

Spirits & Demons

The biblical teaching on unclean spirits and spiritual warfare

The Reality of Evil Spirits

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Job 1:6-7

[6] Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. [7] And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Scripture unambiguously affirms the existence of evil spirits—fallen angels who rebelled against God and now oppose His purposes. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan presented himself among the sons of God, going to and fro in the earth. The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.

These are not metaphors for psychological states or social evils but personal spiritual beings with intelligence, will, and malevolent purpose. They are organized

hierarchically under Satan's leadership.

While Scripture does not satisfy our curiosity about their origin, nature, or precise activities, it clearly teaches their reality and warns against their schemes. Denial of spiritual evil leaves believers vulnerable; obsession with demons distracts from Christ.

The biblical balance acknowledges their reality while focusing on the victory already won.

Satan: The Adversary

Isaiah 14:12-15

[12] How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! [13] For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: [14] I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. [15] Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Ezekiel 28:12-17

[12] Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. [13] Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. [14] Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. [15] Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. [16] By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. [17] Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by

reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Satan, the chief of demons, is a fallen angel of great power and cunning who leads the rebellion against God. Isaiah's lament over the king of Babylon glimpses behind the earthly ruler to his spiritual master: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High.' Ezekiel similarly addresses the prince of Tyre while describing one who was in Eden, perfect in beauty, until iniquity was found in him.

That ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan, deceives the whole world. Jesus said of him, 'He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him... he is a liar, and the father of it.' Satan's names reveal his character: Satan means 'adversary,' Devil means 'slanderer,' he is the tempter, the accuser of the brethren, the prince of this world.

Yet he is a creature, not a second god—powerful but limited, active but restrained, doomed to ultimate defeat.

Demon Possession in the Gospels

Mark 5:2-13

[2] And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, [3] Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: [4] Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. [5] And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. [6] But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, [7] And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. [8] For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. [9] And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. [10] And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. [11] Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. [12] And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. [13] And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Matthew 12:43-45

[43] When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. [44] Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. [45] Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Luke 8:2

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

Mark 1:23-26

[23] And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, [24] Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. [25] And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. [26] And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

The Gospels record numerous encounters between Jesus and demon-possessed individuals, demonstrating both the reality of demonic oppression and Christ's absolute authority over evil spirits. The Gadarene demoniac was possessed by many demons: 'My name is Legion: for we are many.' They tormented him terribly—he lived among tombs, crying out, cutting himself, possessing supernatural strength to break chains.

Yet at Jesus' word, they immediately obeyed, entering the swine and perishing. When an unclean spirit leaves a man, it seeks rest; finding none, it returns with seven spirits more wicked, and the last state is worse than the first.

Mary Magdalene had been delivered from seven devils. In the synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit cried out, recognizing Jesus: 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' Jesus rebuked him, commanding, 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' The demons knew Jesus' identity, feared His judgment, and obeyed His commands instantly.

His exorcisms authenticated His messiahship and demonstrated the arrival of God's kingdom.

Christ's Victory Over Demons

Colossians 2:15

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Hebrews 2:14

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

1 John 3:8

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Luke 10:18

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Through His death and resurrection, Christ decisively defeated Satan and his demons, stripping them of their ultimate power. 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Jesus declared, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.' The cross was not Satan's victory but his defeat—what appeared to be Christ's humiliation was actually the enemy's overthrow.

Satan's accusations are silenced by Christ's atoning blood. Death's sting is removed by resurrection.

The strong man has been bound by a stronger. While demons remain active in this present age, they are defeated foes fighting a rearguard action against an outcome already determined.

Believers share in Christ's victory; we overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-18

[10] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

[11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the

wiles of the devil. [12] For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places. [13] Wherefore take unto you the

whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having

done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,

and having on the breastplate of righteousness; [15] And your feet shod with the

preparation of the gospel of peace; [16] Above all, taking the shield of faith,

wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. [17] And

take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of

God: [18] Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and

watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

[3] For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: [4] (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

James 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 John 4:4

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Believers are called to stand firm against demonic opposition, armed with spiritual weapons provided by God. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The armor includes truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer. Note that all pieces are defensive except the sword of the Spirit (Scripture)—our calling is to stand, not to attack.

We do not seek demons to fight; we stand against their attacks. Victory comes through Christ's finished work appropriated by faith, the Word of God applied to specific temptations, and persistent prayer.

We need not fear demons; neither should we be fascinated by them. Our focus is Christ, not Satan.

Testing the Spirits

1 John 4:1-3

[1] Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. [2] Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: [3] And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2 Corinthians 11:14

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Matthew 24:24

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Scripture warns that demons deceive through false teaching and counterfeit spirituality, requiring believers to exercise discernment. 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.' Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; no wonder his ministers appear as ministers of righteousness. In latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

False Christs and false prophets shall shew great signs and wonders, to deceive if possible even the elect. Demonic deception operates through false religions, heretical teaching within the church, counterfeit spiritual experiences, and occult practices.

The test is always doctrinal: What does this teaching say about Christ? Experiences, miracles, and apparent spiritual power prove nothing apart from sound doctrine.

The Spirit of truth leads to the Christ of Scripture; spirits that deny or diminish Christ are not from God.

Demons' Final Doom

Matthew 25:41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Revelation 20:10

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Jude 1:6

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Scripture reveals that demons face certain and eternal judgment—the lake of fire was prepared specifically for Satan and his angels. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Demons know their doom is certain; they asked Jesus, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' Their present activity is that of condemned criminals awaiting execution. This certain judgment assures believers that evil will not

triumph, that justice will be done, and that the spiritual war, however fierce now, has an ending already written.

Maranatha—the Lord comes, and with Him, the end of all demonic opposition.

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