Fulfilled Prophecies

Who Is The Prince Of The Power Of The Air?



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† When Paul described the prince of the power of the air, he wasn't introducing a mysterious ruler who would continue controlling the world forever. He was identifying Satan's influence over the disobedient world of his own generation (Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31).

† The expression must be understood within the first-century setting of Paul's letter, the spiritual condition of humanity outside Christ, and the approaching fulfillment of God's

judgment against the old covenant order (Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 8:13).
† Satan was a real spiritual adversary whose authority was being brought to an end through the victory of Jesus Christ. The New Testament describes his judgment, defeat, and removal as realities connected to Christ's redemptive work (John 16:11; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).
† The question isn't whether Satan once exercised influence. Scripture clearly says he did. The question is whether that authority continues today after Christ accomplished everything necessary to establish His everlasting kingdom (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 12:28).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the prince of the power of the air belonged to the age that was passing away, not to the completed New Covenant kingdom in which Christ reigns today (1 Corinthians 2:6; Hebrews 8:13; Revelation 11:15).

Ephesians 2:1-3
And you were dead in your offenses and sins, in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.
† Paul was reminding believers of their former spiritual condition. They had once lived under the influence of sin, following the course of the world rather than the righteousness of Christ (Romans 6:17-18; Colossians 1:13).
† The prince of the power of the air was Satan, the spiritual adversary associated with the disobedience and deception of that age. Paul wasn't identifying a human emperor or a physical ruler occupying the atmosphere (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4).
† The Greek word translated air is aer, referring to the lower atmosphere. In this expression, it serves as part of Paul's description of Satan's spiritual influence, not proof that Satan owned the physical sky (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15).

† The word prince identifies a ruler or authority. Satan exercised influence over those who rejected God's truth, but that authority was neither independent of God nor everlasting (Luke 4:6; John 16:11).
† Paul's description of the spirit working in the sons of disobedience identifies the influence of rebellion against God. It doesn't mean every unbeliever was personally possessed by Satan (Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:5-7).
† Notice that Paul repeatedly described the believers' former way of life. Their conversion had already transferred them from spiritual death into life in Christ (Colossians 1:13-14; Romans 8:1-2).

John 12:31-32
Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.
† Jesus identified Satan as the ruler of this world and announced that his judgment had arrived. The word now is important because Jesus placed this decisive confrontation within His own earthly ministry (John 16:11; Hebrews 2:14).
† Jesus didn't say Satan would remain the permanent ruler of the world. He announced that the ruler would be cast out through the redemptive victory He was about to accomplish (Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8).
† The world in this context includes the rebellious order standing against Christ. The statement doesn't mean the physical planet would be destroyed or that God had surrendered ownership of creation (Psalm 24:1; Ecclesiastes 1:4).
† Christ's crucifixion was the decisive turning point in Satan's defeat. The completed removal of the old covenant order would publicly confirm the victory of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 11:15).
† Satan's authority was being judged while Jesus was speaking, not postponed to an indefinite future generation (Luke

10:18; John 16:11).

John 16:8-11
And He, when He comes, will convict the world regarding sin, and righteousness, and judgment: regarding sin, because they do not believe in Me; and regarding righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer are going to see Me; and regarding judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
† Jesus declared that the ruler of this world had been judged. This was a judicial announcement concerning Satan's authority, not a prediction that his judgment would remain unresolved for thousands of years (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15).
† The Holy Spirit would testify to the righteousness of Christ and expose the guilt of those who rejected Him. Satan's condemnation was already certain because Christ's victory was certain (Acts 2:32-36; Hebrews 2:14).
† Judgment and the execution of judgment aren't always described as occurring at precisely the same moment. Satan's decisive condemnation through Christ's work and his final removal in Revelation belong to the same completed redemptive victory (Revelation 12:10-12; Revelation 20:10).
† From the fulfilled perspective, this judgment reached its covenantal completion by AD 70, when the old covenant age passed away and the kingdom stood fully established (Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 8:13).

