

Thought For The Week

Articles

Articles (Part1, Part2): *The 'I' in Sin and Pride* - ~1000 words, ~300 words

The 'I' in Sin and Pride, Part 1

Unveiling the Origins of Evil: A Biblical Exploration of Pride and the Fall

Preacher Jim delivered the first installment of a two-part sermon titled “The ‘I’ in Sin and Pride, Part 1.” The message, rooted deeply in Scripture, sought to address one of theology’s most enduring questions: the origin of the devil and the nature of evil itself. Through careful exposition of biblical texts, Jim presented a worldview where God’s eternal sovereignty stands in stark contrast to a created being’s tragic descent into rebellion—a descent mirrored in human lives through the seductive power of pride.

The sermon opened with two Scripture readings from Isaiah 14. John read verse 12: “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations.” Roger followed with verses 13–14, capturing the heart of the figure’s arrogance: five defiant “I will” declarations—“I will ascend to heaven,” “I will raise my throne above the stars of God,” “I will sit on the mount of assembly,” “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,” and “I will make myself like the Most High.” These verses provide a window into the origin story of Satan, setting the stage for understanding how pride transforms a once-glorious being into humanity’s greatest adversary.

Jim described the devil as a constant presence across the biblical narrative—from witnessing God’s creation days, to tempting Eve in Eden, to appearing as the dragon in Revelation. Scripture offers no redeeming qualities, portraying him instead as malevolent, murderous, deceptive, and consumed with hatred toward mankind. Yet the preacher posed probing questions: Who is this being? Where did he originate? Was he created evil, or did evil arise within him? Rather than speculate immediately, Jim first established foundational truths about God to highlight the unbridgeable gulf between Creator and creature.

God exists eternally in a timeless realm with no beginning or end. Introduced in Genesis as Elohim—a Hebrew plural noun denoting the triune Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—God predates all creation. King David’s words in Psalm 90:2 affirm this: “Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” What distinguishes God are three attributes exclusive to Him: omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. As El Shaddai (God Almighty), He spoke the universe into existence with effortless authority, creating both spiritual and physical realms. Jeremiah 32:17 declares nothing too difficult for Him, while 1 John 4:4 reassures believers that “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” Omniscience grants God infinite knowledge; Job 38–41 showcases His unrivaled understanding, and Psalm 147:5 states His insight has no limit. Omnipresence means God exists everywhere simultaneously—past, present, and future—as Psalm 139:7–10 poetically illustrates: no place in heaven, Sheol, or the farthest sea escapes His presence.

Because only God possesses these qualities and eternal existence, Satan must be a created being of heavenly origin. Jim then surveyed the two realms of creation. In the spiritual realm dwell seraphim, cherubim, archangels, angels, and other celestial beings—all formed early in Genesis 1's creation week. Though endowed with eternal spiritual bodies and remarkable power, they remain finite, lacking God's unique attributes. Job records their joyful praise as they witnessed the remainder of creation.

In the physical realm, humanity occupies the pinnacle, fashioned in God's image. Yet the Fall in Eden changed everything. Deceived by the serpent, Eve ate the forbidden fruit; Adam followed willingly. In doing so, they relinquished the dominion God entrusted to them. Jim pointed to Luke 4:5–6, where Satan tempted Jesus by offering all earthly kingdoms, claiming they had been “handed over” to him. Jesus did not dispute the claim, underscoring humanity's responsibility in surrendering stewardship. This division persists: every person resides in either God's kingdom or Satan's. At Christ's return, Jesus will separate humanity like a shepherd divides sheep from goats. Believers inherit eternal life; rejectors face condemnation. The resurrection grants all incorruptible spiritual bodies suited for eternity—either peaceful fellowship in heaven or punishment in the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Jim described humanity's tripartite nature—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The body, temporary like a tent, returns to dust after an average lifespan of seventy years. The spirit—God's breath of life—animates flesh. He cited Genesis 2:7, where Adam's formed body remained lifeless until God breathed into him. Animals share this breath (Genesis 7:21–22), refuting spontaneous life theories; James 2:26 declares, “the body without the spirit is dead,” and Psalm 104:29–30 shows God's spirit creates and sustains life.

The soul, intelligent, rational, creative, and emotional, bears God's image and receives life at conception (Psalm 139). At death, the soul departs to Hades. Faithful souls rest in Abraham's bosom (paradise), awaiting resurrection; the unfaithful enter torment. Luke 16:19–31 vividly illustrates this: Lazarus is carried by angels to Abraham's side, while the rich man awakens in agony. Ecclesiastes 12:7 confirms the spirit returns to God, while the soul faces immediate destiny.

Returning to Satan, Jim noted that God declared all creation “very good,” including Lucifer before his fall. As a created angel, he possessed no divine attributes and was never God's equal. The preacher teased his hypothesis for the evening session: the answer to Lucifer's transformation into Satan lies in the prideful “I will” statements of Isaiah 14:13–14.

The sermon closed with an invitation. Jim urged anyone needing prayer, baptism, or gospel response to come forward during the closing song, extending the congregation's support to all seeking spiritual renewal.

