

Demons

In our last lesson we talked extensively about angels. This week we are going to take a close look at the subject of demons. This actually overlaps our previous discussion because demons are actually fallen angels, and Satan was originally the highest created angel – and that is where we will begin our study.

Only One-Third Of Angels Fell

The Bible tells us that demons are *not* a separate class of creatures. Demons are actually fallen angels – angels that rebelled against God. We find the account of this in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 12:3: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

There is a great deal going on in this passage, and what makes things even more challenging is its heavy use of symbolic language. Thankfully, the Bible explains the terms that it uses. Later on in the chapter we are told that the dragon is actually Satan:

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.”

Notice that the verse mentions “his angels”. This makes it clear that the beings we refer to as demons are actually fallen angels. They are angels who have gone bad and allied with Satan. They are now the devil's angels, not God's angels.

Verse 4 tells us that when Satan rebelled he took one third of all angels with him. The phrase “stars of heaven” symbolizes angels. We saw this same usage earlier in Job 38:7. When the Bible speaks of stars in a symbolic way, it is referring to angels (either good ones or evil ones). Since one-third of the angels rebelled with Satan, that means that God has twice as many angels as Satan does (two-thirds vs one-third).

Angels have what theologians refer to as a “fixed will”. The fallen angels (also known as demons) are evil and will always be evil. The holy angels are good and will always be good. When Satan launched his rebellion against God, each angel chose to either side with God or side with the devil. That choice, once made, was permanent.

It should be noted that fallen angels *cannot* be saved. Salvation only applies to mankind. The reason for this is because in order for salvation to be possible, an innocent party has to suffer on behalf of the guilty party. Mankind can be saved because Jesus Christ became *a man* and died in our place,

suffering for our sins. Since He did not become an angel and die in *their* place, forgiveness is not possible for angels. Jesus died for mankind, not for the angels. We can be saved, but they cannot.

Satan Was Once The Highest Angel

The reason that demons exist is because of Satan's rebellion against God. The Bible tells us that Satan was once the highest classification of angel:

Ezekiel 28:12: "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."

Even though this passage seems to be talking about the King of Tyrus, it is actually referring to Satan, not to a human king. No human king in Ezekiel's day had ever set foot in Eden! This passage is talking about what Satan was like *before* he fell and became the devil. As you can see, God created him as a perfect being. He was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, and he was arrayed in precious stones.

Verse 14 tells us that he was "the anointed cherub that covereth". As we mentioned in our last lesson, cherubs are one of the types of angels. All of the cherubs were stationed below the throne of God, except for the covering cherub. That angel was stationed *above* God's throne and acted as a covering. This means that the covering cherub was the highest rank of cherub – which means that Satan was created to be the highest ranking angel.

At first Satan was perfect, but then he became proud and that led to his downfall:

Ezekiel 28:15: "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."

His beauty led to pride, and he decided to exalt himself still further:

Isaiah 14:12: "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.”

The devil (who was originally called Lucifer, which according to Strong's Concordance means “light-bearer”) decided that he wanted to be God. The gifts, beauty, position, and wisdom that God had given him were not enough; he demanded more. His pride led to his rebellion, and one third of the angels joined him.

No one knows when this happened, but it was apparently pretty soon after the angels were created. There doesn't seem to be much time between the creation of man on day six and Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. By the time that happened Satan had already fallen and become the deceiver.

Satan's Doom Is Assured

We have discussed that Satan rebelled against God and created an army of demons, so now let's take a look at how God is going to punish the devil. God did not stand idly by while Satan worked his work; the book of Isaiah tells us what God is planning on doing to him:

Isaiah 14:15: “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

The devil tried to exalt himself above God, but he will be brought down to Hell. This will happen after the Millennial Kingdom is over. When the thousand-year reign of Christ has ended, God will release Satan from his prison. The devil will then launch one final war against God, but he will be defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire:

Revelation 20:7: “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

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.”

That is the ultimate fate of the devil – he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will be tormented day and night, forever and ever. He will no longer be able to spread evil, or deceive the nations, or accuse believers. His reign of terror will be over forever.

This brings up an important point. Many people have this idea that Satan is the CEO of Hell and spends his time managing Hell and tormenting the people who are there. However, the Bible tells us

that that is *not* the case. Satan actually spends his time roaming around the Earth:

Job 1:7: “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.”

