the positive resolution of the angelic conflict.
18. As we observe our nation's decline into the slavery of socialism it must be remembered that the cultural, moral, and fiscal conditions of the country are only symptoms of the underlying loss of thought by a majority of the population.
19. When suffering comes we should also remember that the discipline this nation is about to endure is an opportunity for us to demonstrate our inner integrity by becoming people of honor.

20. When suffering, difficulty, distress, and indigence enter one's life there may be others upon whom he may wish to lean, but faith in God's grace to sustain and the residence of a biblical inventory of doctrinal ideas in his soul are the only real sources of tranquility and problem-solving available.
21. In the days ahead we must be spiritually self-sustaining. We must use the doctrine in our souls. We must have the unwavering belief that invisible biblical truths are more real to us than the reality we face.
22. And when these challenges arise and you ride out the storm you become a Christian professor who has successfully conducted a laboratory experiment instructing the angels, both elect and fallen, of the power of the Word of God.
23. Your testimony for the prosecution will have demonstrated that nothing the devil's world can devise can overcome the application of biblical truth to life and circumstances.
24. When you learn to rely on God, to trust Him, and to let biblical principles instruct your decision making and problem solving, then the angels receive a tutorial on the unique power and overwhelming effectiveness of the Church Age believer's execution of the dispensation's spiritual life.
25. The advancing believer becomes an instructor of angels. Those on the Dark Side learn from our mistakes and our successes and develop their strategy and tactics accordingly.
26. Therefore, the Christian way of life is not a game; it is not a means of self-aggrandizement; it is not designed to isolate you from the devil's world.
27. You are in the devil's world and you are not only to grow in grace and perform the tasks associated with the spiritual life, but you are to be aware that you are being observed by angels and as the Lord's representatives on earth you have the responsibility to provide honorable testimony before the appeal trial.
28. Verse 10 now reads, "In order that now, to the general officers and commissioned officers in the heavenly places." The church's instruction of the demonic hierarchy is now addressed. We start out with the phrase "the manifold wisdom of God." The word "manifold" is the adjective **πολυποίκιλος, polukoikilos**.
29. This is a compound of adjectives **πολύς, polus** meaning great or large in number, plus **ποίκιλος, poikilos**, meaning varied, many, or diverse. Together the word means "manifold, multifarious, or varied." It is difficult to find an English word that presents the entire essence of this word when applied to divine wisdom. Here is one effort:

The wisdom of God has shown itself in Christ to be varied beyond measure and in a way which surpasses all previous knowledge thereof.<sup>1</sup>

30. Absent anything more precise we'll stay with the NASB's "manifold" which describes divine wisdom, the noun σοφία, *sophia*. The wisdom of God is infinite and contains varieties of knowledge on multifarious subjects that only those steeped in biblical truth can possibly hope to convey its contents.
31. Yet this is exactly what the Church Age believer is assigned to do. This wisdom is said by Paul to be made known through the church.
32. The verb here is the aorist passive subjunctive of γνωρίζω, *gnōrizō* translated "might be made known."
 

aorist:	Constative: contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety: God's wisdom revealed to Church Age believers is to be made known to the angels.
passive:	Fallen angels receive knowledge of God's wisdom through the church.
subjunctive:	Potential: indicates that this wisdom was not to be released until the Church Age.
33. This instruction is to be accomplished by the church indicated by the prepositional phrase διὰ, *dia* plus the noun ἐκκλησία, *ekklēsia*, translated "through the church."
34. Here now is the translation for the third Ephesian passage on the hierarchy of Lucifer's demonic armies:

**Ephesians 3:8** - To me, the very least of all saints, this grace blessing has been given, to preach to the Gentiles the inexhaustible riches of Christ,

**v. 9** - to bring to light what is the dispensation of the mystery which during all previous dispensations has been kept secret in God who created all things;

**v. 10** - in order that now, to the general officers and to the commissioned officers of the demonic armies in the heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church.

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Seesemann, "πολυποίκιλος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 6:485.