In this morning message, Jim laid a robust theological foundation: God's unmatched sovereignty, creation's goodness, humanity's dignity and fall, and the stark realities of eternity. By contrasting the eternal Creator with a fallen creature, the sermon warned against pride—the same “I”-centered ambition that doomed Lucifer—and invited listeners to choose humility, faith, and alignment with God's kingdom. The evening conclusion promised deeper insight into how that ancient rebellion continues to echo in every human heart.

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The "I" in Sin and Pride, Part 1

The Origin of Evil: Exploring the Fall of Pride in a Biblical Sermon

The preacher, Jim delivered the first part of a two-part sermon titled "**The 'I' in Sin and Pride, Part 1.**" Drawing from Isaiah 14:12–14, he opened with vivid Scripture readings depicting a proud figure—the "star of the morning," or son of the dawn—falling from heaven after declaring ambitious "I will" statements: ascending to God's throne, exalting above the stars, and making himself like the Most High. These verses set the stage for examining the adversary, the devil, and how his fall mirrors patterns of sin in human lives.

Jim emphasized that the Bible portrays Satan as a malevolent, lying, murderous being bent on humanity's destruction, present from Genesis through Revelation. He posed key questions: Who is Satan? Was he created evil, or did he become so? To answer, Jim first contrasted Satan with God's eternal nature. God, introduced as Elohim in Genesis—a plural term signifying the triune Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)—exists timelessly with no beginning or end, as Psalm 90:2 affirms.

God alone holds three unique attributes: omnipotence (all-powerful, as El Shaddai), omniscience (all-knowing, with infinite understanding per Psalm 147:5), and omnipresence (everywhere at once, as Psalm 139 poetically illustrates). These set Him infinitely above all creation, including Satan, whom Jim described as a created heavenly being lacking these qualities.

The sermon explored spiritual beings like angels, cherubim, and seraphim—created early in Genesis 1, powerful yet finite—and humans as God's earthly pinnacle, made in His image. Through the Garden of Eden's fall, humanity surrendered dominion to Satan, as evidenced in his wilderness temptation of Jesus (Luke 4). At judgment, people will be separated into God's kingdom or Satan's, receiving eternal spiritual bodies for heaven or the lake of fire.

Jim detailed humanity's tripartite nature—body (temporary, returning to dust), soul (eternal, intelligent, emotional part in God's image, departing to Hades at death), and spirit (God's breath animating life, returning to Him). Souls of the faithful await resurrection in paradise (Abraham's bosom), while the unfaithful face torment, per Luke 16's rich man and Lazarus.

Lucifer was created "very good," but pride led to his fall—details promised for the evening session from Isaiah 14. The message closed with an invitation for prayer, baptism, or gospel response.

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The 'I' in Sin and Pride, Part 2

The "I" Factor: Pride as the Root of All Sin – A Sermon on Lucifer's Fall

In the evening service, the preacher, Jim returned to the pulpit for the conclusion of his two-part sermon, “The ‘I’ in Sin and Pride.” After Mike’s Scripture reading from Isaiah 14:12–14, Jim explained that the morning session had established God’s unrivaled preeminence—His eternal existence, triune nature as Elohim, and exclusive attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. The evening message focused on Lucifer’s tragic fall and how the same sin of pride lies at the heart of every human transgression.

The sermon’s title and central motif originated from a message Jim heard about thirty years earlier by former minister Dan Collier. Collier had used a clever double entendre: the letter “I” occupies the exact center of the words “Lucifer,” “pride,” and “sin.” In each, an equal number of letters flank the central “I,” symbolizing self-centeredness as the core—“the I factor.” Isaiah 14 captures this perfectly in Lucifer’s five boastful declarations: “I will ascend into heaven,” “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,” “I will also sit on the mount of the congregation,” “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,” and “I will be like the Most High.” These “I wills,” born of pride, precipitated his downfall, fulfilling Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Jim clarified that “Lucifer” (from Hebrew meaning “brightness” or “morning star”) refers to this fallen angel, not literal planets like Venus or Jupiter, which serve as morning stars in the physical sky. He noted an intriguing biblical parallel in Job 38:4, 7, where God asks Job, “Where were you when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” during creation. Jim suggested—while remaining open to discussion—that the plural “morning stars” may refer to the pre-incarnate Jesus (who calls Himself “the Bright and Morning Star” in Revelation 22:16) and Lucifer, both radiant beings present at creation’s climax.

To deepen the portrait, Jim turned to Ezekiel 28:14–17, a prophecy against the king of Tyre that carries double meaning. The passage addresses a spiritual being: “You were the anointed cherub who covers ... You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.” Blameless from creation until “iniquity was found in you,” this cherub became filled with violence, his heart lifted up because of his beauty and splendor. God cast him down as profane. Jim argued this describes Lucifer, not merely a human king, since no mortal could claim heavenly access or cherubic status.

