

Unmasking the Supernatural 13

"And (Jesus) said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!" Luke 10:18

Great and Precious Promises

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:8.

The very first promise in the Bible contains the entire Gospel, and also one of the greatest gifts from God, but few even recognize it as such. It is found in Genesis 3:15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Do you see the Gospel there? Yes, most people can see that; but what about the great gift? What is it? That special gift is the enmity! Enmity, a gift? YES; just take a look at this quote:

"When Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden, they were innocent and sinless, in perfect harmony with God. Enmity had no natural existence in their hearts. But when they transgressed, their nature was no longer sinless. They became evil; for they had placed themselves on the side of the fallen foe, doing the very things that God specified they should not do. Had there been no interference on the part of God, man would have formed a firm alliance with Satan against heaven. But when the words were spoken, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Satan knew that although he had succeeded in making human beings sin, although he had led them to believe his lie, and to question God, although he had succeeded in depraving human nature, some arrangement had been made whereby the beings who had fallen would be placed on vantage ground, their nature renewed in godliness. He saw that his action in tempting them would react upon himself, and that he would be placed where he could not become conqueror.

"In the statement, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," God pledged Himself to introduce into the hearts of human beings a new principle,--a hatred of sin, of deception, of pretense, of everything that bears the marks of Satan's guile." Special Testimonies B02 6.

The fact is that if God had not given this supernatural gift to mankind, there would be no way He could have saved anybody! Even if Jesus came into the world and died, no one would have even cared, because they would have been in perfect harmony with Satan! Notice another quote:

"We are to know the meaning of the words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The enmity that exists in the heart against evil has no natural existence, but is an enmity that has been created through the agency of the Holy Spirit. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The natural man is in transgression, and his nature is in harmony with that of the first transgressor. There is no natural enmity between fallen men and fallen angels; both are partakers of the same spirit through indulgence in evil. It is according to the law of the synagogue of Satan that in the controversy of the evil against the good, fallen men and fallen angels shall unite in a desperate companionship. From the beginning Satan has worked continually to dethrone the Creator, and whatever may be the divisions among evil men and evil angels, there is no division in their opposition to God. They are banded together as with iron cords to oppose the Creator and Redeemer of man. Satan is determined to utterly deprave human nature through making of none effect the commandments of God. He originates traditions, and through his maxims he succeeds in assimilating to his own nature the nature of those who do not yield allegiance to the law of God." Signs of the Times, June 11, 1894.

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Now one thing that seemed puzzling that we see in the world today is that more and more people do not seem to care whether something is true, or if it is a lie, as long as they are getting what they want and believing what they want to believe! This is getting worse all the time; why?

Well, did you notice what our quote says is the source of that special enmity against evil and wrong? It is the Holy Spirit; the enmity in the heart against wrong is a product of the Holy Spirit working on the heart of every person! Did you ever notice how even small children playing together will have clear ideas of what is 'fair' and what 'isn't fair'? This sense of right and wrong is what we call our conscience; but what few realize is, this is not a natural part of man! No, it is the gift of God through the Holy Spirit working to win each person.

So what happens when the Holy Spirit begins to withdraw—beaten back by rebellious hearts?

"The evidences before us indicate that God's Spirit is being withdrawn from the earth." Review and Herald, May 27, 1902.

As the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the hearts of men, that sense of right and wrong, that abhorrence of falsehood and lies, will also be gone from them. People will be left to the control of evil spirits and will not care whether something is true or not; right or wrong! Here is more amazing insight:

"Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who served God removed from the earth, and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion. Though the wicked know it not, they owe even the blessings of this life to the presence, in the world, of God's people whom they despise and oppress. But if Christians are such in name only, they are like the salt that has lost its savor. They have no influence for good in the world. Through their misrepresentation of God they are worse than unbelievers." The Desire of Ages, p. 306.

There are no doubt times when all of us experience moments of fear as we think about the future these days. Here are two scriptures that can encourage us at such times. Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb," and Romans 8:38, 39, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As we learn to fortify ourselves in the merits of the sacrificial blood of Christ and read and ponder the accounts of the great sacrifice on our behalf, such as found in Matthew 27:24-54, Luke 23, or John 19, such practices can remove all fear of the destroyer, and serve to surround us with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change--wonderfully change--the most hopeless, discouraging outlook, if it is our heavenly Father's will.

