

Angels and Demons - Part 2

“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.”

Let's take a look at the darker side of this spiritual realm that surrounds us. The Bible also teaches us that our struggle is with demons. This subject may make many of us uncomfortable. It can even seem like a throwback to medieval superstitions. However, a person cannot read the Word of God without accepting the reality of demons. A major part of Jesus' ministry was given to confronting demonic powers and releasing people from the control and/or influence of demons. If we deny that demons exist, we discredit Jesus and His gospel. He declared that one of the signs of His kingdom was the overthrow of demonic powers. **Matthew 12:22**, *“Then they brought Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.”* **Verse 28**, *“If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”*

Who are the demons? The answer is very simple. Demons are fallen angels. The same attributes that angels have are therefore also true of demons. When God created the universe, he created a vast array of angelic beings. The most glorious angel was a 'being' named Lucifer, which means “Morning Star.” **Isaiah 14:12-14** describes in poetic terms how he led a rebellion in heaven in an attempt to overthrow God. That rebellion failed, but in the process one-third of the angels followed Lucifer in his evil scheme. Lucifer became the devil and the rebellious angels became the demons.

The Bible tells us that Satan set up his headquarters right here on planet earth. He won his first victory when he persuaded Eve to eat the fruit and she gave it to Adam - and he ate. Right then, sin entered paradise. From that moment until this the whole world has been the devil's playground and the demons have been his foot soldiers in his battle against God. Demons have only one purpose: to further Satan's evil work in the world. They are evil through and through, they hate God and they hate Christ. They are unholy, disobedient, arrogant liars. Like Satan, they come only to steal, kill and to destroy. And like their master, they work through the world and the flesh to tempt us to do wrong. And they are very good at the art of deception!

Most of what the Bible says about demons comes from the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus. Time and again Jesus encountered men and women who had somehow fallen under the control of demonic spirits. Some of the terrible afflictions included blindness, deafness, loss of speech, paralysis, insanity, seizures, and suicidal tendencies. Interestingly, the Bible never connects demon possession with personal moral sin. In fact, the gospel writers seem to put it in the category of sickness and disease. It's also worth noting that whenever Jesus cast out a demon, it came out instantly because the demons must bow before the mighty name of the Son of God. He is Lord of ALL!

We cannot read of the wickedness of humanity or the cruelty that men are capable of doing to each other without believing in the reality of wicked spirits called **demons**. The atrocities of the Nazi regime, the horror of My Lai in Vietnam, the slaughter of millions in Rwanda, the viciousness of the Serbs in Bosnia, the cold brutality of young men devoted to Islam who crashed airliners into tall buildings... These are not simply the

work of twisted minds.

This kind of evil is master-minded and orchestrated by people who are controlled by the agents of the devil - the demons who delight in destruction and death. Right now, the devil and his demons are at work, but most of the time they prefer that we do not see them. They are content to work through people (and negative situations) to carry out their mandate to kill, steal and destroy.

The Bible is not clear as to the origin of demons, but hints that they were angels who left their service of God during a rebellion in Heaven led by Satan. We read in **Revelation 12:7-9**, *“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down -- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Like angels, demons are spiritual beings. Jesus referred to them often as “evil spirits.” They serve Satan’s purposes, opposing the work and will of God in the world. They are powerful beings who can (and do) impact our lives. How?

- A. They inflict disease and physical suffering.
- B. They cause mental torment.
- C. They incite to war, violence, and cruelty.
- D. They are the power behind false religions.
- E. They tempt, seduce and deceive believers.

We need to understand the power and influence of demons. To ignore them or to disbelieve their existence gives them a free hand in your life. In this instance, ignorance isn’t bliss, it’s simply dangerous!

Our opening scripture reminds us to be strong in the Lord and to be mindful of our spiritual foes. *“Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ...take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”* Yet, the Bible assures us of our victory so we need not have undue fear. **James 4:7-8**, *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.”*

Let me answer a few questions that may help focus our thinking.

1. Do you believe that demons are at work in the world today? Absolutely! In fact, the Bible mentions that demonic activity will increase as we near the end of the age. I think that demons work especially through Satanism, occultic games, séances, the New Age movement, eastern religions, sexual perversion of every kind, homosexuality, drug abuse, pornography, and idolatry.

2. Is it possible for a person to be demon possessed in the same sense the Bible uses the term? In my judgment, the answer is yes and no. Yes, unbelievers can be “possessed” or fully controlled by demons. After all, if you don’t know Christ as Saviour, you’re already living in Satan’s kingdom. As an unholy sovereign, he can do as he wishes with his subjects. But I believe the answer is quite different for the

Christian. I do not believe that a Christian can be “possessed” or “demonised” in the same sense that the New Testament uses those terms. In fact, I believe such a notion is contrary to the biblical teaching regarding our position in Christ; the complete forgiveness of our sins; the power of the blood of Christ; the indwelling Holy Spirit; and the absolute promise of God’s Word that, **“greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”** God does not share his children with the devil. And he won’t give the devil “Squatter’s Rights” either!