Matthew 12:28-29
But if I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or, how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.
† Jesus connected the arrival of God's kingdom with His authority over demonic powers. His miracles demonstrated that Satan's dominion was already being challenged and overcome (Luke 10:17-20; Acts 10:38).
† The strong man represents Satan in this illustration. Jesus

was explaining that His authority to deliver people demonstrated His superiority over the adversary (Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:20-22).
† The binding of the strong man began through Christ's ministry. It wasn't an event that had to wait thousands of years before the kingdom could become effective (Luke 17:20-21; Colossians 1:13).
† Satan's binding and his final judgment must be understood within the unfolding victory of Christ, culminating in the completed kingdom rather than an endless struggle between two equal powers (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Revelation 20:1-10).

Luke 10:17-20
Now the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!" And He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to walk on snakes and scorpions, and authority over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."
† Jesus described Satan's fall while the disciples were witnessing the power of His kingdom. The authority exercised through Christ's name demonstrated the overthrow of the enemy's influence (Matthew 12:28-29; John 12:31).
† Satan's fall from heaven shouldn't be confused with a literal description of a physical object falling through the atmosphere. The language communicates the loss of authority and position (Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 12:9-10).
† The disciples' authority over demons was part of the extraordinary signs accompanying the establishment of the kingdom during the first-century transition (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3-4).
† Jesus directed their attention away from spiritual power and toward their relationship with God. Salvation in Christ was greater than their temporary authority over evil spirits

(Philippians 4:3; Hebrews 12:23).

Hebrews 2:14-15
Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
† The writer of Hebrews explicitly identifies the devil as the one associated with the power of death. Christ entered human existence to defeat that enemy through His own death (1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:15).
† Jesus didn't merely weaken Satan or negotiate a temporary agreement with him. His sacrifice established the decisive victory that would bring Satan's authority to its final end (John 12:31; Revelation 20:10).
† The bondage described here concerns humanity's captivity under sin and death. Christ's redemption brought freedom through the forgiveness of sins and the gift of everlasting life (Romans 6:22-23; John 11:25-26).
† Physical death continues in the world, but the covenantal separation and condemnation associated with Adam's death have been overcome in Christ. Believers now possess life through Him (Romans 5:17-21; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).
† The fulfilled kingdom doesn't require Satan to remain alive and active. Christ's victory is sufficient, and His people belong to a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 21:4).

Colossians 2:13-15
And when you were dead in your wrongdoings and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings, having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed

over them through Him.
† Paul described Christ's triumph over the rulers and authorities as an accomplished victory. The cross exposed their defeat and established the superiority of Christ (Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11).
† The written record of ordinances standing against God's people was removed through Christ's sacrifice. The old covenant system could no longer serve as the governing basis of their relationship with God (Ephesians 2:14-16; Hebrews 10:9-10).
† Satan's influence depended upon accusation, deception, and the bondage of sin. Christ's forgiveness and righteousness removed the foundation of that condemnation for those who belong to Him (Romans 8:1-4; Revelation 12:10-11).
† The rulers and authorities were publicly defeated through Christ's redemptive work. Paul wasn't describing a victory that would become possible only after a future earthly millennium (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Hebrews 10:12-13).
† The cross established the victory, and the events culminating in AD 70 marked the fulfillment of the covenantal transition announced by Jesus and His apostles (Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 8:13).

Ephesians 6:11-12
Put on the full armor of God, so that you will 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 this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
† Paul was writing to Christians who were living during the first-century conflict between the advancing kingdom of Christ and the powers opposing its establishment (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 2:15).
† Their struggle wasn't primarily against human enemies. Paul identified spiritual opposition operating behind deception, persecution, and resistance to the gospel (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

† The heavenly places in Ephesians describe the spiritual realm rather than a physical location above the clouds. Christ was already exalted above every ruler and authority (Ephesians 1:20-21; Ephesians 2:6).
† These instructions were necessary for the original believers who faced Satan's opposition during the transition to the completed kingdom (Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:12).
† Christians today still need truth, righteousness, faith, and God's Word. However, applying these spiritual principles doesn't require teaching that Satan remains alive after his fulfilled judgment (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 20:10).