"The mighty God of Israel is our God. In Him we may trust, and if we obey His requirements He will work for us in as signal a manner as He did for His ancient people. Everyone who seeks to follow the path of duty will at times be assailed by doubt and unbelief. The way will sometimes be so barred by obstacles, apparently insurmountable, as to dishearten those who will yield to discouragement; but God is saying to such, Go forward. Do your duty at any cost. The difficulties that seem so formidable, that fill your soul with dread, will vanish as you move forward in the path of obedience, humbly trusting in God." Patriarchs and Prophets 437.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13).

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psalm 146:5).

Here is another glimpse into the Great Controversy:

"There is a strife between the forces of good and evil, between the loyal and the disloyal angels. Christ and Satan are not at an agreement, and they never will be. In every age the true church of God has

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engaged in decided warfare against satanic agencies. Until the controversy is ended, the struggle will go on, between wicked angels and wicked men on the one side, and holy angels and true believers on the other.

“There is not, and can not be, a natural enmity between fallen angels and fallen men. Both are evil. Through apostasy, both cherish evil sentiments. Wicked angels and wicked men are leagued in a desperate confederacy against the good. Satan knew that if he could induce men, as he had induced angels, to unite with him in his rebellion, he would have a strong force with which to carry on his rebellion.

“In the hosts of evil there is jarring and discord, but they are all firm allies in fighting against heaven. Their one aim is to disparage God, and their great numbers lead them to entertain the hope that they will be able to dethrone Omnipotence. Special Testimonies B02 5, 6.

Now here is a promise for us today:

“Through the transforming power of the grace of Christ, men may prevail against the evil that strives for the victory. They need not become the servants of Satan, the dupes of his lies. They need not continue to be his willing captives. They may rise against the deceiver, whose wily tissue of lies cost our first parents their Eden home. They may resist the attacks of Satan. God can give them power to distinguish between falsehood and error, between sincerity and truth. If they choose, they may stand on vantage ground. But they can continue to stand there only by placing their hand in the hand of Christ, and following where He leads the way.” Special Testimonies B02 8.

Wow! What a promise!!! Look closely what our dear Heavenly Father is giving us here!

- We need not become Satan’s servants!
- We need not be fooled by his lies!
- We can rise and resist the attacks of Satan!
- God will give us power to distinguish between lies and truth!
- We can stand on vantage ground!
- We can have our hand in the hand of Jesus by faith!

That is where I choose to be; how about you? Are you tired of all the confusion and insecurity; tired of having all kinds of bad habits that harm your body and soul; unhappiness, and bad attitudes that make you miserable, and distress you and your family? Oh my friends! There is freedom for you in the mighty power of God’s amazing plan of Salvation; there is power and guidance and comfort in the presence of the Holy Spirit, who will be sent to fight your spiritual battles with the dark side!

You know, it is impossible for a human being of flesh and blood to fight a spirit being! But the greatest power in the universe is a spirit, the Holy Spirit, and you can ask for Him and have Him as your best friend and protection. Then also you can have the mighty angels of God who excel in strength to be your body guard! Surely this in an offer no one should refuse!

Let’s learn some more about God’s dealing with humankind, shall we? The more we understand Him the happier we can be because there is life in really knowing Him.

John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

One of the questions that get asked a lot, both by people who want to know the answer and by those who want an excuse to rebel against God, is, why does not God put a stop to all the problems here on earth? Well there are very good and wise reasons why not! For one thing, most of the folk who ask this, would be hopping mad if God came along and took all their sinful pleasures away from them! They sure would! So God only takes these harmful habits from those who ask Him to; make sense? Those who want to keep them are left with them and also to receive the eventual effects of them. It would not be right or just for God to heal my illnesses

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that were caused by me doing deliberate harm to my body; should He heal me and I keep right on doing these wicked things? That would be supporting sin, and it would be a terrible crime.

Let's learn some more from another special gift our dear Father has given us, the Spirit of Prophecy.

"God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work." Review and Herald, September 17, 1901.