3. Do you mean to imply that we shouldn’t take demons seriously? No, not at all. I’m only suggesting that we stick with the Bible, not with wild speculations. Demons are real, they are at work in the world today, and they do everything they can to harass God’s people. However, I believe they operate from outside the believer, not from within.

Note, understanding the way in which we are influenced by the spiritual realm is very important. Every person, Christian and non-Christian, is in some way **influenced** (not possessed) by the demons in the world. The influence that they have over a person’s life ranges from the ordinary temptations at one end of the scale to near total control at the other end. Most of the time, demons work on us to cause fear, doubt, despair, lust, greed, and hatred. They attempt to distort our perception of reality and hinder the work of God in our lives. That is part and parcel of being a Christian. Whether we like it or not we are involved in a great spiritual battle!

What we all need to know is this: when a person is **filled** with the **Spirit of God** the ability of demons to influence his life is curtailed. That is the reason why we have been given the full armour of God (**Ephesians 6**). As we put on Christ, His truth, His righteousness, His peace, and live in His presence - demons are defeated at every level in our lives! If we choose to live disobediently in wilful sin, we create gaps in our defence - becoming vulnerable to increasing levels of demonic influence. That is why the Word warns us, **“Do not give the devil a foothold.”** (**Ephesians 4:27**) We need to learn how to exercise the spiritual **authority** that belongs to us in Christ Jesus. I’ve heard some misguided believers rebuking and binding Satan and demons constantly. It seems like a magic formula that they mutter over and over.

What’s wrong with that?

Two things: (1) As Christians our focus is not Satan or demons, it is Christ! And, (2) it is not our primary business to go around yelling at demons, real or imagined! Your authority does not need to be trumpeted all that often, and it should not be flaunted. Being grounded in Christ and filled with praise gives us the **power** and **authority** that we need most of the time. You do not need to rebuke demons when you begin your day, but you definitely should offer up joyful thanksgiving and invite the Spirit of God to fill your emotions, your intellect, and your will. Our **authority** is primarily in attitude: a “Christ-centred” attitude. When exercising authority over demons, do so without screaming or yelling. If you have to resort to that, you are on shaky ground already!

Demons know when you know who you are **in Christ**, and they know when you don’t! They know when you are **filled** with the Holy Spirit and the power of God - and when you are not. There’s a story in **Acts 19** that is rather humorous, but the lesson is quite serious... *A team of Jews who were traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus. The incantation they used was this: “I command you by Jesus, whom*

Paul preaches, to come out!" Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. But when they tried it on a man possessed by an evil spirit, the spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul. But who are you?" And he leaped on them and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and badly injured. The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honoured. Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. If you do not fully comprehend your authority in Christ, do not attempt to rebuke the devil or cast out demons. You may expose yourself to ridicule or even harm. The question you may want to ask is this... "Is your name known in hell?"

I'm sure there will be times when **power encounters** will take place. You may run up against a person who is full of evil, what we might call, possessed. In such encounters there is a place for taking **authority**, speaking to the demon in the name of Jesus, and binding that evil spirit from further destruction. However, even in these moments, you should never forget that your authority comes only from Jesus Christ. No demon is intimidated by your bravado. If you shift from the authority of Christ to your own strength, you will find yourself powerless in the face of evil.

Our primary mission is to make the Kingdom of God known, and if necessary, to take the kingdom by force. We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the light of Christ, let's live in the light. His light shining in us will dispel any darkness. A "Christ centred" Christian will be so much more joyful, so much more contented, so much more loving! And he will be effective in both the spiritual and the natural realms. The spiritual realm is real. Learn to discern. Ask God to teach you by His Word (and by His Spirit) to see the evil schemes of satan, and his collaborators in the world, so that you will be effective in confronting and defeating wickedness in heavenly places.

Thank God for the "messengers" of His kingdom as well - the **angels** sent to serve us. I'm sure you and I would benefit greatly by inviting God to give us angels of protection, but be careful not to pray to angels. The Bible strictly forbids any one from that practice. Finally, live in the Spirit! Allow the bright Light of Jesus to shine through you and you will become an effective agent of the Kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Luke 10:17, *"The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!"*

Demons in the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus was anointed to heal all who were under the power of the devil.

Acts 10:38: *"[You know] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him."*

Matthew 4:24: *"News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed, and He healed them."*

Matthew 9:32: *“While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, ‘Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel’.”*

Matthew 12:22: *“Then they brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.”*

Mark. 5:15-16: *“When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well.”*

Luke 6:19: *“Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.”*