Cherubim, Jim explained, are awe-inspiring: multi-faced (man, lion, ox, eagle), four-winged, bronze-sparkling beings with perhaps twenty-foot wingspans (Ezekiel 1). They guard Eden’s tree of life (Genesis 3:24), cover the mercy seat in the tabernacle (Exodus 37:9) and heavenly throne (2 Kings 19:15), and accompany God. Seraphim, distinct six-winged beings, cry “Holy, holy, holy” before the Lord (Isaiah 6). Constant exposure to God’s glory made these creatures luminous; Lucifer’s brilliance, reflecting divine radiance, likely contributed to his title “morning star.” Yet proximity bred presumption. Pride corrupted his wisdom; he began viewing himself superior, craving

worship.

This arrogance sparked cosmic rebellion. Jesus declared, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Revelation 12:7–9 recounts war in heaven: Michael and his angels defeated the dragon—Satan, the old serpent, deceiver of the world—and cast him and his angels to earth. Satan’s demand for worship appears in his temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:7), offering earthly kingdoms for adoration.

Jim highlighted typology: earthly events mirror spiritual realities. The prophecies against Babylon’s and Tyre’s kings (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28) serve as “types” foreshadowing Satan as the “anti-type.” Humans under satanic influence become types of Satan when they sin, repeating his pattern of autonomy from God. Adam and Eve’s fall exemplifies this: deceived, they chose self-rule, trading divine protection for enslavement to evil. The spiritual realm’s aggression—demons fearing the abyss (Gospels)—intensifies negative influence, knowing their time is short.

Pride is no trivial fault. Proverbs 6:16–19 lists seven things God hates, beginning with “haughty eyes”—arrogant pride. This perversion sickens the soul, making one unreasonable and resistant to counsel. Paul describes love as neither boastful, proud, envious, nor self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13). James traces selfish ambition to “earthly, sensual, demonic” wisdom that breeds confusion and evil (James 3:14–16).

The antidote? Fear God. Satan lost reverence, believing he deserved worship. Proverbs 8:13 declares, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.” Believers must cultivate hatred for pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech. Every sin conceals the “I”—me, mine, my will—repeating Satan’s original rebellion. He sinned first; humans follow.

Paul warned against appointing novices as elders, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). Pride disqualifies service and severs grace.

In conclusion, Jim answered the morning’s questions: Satan, once Lucifer the cherub, was created good in heaven’s ranks. Unrighteousness arose through pride; he became evil. Beware the “I factor.” It topples angels and humans alike. Humility before God remains the path to safety.

The sermon closed with an invitation for prayer or response, underscoring that turning from self to submission restores what pride destroys.

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The "I" in Sin and Pride, Part 2

The "I" Factor: Pride, Lucifer's Fall, and the Root of All Sin

In the evening service, the preacher, Jim delivered the second part of his sermon, "The 'I' in Sin and Pride," building on the morning's foundation. Mike read Isaiah 14:12–14, where the prophet describes Lucifer's dramatic fall: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ... I will be like the Most High.'" These five "I will" statements reveal the core of Lucifer's rebellion—self-exaltation that led to his expulsion from heaven.

Jim explained the sermon's clever title draws from a message he heard decades ago by Dan Collier. The letter "I" sits at the heart of the words Lucifer, pride, and sin, symbolizing self-centeredness as the "I factor" driving evil. Pride, Scripture warns, precedes destruction (Proverbs 16:18). Lucifer, once a radiant "morning star" (Hebrew for brightness), was not a planet like Venus or Jupiter but a high-ranking cherub in God's presence.

Cross-referencing Ezekiel 28:14–17, Jim described Lucifer as "the anointed cherub who covers," blameless until iniquity was found in him. His heart became proud because of his beauty and splendor; he corrupted his wisdom and was cast down. Cherubim, vivid multi-faced beings with wings spanning perhaps twenty feet (Ezekiel 1), guard God's throne, Eden, and the mercy seat—positions of immense honor. Lucifer's proximity to God's glory made him shine, yet that very privilege fueled arrogance.

The prophecies against the kings of Babylon and Tyre (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28) carry double meaning: earthly rulers reflect the spiritual reality of Satan's fall. Humans, influenced by the evil realm, repeat the pattern—choosing autonomy over submission, as Adam and Eve did. Satan, now the dragon cast out with his angels (Revelation 12:7–9), seeks worship (Luke 4:7) and deceives the world.

Pride is no mere flaw; it tops God's list of detestable things (Proverbs 6:16–19), producing haughty eyes, lies, violence, and division. True love, Paul writes, is not boastful or self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13). James links selfish ambition to demonic wisdom that breeds confusion and evil (James 3:14–16).

To combat the "I factor," Jim urged fearing God, hating pride and arrogance (Proverbs 8:13), and recognizing that every sin hides self-will—the same original sin Satan committed. Paul warned elders against pride lest they fall "into the same condemnation as the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6).

Lucifer began good, a created cherub, but became Satan through pride. The lesson closed with a sobering call: beware of pride, for it can cause anyone to fall from grace. Jim extended the invitation for prayer or response, reminding the congregation that humility before God is the antidote to the deadly "I."

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