You know, there are sweet promises here also; but also some scary warnings, but love will always warn of danger, right?

- God keeps careful track and He knows; He cares even for the little birds.
- Contempt of God will meet with punishment.
- God has a limit; He allows people and nations to go so far and He does something about it.
- No one will always go on getting away with wickedness!

These are all promises that can comfort the hearts of the true believer. You know that we sometimes feel distressed as we see such cruelty, neglect and unkindness from selfish people, and they *seem* to get away with it. But we can be assured that God knows, and He *will* deal with it. Just make sure you are on God's side of the story!

Now look at what happened at the cross; if ever there was a time when it looked like God was defeated, it was then; but actually it was the opposite! God was victorious; and that seeming defeat put the universe in a secure position; sin was sentenced to eternal death on that hill of Calvary!

"Be astonished, O heaven, and be everlastingly ashamed, O inhabitants of earth! With sorrow and indignation the angels heard the choice made by the people and the sentence passed upon Christ. But they could not interfere; for in the great controversy between good and evil, Satan must be given every opportunity to develop his true character, that the heavenly universe, and the race for whom Christ was giving His life, might see the righteousness of God's purposes. Those under the control of the enemy must be allowed to reveal the principles of his government." Sign of the Times, March 28, 1900.

See? It all has to do with love and free will. God does not use force and so the universe had to see it all for themselves. Because of the way God allowed things to happen, we can be sure of a bright future for all who love Him. Let's learn more about the Holy Spirit and our freedom of choice:

"A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. Through the ministry of the angels, the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent, and draw him to Christ, who has paid the ransom money for his soul, that the sinner may be rescued from the slavery of sin and Satan. But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that the human agent may cooperate with the divine intelligences; and it is its province (job) to draw the soul, but never to force obedience. Christ is ready to impart all heavenly influences. He knows every temptation that comes to man, and the capabilities of every human agent. He weighs his strength. He sees the present and the future, and presents before the mind the obligations that should be met, and urges that common, earthly things shall not be permitted to be so absorbing that eternal things shall be lost out of reckoning. The Lord has fulness of grace to

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bestow on every one that will receive the heavenly gift. The Holy Spirit will bring the God-entrusted capabilities into Christ's service, and will mold and fashion the human agent according to the divine Pattern, in proportion as the human agent shall earnestly desire the transformation. "

Notice these wonderful promises connected with what the Holy Spirit does for us. Let's list a few:

- First off, the influence of the Holy Spirit comes to every human being on earth! This is like God introducing Himself and saying, "I love you, and I want to be your God. If you want to have me come closer to you, even move in with you, just let Me know!" But He is not like Satan, He will never shove open the door.
- Again we see this gift includes our helpers and body-guards the holy angels.
- We can be rescued from slavery to sin.
- Still, He will not take away our freedom to choose.
- Christ is ready to impart all heavenly influences. That is like saying, "here, everything you need is available to you! Just ask."
- He sees the future and will guide us accordingly if we will listen.
- Jesus has fullness of grace to give us. I don't think any of us can really understand the greatness of that promise! I think we would have to call that, "Amazing Grace!"
- We can be molded into the divine pattern if we want to be and choose to be.

Let's continue this quote.

"Christ, our Mediator, is the one who gives the Holy Spirit; and by the office work of the Holy Spirit, the atonement made on Calvary is brought in contact with the soul of man to transform his character, and change his nature, until it can be said in heaven, "Ye are laborers together with God, wearing Christ's yoke, bearing his burden." Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, man becomes the agent through which souls are brought into the kingdom of heaven. Through sanctification of the Spirit, he is a light to direct souls in the path of right, and draw souls to Jesus Christ. His hitherto paralyzed moral agency is quickened and reinvigorated with spiritual energy. Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Christian is placed on vantage ground, and becomes a channel through which the Holy Spirit can work, and the work done through the human agent, does not disappoint our Redeemer; for in such instruments he does not plead in vain with the souls of men. They are not ambassadors who having eyes see not, having ears hear not, and having hearts will not understand." Youth's Instructor, July 5, 1894.

Here's your power source folks; everything you need; and here also is your job description. It's all there for you; everything you need, even eyes that see; and ears that hear; and hearts that understand.