Romans 16:20
The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
† Paul didn't tell the Roman Christians that Satan would be crushed thousands of years after their deaths. He told them that God would crush Satan under their feet shortly (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:6).
† This statement recalls the promise of victory over the serpent in Genesis. Christ, the promised descendant, accomplished the defeat that God's people would share (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16).
† The time expression matters. Paul's original readers were expecting the approaching completion of God's victory, not an endlessly postponed fulfillment (James 5:8-9; Hebrews 10:37).
† From the fulfilled perspective, Satan's final defeat occurred within that first-century period, culminating by AD 70 (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 20:10).
† If Satan was to be crushed shortly, we shouldn't reinterpret that promise to mean he would continue ruling the world for another two thousand years (John 16:11; Revelation 22:10).

Revelation 12:9-12
And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown

down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

† Revelation identifies the dragon as Satan, the same adversary associated with deception and opposition to God's people (Genesis 3:1-15; John 8:44).

† His expulsion is connected directly with the victory of the Lamb and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. The passage doesn't describe Satan receiving permanent authority over the earth (Luke 10:18; John 12:31).

† The accuser was cast down because the blood of Christ had secured redemption. His accusations couldn't overturn the salvation accomplished through Jesus (Romans 8:33-34; Colossians 2:13-15).

† Revelation explicitly says Satan had only a short time. That expression fits the first-century urgency of the book rather than an indefinite period extending through all subsequent history (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:10).

† The persecution of the saints and the approaching judgment belonged to the generation addressed by Jesus and His apostles (Matthew 23:34-36; Matthew 24:9-14).

Revelation 20:1-3

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were

completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.
† The thousand years represents the complete period appointed by God for Satan's restraint. Revelation uses symbolic numbers and images to communicate spiritual realities (Psalm 50:10; 2 Peter 3:8).
† Satan's binding began with Christ's victorious ministry, when Jesus demonstrated that the strong man was being overcome (Matthew 12:28-29; Luke 10:18).
† The binding had a specific purpose, preventing Satan from deceiving the nations in the manner described by the prophecy. It doesn't mean Satan was completely inactive throughout the period (Revelation 12:12; 1 Peter 5:8).
† The brief release belonged to the closing conflict of the first-century covenantal transition. It wasn't a prediction of another period of satanic rule thousands of years after the kingdom was established (Matthew 24:21-34; Revelation 1:1-3).
† The symbolic millennium doesn't require a literal thousand-year interval. It describes God's sovereign control over the events leading to Satan's final judgment (Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15).

Revelation 20:10
And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
† Revelation describes Satan's final judgment, not his temporary imprisonment followed by another opportunity to rule the world (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9).
† The lake of fire represents the irreversible judgment of God. Satan's final destination is judgment, not continued authority over humanity (John 16:11; Romans 16:20).
† The devil, beast, and false prophet are specifically identified in this judgment. The passage shouldn't be confused with the separate judgment of death and Hades described later in the chapter (Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:14).
† The fulfilled interpretation understands this final judgment as

part of the events completed by AD 70, consistent with Revelation's repeated statements that its fulfillment was near (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:6-10).
† Satan's judgment doesn't mean human sin, temptation, deception, or wickedness disappeared. Scripture identifies the human heart and fleshly desires as sources of sinful behavior (James 1:14-15; Mark 7:20-23).
† We don't need an active devil to explain every evil action in the world today. Human beings remain responsible for their choices before God (Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:7-8).

Colossians 1:12-14
giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
† Paul described salvation as a transfer from the authority of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. This was already taking place among the first-century believers (Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 6:17-18).
† The kingdom wasn't waiting for Christ to return physically to establish an earthly government. Believers were already participating in His spiritual reign (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36).
† Redemption and forgiveness were the foundations of their new identity. They no longer belonged to the realm of spiritual darkness and condemnation (Romans 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
† The completed New Covenant kingdom remains the inheritance of believers today. Christ's authority isn't threatened by a rival spiritual ruler (Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 12:28).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 5-7, records the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple in AD 70, and the terrible suffering surrounding the end of the Jewish revolt. These events provide historical context for the first-

century judgment announced by Jesus (Luke 21:20-24; Matthew 24:34).
† Tacitus, Histories, Book 5, describes the Jewish revolt and Roman military operations against Jerusalem. His account independently supports the historical reality of the conflict that brought the temple-centered order to an end (Luke 19:41-44; Hebrews 8:13).
† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, chapters 5-7, connects Jerusalem's destruction with the fulfillment of Christ's warnings and preserves the tradition that Christians departed Jerusalem before its destruction (Matthew 24:15-16; Luke 21:20-22).
† These historical writers confirm the setting and reality of Jerusalem's destruction. They don't independently prove the invisible judgment of Satan. That conclusion comes from the fulfilled interpretation of the biblical passages concerning his defeat (Romans 16:20; Revelation 20:10).

