

## 67 ARE THERE EVIL POWERS IN HEAVEN?

***"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers [arche #746], against the authorities [exousia #1849], against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."***  
**Eph 6:12**

**INTRODUCTION:** This passage is considered, by some, to be evidence of a superhuman enemy of God named "Satan" commanding an army of evil entities in heaven. Futurists believe this band of evil entities are still present and preterists believe they were destroyed in AD 70. We will seek to show, as we let scripture interpret scripture, Paul was referring to the oppressive Jewish religious system and the entrenched persecuting temple leadership.

### 1. HEAVEN IS THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD WITH NO OPPOSITION.

**A. God's home:** "The LORD says: 'The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool.'" Is 66:1

**B. God's will always done:** "Our Father in heaven...may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Mt 6:9-10

**C. No opposition in heaven:** "O Lord God of our ancestors, you are the God who lives in heaven and rules over all the kingdoms of the nations. You possess strength and power; no one can stand against you." 2 Chr 20:6

**D. Heaven is the source of all spiritual blessing:** "Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ." Eph 1:3

**E. Heaven is our eternal home:** "We know that if our earthly house, the tent we live in, is dismantled, we have a building from God, a house not built by human hands, that is eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor 5:1

### 2. THE TEMPLE WAS THE SYMBOLIC DWELLING PLACE OF GOD, THAT IS, HEAVEN.

**A. Yahweh's glory filled the temple at its dedication.** "When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and Yahweh's glory filled the house." 2 Chr 7:1

**B. Jesus said,** "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who has been living in it." Mt. 23:21

**C. Symbolic meaning of "heaven":** "I have put my words in your mouth, and have covered you in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and tell Zion, 'You are my people.'" Is 51:16

**D. Josephus described how the High Priest wore "heaven" on his clothing:** The stones on the High Priest's shoulders represented the sun and moon and the twelve jewels on his garment represented the 12 months as well as the 12 signs of the zodiac. "And for the [High Priest's] mitre, which was of a blue color, it seems to me to mean heaven; for how otherwise could the name of God be inscribed upon it?" Antiquities 3.7.7 Josephus

### 3. FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANS WEREN'T STRUGGLING AGAINST INDIVIDUAL PERSONS, BUT THE ENTRENCHED CORRUPT RELIGIOUS SYSTEM.

**A. Legalism:** "The experts in the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat... They tie up heavy loads, hard to carry, and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing even to lift a finger to move them." Mt. 23:3-4

**B. Lock self and others out of heaven:** "But woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in." Mt 23:13

**C. Evil indoctrination:** "Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross land and sea to make one convert, and when you get one, you make him twice as much a child of hell [Gehenna] as yourselves!" Mt. 23:15

**D. No discernment, immoral:** "Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law – justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!" Mt. 23:23-24

**E. Materialistic, self-centered:** "Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean too!" Mt 23:25-26

### 4. THERE ARE THREE ACCOUNTS OF SAUL'S ROLE IN PERSECUTING CHRISTIANS, GIVING INSIGHT REGARDING TEMPLE LEADERS' CENTRAL ROLE TO ERADICATE THE PEOPLE OF "THE WAY".

**A. The High Priest issued orders for militants, like Saul, to arrest men and women of "The Way" and bring them bound to Jerusalem.** "Meanwhile Saul, still breathing out threats to murder the Lord's disciples, went to the high priest and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, either men or women, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Acts 9:1-2

**B. The High Priest and council issued orders to enable arrests, imprisonment and murder of the followers of Christ. It appears the Roman prohibition of capital punishment by the Jewish state was lawlessly ignored.** Paul said, "I persecuted this Way even to the point of death, tying up both men and women and putting them in prison, as both the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I was on my way to make arrests there and bring the prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished." Acts 22:4-5

**C. Chief Priests issued authority to Paul in order to imprison and kill Christians. Tactics included entrapment. Saul even carried out terror beyond the province of Judaea, into foreign cities.** Paul said, “Not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons by the authority I received from the Chief Priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were sentenced to death. I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme. Because I was so furiously enraged at them, I went to persecute them even in foreign cities.” Acts 26:10-12

**5. ON-GOING PERSECUTION OF PEOPLE OF “THE WAY” BY JEWISH LEADERS (This is a small sample).**

**A. Beating:** “Summoning the apostles, they [Jewish leaders] beat them and commanded them not to speak...” Acts 5:40

**B. Martyrdom of Stephen:** “They threw him out of the city and stoned him.” Acts. 7:58

**C. Plan to murder:** The Jews plotted together to kill him, but Saul [Paul] learned of their plot against him. They were also watching the city gates day and night so that they could kill him. Acts 9:23-25

**D. Attempted murder:** He was speaking and debating with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they were trying to kill him. Acts 9:29

**E. Execution and imprisoning:** “King Herod [Agrippa]... had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too.” Acts 12:1-3

**F. Tortured just short of death:** “But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and after winning the crowds over, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, presuming him to be dead.” Acts 14:19

**G. Rioting, attack, mob rule:** “But the Jews became jealous, and gathering together some worthless men from the rabble in the marketplace, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. They attacked Jason’s house, trying to find Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly.” Acts 17:5

**6. USE OF “ARCHE” [#746] and “EXOUSIA” [#1849]:**

**RULERS/PRINCIPALITIES/AUTHORITIES/POWER/JURISDICTION. THESE REFERENCES PERTAIN TO HUMAN RULERS.**

**A.** “Now a certain ruler [#746], asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Lk 18:18

**B.** “On the next day, their rulers [#746], elders, and experts in the law came together in Jerusalem.” Acts 4:5

**C.** The leaders: “wanted to take advantage of what he [Jesus] might say so that they could deliver him up to the authority [#746] and jurisdiction [#1849] of the governor.” Lk. 20:20

**D.** “When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers [#746], and the authorities [#1849], do not worry about how you should make your defense or what you should say.” Lk 12:11

**E.** “Remind them to be subject to principalities [#746] and authorities [#1849], to obey rule...” Titus 3:1

**F.** “I was going to Damascus with authority [#1849] and complete power [#746] from the chief priests...” Acts 26:12

**G.** “They watched him [Jesus] and sent out spies, who pretended to be righteous, that they might trap him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the power [#746] and authority [#1849] of the governor.” LK 20:20

**7. USE OF THE WORD “DARK”: WORLD RULERS OF DARKNESS WERE APOSTATE JEWISH OFFICIALS. “DARK” DESCRIBES MAN’S UNREGENERATE STATE.**

**A.** Jesus said to the chief priests: “This is your hour, and that of the power of darkness!” Lk 22:53

**B.** “He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves.” Col 1:13

**C.** “But he who hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and doesn’t know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” 1 Jn 2:11

**Summary:** The “heaven” where wickedness resided was the Jerusalem temple from which documents were issued to persecute the followers of Jesus to prevent the spread of the gospel of Christ.

**NOTES:**

“**The Devil**” means “the slanderous”. Rightly translated “slanderous” would be used as a noun similar to “the wicked” also an adjective used as a noun. Slanderous means false. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the slanderous.” Eph 6:11 Jewish leadership portrayed believers in Jesus to be opposing God.

**Ruler of this world:** kosmokratas #2888. Used only once in the New Testament. Kosmos most frequently pertains to the Mosaic covenant world

“**Satan**” **videos/papers:** Preterist Papers #59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66 **Harlot of Revelation:** Preterist Paper #4.