This is true job security too. There are no forced retirements; no layoffs; and if it happens by the will of God that you fall asleep in death at your post of duty here, then when Jesus comes you will arise and your job will be waiting for you. No danger of unemployment!

When Jesus fulfilled His Father's plan, and made sure that all was accepted, then He asked for a gift for His people. He never asks tiny gifts, He asked for the biggest gift possible! Here it is:

"The donation of the Holy Spirit was the greatest gift God could bestow upon finite man. This is free to all and in this gift there could be no computation; this endowment specially signaled the enthronement of the only begotten Son of God in His mediatorial kingdom. In this the gift of the Comforter the Lord God of heaven demonstrates to man the perfect reconciliation which He had effected between Himself and men, which hope, says the apostle, "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered."

Free Gifts:

Don't you just love free gifts? I think all of us do. Around here if a store advertises that on a certain day the first hundred shoppers will be given a free whatever, well, the people go there and line up just to be sure to be among those who get the free whatever! The nice thing about this free gift is that it is not limited; everyone can have it; you don't have to line up. Continuing:

"Has not God said He would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? And is not this Spirit a real, true actual guide? Some men seem afraid to take God at His word as though it would be presumption in them. They pray for the Lord to teach us and yet are afraid to credit the pledged word of God and believe we have been taught of Him. So long as we come to our heavenly Father humbly and with a spirit to be taught, willing and anxious to learn, why should we doubt God's fulfillment of His own promise. You must not for a moment doubt Him and dishonor Him thereby. When you have sought to know His will, your part in the operation with God is to believe that you will be led and guided and blessed in the doing of His will. We may mistrust ourselves lest we misinterpret His teachings, but make even this a subject of prayer, and trust Him, still trust Him to the uttermost, that His Holy Spirit will lead you to interpret aright His plans and the working of His providence.: 6 Manuscript Releases 225.

Let's just review for a moment the reason why we need all of these wonderful promises and amazing free gifts. We need to consider what we are up against; there is no middle ground you know, either we are God's and we have all these amazing gifts; or we are the tormented slaves of this power described here.

"The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us, were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder, torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims, and yield to Satan's temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits. But those who follow Christ are ever safe under his watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from Heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about his people. Great Controversy 88 517.

Great to have your own personal guard isn't it. But we need to do our part or we can lose out on these promises. Remember the key is to ask; and the asking must be done in faith, and our faith must be based on the Word of God. How is our faith kept strong? By feeding it with the promises of the Word of God. This poem tells the story well.

WHAT SATAN FEARS MOST

What Satan fears most
Is a man on his knees;
Not vast marching armies
With great weaponry.
He knows he can stand
Against the power of men;
To engage us in battle
Is mere sport to him.
But a man on his knees
With his head bowed in prayer
Is something quite different
To the prince of the air.

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For when he sees us in prayer
To our God most high,
He knows we have seen
Through his devilish lies.
That's why Satan fears most
A man on his knees;
And we'll keep him trembling
If our prayers never cease.

“It is very necessary that we should pray in order that we may have strength from above to see and resist the temptations of the enemy; but Satan ever seeks to prevent men from praying, by filling up their time with business or pleasure, or by leading them into such wickedness that they will have no desire to pray. The Lord Jesus has made heaven accessible to all who will come unto Him, and He invites the children and the youth to come. He said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” Jesus would have the children and the youth come to Him with the same confidence with which they go to their parents. As a child asks his mother or father for bread when he is hungry, so the Lord would have you ask Him for the things which you need. If your sins are heavy upon your heart, you are to come to God and say, “For Christ’s sake, forgive my sins.” Every sincere prayer will be heard in heaven, and every earnest petition for grace and strength will be answered.”—(The Youth’s Instructor, July 7, 1892.)

Have you ever noticed how when you kneel to have your personal devotions, that often all kinds of distracting thoughts start skipping through your mind? We need to take hold of the power of Jesus to have victory over this trick of the evil angels to interrupt our communication lines with our God.