How It Applies To Us Today
† We live under the authority of the risen and reigning Jesus Christ. We aren't waiting for Him to defeat Satan or establish His kingdom, because His redemptive victory has already been accomplished (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 12:28).
† The prince of the power of the air doesn't remain the ruler of our world. Christ has received all authority in heaven and on earth, and His kingdom has no end (Matthew 28:18; Daniel 7:14).
† We shouldn't attribute every temptation, illness, disaster, or act of wickedness to Satan. Human desires, sinful choices, and the brokenness of mortal life are sufficient explanations for many of the struggles people experience (James 1:14-15; Romans 8:22-23).
† Our responsibility is to live according to the Spirit, reject sinful desires, and demonstrate the righteousness of Christ through our conduct (Galatians 5:16-25; Colossians 3:12-17).
† We don't need to fear an invisible adversary supposedly controlling the atmosphere. Our confidence rests in the

completed victory of Jesus and the everlasting security of His kingdom (Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 12:28).
† The gospel isn't a message about an unfinished battle between Christ and Satan. It's the announcement of redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, and everlasting life through the victorious Son of God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Colossians 1:13-14).
† The kingdom is present, the New Covenant is established, and the gates of the New Jerusalem remain open to those who come to Christ (Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:25-27; Revelation 22:17).

Q & A Appendix
Q: Who was the prince of the power of the air?
A: Satan, the spiritual adversary who exercised influence over the disobedient world during the first-century age in which Paul was writing (Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31).

Q: Does the power of the air mean Satan physically controlled the atmosphere?
A: No. The expression describes his spiritual authority and influence. It doesn't establish ownership of the literal atmosphere or control over the weather (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15).

Q: Was Satan already being defeated during Jesus' ministry?
A: Yes. Jesus announced the ruler's judgment, described Satan's fall, and demonstrated His authority over demonic powers (Matthew 12:28-29; Luke 10:18; John 16:11).

Q: Did the cross accomplish Satan's defeat?
A: Yes. Christ's death established the decisive victory over the devil and the rulers and authorities that opposed God's people (Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:15).

Q: Why did Paul say Satan would be crushed shortly?
A: Because he expected God's victory to reach its fulfillment

within the first-century period. The fulfilled perspective places that completion by AD 70 (Romans 16:20; Matthew 24:34).

Q: Does Revelation teach that Satan would return to rule the world after AD 70?
A: No. From the fulfilled perspective, the brief release and final judgment belonged to the first-century completion of prophecy. Revelation doesn't establish another satanic age after that judgment (Revelation 20:3, 10; Revelation 22:10).

Q: If Satan is defeated, why do people still commit evil?
A: Because human beings can still choose sin. Scripture identifies sinful desires, pride, greed, and the human heart as sources of wickedness (James 1:14-15; Mark 7:20-23; Galatians 5:19-21).

Q: Does the existence of evil prove Satan is still alive?
A: No. The existence of sin doesn't establish the continued existence of Satan. Human moral responsibility remains even after the adversary's judgment (Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:7-8).

Q: Does Christ have complete authority today?
A: Yes. Jesus declared that all authority had been given to Him, and Scripture describes His kingdom as everlasting and unshakable (Matthew 28:18; Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

Q: What should Christians understand about the prince of the power of the air today?
A: He was an adversary whose authority belonged to the age that was passing away. We live in the completed New Covenant kingdom under the victorious reign of Jesus Christ (John 12:31; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 20:10).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Ephesians 2:1-3; John 12:31-32; John 16:8-11; Matthew 12:28-29; Luke 10:17-20; Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:13-15; Ephesians 6:11-12; Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:9-12; Revelation 20:1-3; Revelation 20:10; Colossians 1:12-14

† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7

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