“We are exhorted to pray always, to watch unto prayer, lest Satan crowd in between the soul and God, or mingle with our prayers to such a degree that God and Christ shall be shut out from our view, that the pledged word of God shall be made of no effect. He would so engage the mind that those who profess to be Christians shall have only a few stray thoughts of God, and engage in occasional, listless seasons of prayer. He would have them neglect to come to God, who is the great reservoir of power.” Signs of the Times, April 4, 1895.

Here are yet more gifts and promises for us as the children of our heavenly Father.

“Take Jesus as your standard. Imitate His life. Fall in love with His character. Walk as Christ walked. A new spring will be given to your intellectual faculties, a larger scope to your thoughts, when you bring your powers into vigorous contact with eternal things, which are intrinsically grand and great. “Thoughts of God and of heaven are ennobling. There is no limit to the height you may reach, for it will be like swimming in waters where there is no bottom. Vital religion is of such a character that it will widen the scope and stimulate the movements of the human understanding. There is nothing belittling in the pure religion of Christ. The gospel received will bow down the loftiness of human understanding and lay the haughtiness of men low, that God alone may be exalted. But in this it does not dwarf the intellect and cripple the energies. It transforms the man, renewing his heart, changing his character, and not cramping the intellect. “True religion unfolds and calls out the mental energies. Conviction and repentance of sin, renunciation of self, and trust in the merits of the blood of Christ cannot be experienced without the individual being made more thoughtful, more intellectual, than he was before. No one will become mentally imbecile by having his attention directed to God. Connection with God is connection with all true wisdom.” 20 Manuscript Releases 73.

God also gave a special gift to the Advent people in the writings of Sister White, the Spirit of Prophecy. He gave us line upon line, precept upon precept; minute counsel to cover every aspect of life that we could possibly

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run into. Sometimes it is spelled out so clearly you feel that somehow, it was written just for your needs and mailed to you.

Many of the Spirit of Prophecy writings act as a magnifying glass to show us more clearly the lessons in the Biblical accounts. We need a magnifying glass because Laodicea has bad eyes! Oh Yes, we are told they are blind. Otherwise why did Jesus tell us to anoint our eyes with eye-salve? The Spirit of Prophecy is a part of that eye-salve that we need so desperately and we can only apply it by personal study.

It is sad when we hear anyone who is aware of the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy, become so self-confident and arrogant as to think that they can 'just use the Bible.' It is said that *if* we had studied as we ought to have done, we wouldn't have needed the Spirit of Prophecy. But God has looked down and saw our desperate need, and knew He had to provide this for us, but some folk turn around and boldly say, "Yes Lord, that's OK for those guys over there, but I'm so smart Lord, I don't need what You say that I need."

Did you know that every time that God has sent light into the world there were always many who said; "Oh I don't need this, I'm fine with what I already have?" It was said about the Old Testament prophets, the New Testament writers, the writers of the epistles and so on. They said the same thing to the Lord Himself; "We believe Moses, but who do you think *You* are?"

What does the Bible say? "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21. Once this has been done, and it has, and the prophet has passed the Bible tests, then their messages are to be accepted as the voice of God. If someone brings us a spiritual message, we are to look it over carefully, comparing it to the existing inspired counsel—if it passes the tests, it is truth. But what do we do when we find information that has some good stuff in it and yet has some things not true? Many fall for a mixture of truth and error.

The Bible says in these last days, Satan shall seek to deceive, "Even the very elect". It is interesting to note that when the Israelites apostatized, it was always by *adding* something from the pagans around them that they felt wasn't totally forbidden by God and seemed to have some good in it. But it led minds away from the firm foundation and eventually more and more pagan things came to be seen as 'having a lot of good in them' and before you know it, it didn't even seem wrong to them to offer their children to idols! It has always worked the same way.

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."
Deuteronomy 12:32

God does not give power to those who do not walk according to His council. He only promises power if we obey Him; completely. His power is to bless and enable His children to live in the ways He has laid down for them. He has never authorized us to add or take away from His counsel. If we do start practicing things He has not enjoined or neglecting things He has enjoined, He can't bless us; we cut off our Power lines completely; the power of God's blessing just won't be there!

So let us all keep in mind all these amazing promises and gifts that are ours when we determine to let nothing between our soul and our Savior!

Under His wings;
I'll trust and I'll sing;
I'll walk in the light, and sleep in the night,
Under His wings.