Notice that Satan did *not* say “Oh, I’ve been in Hell tormenting all the new arrivals.” You see, Hell is not a fun playground for demons. The truth is actually the opposite: Hell was instead created *to torment them*:

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:”

Hell was created as a place to torment the devil and his angels. The demons are very aware of their fate and they are terrified of it. When Jesus walked the Earth the demons had a question to ask him:

Matthew 8:28: “And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.
29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

The demons are *not* going to spend eternity tormenting all of the lost souls that they have managed to deceive. No, their future is quite different: they are going to spend eternity *being tormented* in the place of eternal fire that God has prepared for them. They are not going to be Hell's management, but Hell's *occupants*. They will be tormented along with everyone else.

One day Satan's power will be utterly broken. The book of Isaiah speaks of this time:

Isaiah 14:9: “Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?
11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. . .
16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;
17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?
18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.
19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.”

Notice what happens when Satan finally is cast down to Hell! He is not greeted as some sort of dignitary. Instead people look at him in amazement that his power is finally broken and he has become as weak as the rest of the tormented dead. He is not reigning over Hell; instead he is described as a carcass trodden under foot that is covered by worms. He is not reigning; he is suffering along with everyone else. The one who made the world tremble and who destroyed cities will one day become nothing more than another tormented soul in Hell.

The War In Heaven Has Not Happened Yet

The book of Revelation speaks of a time when there will be a great war in Heaven, and the devil and his angels will be cast out:

Revelation 12:7: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
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.
10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.
11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Here we see that Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels. When Satan lost, he and his angels were cast out of Heaven forever. Now, when people read this they commonly assume that this event happened long before mankind was created, but that is *not* the case. This is a *future* event, not a past one. It has not yet taken place.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, this passage tells us that when this war happened the “accuser of our brethren is cast down”. Satan had been accusing Christians to God day and night, but when he is evicted from Heaven he loses the power to do that. However, if Satan was thrown out of Heaven before mankind was created then it would have been impossible for him to accuse anyone *because no one existed for him to accuse!* If you read the book of Job you will see that Satan actually *does* still have access to Heaven, and he uses that access to accuse the brethren – just like Revelation 12:10 says:

Job 1:6: “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.
8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?
10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.
11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

Here you can see Satan going before God Himself and accusing Job. The devil accused believers back in Job's day, and he is still doing it today – but one day there will be a war in Heaven and his access will be revoked. He will be cast down to the Earth.

If you study the book of Revelation (which is well outside the scope of this lesson) you will see that this event happens near the middle of the Tribulation. As I have discussed elsewhere, before the Tribulation begins the Lord will come to Earth, Rapture the Church, and take them with Him to Heaven. We will be with the Lord in Heaven for the entire duration of the Tribulation. This means that when the war in Heaven happens and Satan is cast out, *we will actually be in Heaven*. We will not participate in the battle (as verse 7 explains, it is a war among angels), but we will be there.

The Devil Is Our Adversary

There are many people today who do not believe in the devil. They think of him as some sort of ridiculous cartoon character. However, the Bible paints a very different picture. It teaches us that the devil is very real – and very dangerous. We are told in no uncertain terms that the devil is our adversary, and he will try to destroy us if he can:

I Peter 5:8: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

The devil is not imaginary. He exists, he is real, he opposes us, and he searches the world for people that he can destroy. Peter urges us to be sober and to watch vigilantly, and to resist him by remaining steadfast in the faith. We really *do* have an enemy, and we should take him seriously. We are told to *resist* him, not ignore him. If we resist the devil he will flee from us:

James 4:7: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

We must fight him, because he is exceedingly dangerous. Jesus told us that when the gospel is preached, Satan and his minions are standing by so that they can snatch the word out of people's hearts:

Mark 4:4: “And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. . .

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their

hearts.”

The devil actively opposes the spread of the gospel. He wanted to destroy Peter:

Luke 22:31: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:”

He persuaded Ananias to lie:

Acts 5:3: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”

He is actively seeking to gain an advantage over us:

2 Corinthians 2:11: “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

He actively seeks to hinder us:

1 Thessalonians 2:18: “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

He provokes us to do evil:

1 Chronicles 21:1: “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.”

There are even some illnesses that are his handiwork:

Luke 13:11: “And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

There are also trials and tribulations in our life that are a result of his work:

2 Corinthians 12:7: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

In fact, there are times when Satan not only strikes people with disease, but even kills them outright:

Job 1:12: “And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

As we know, Satan later struck Job with a terrible disease:

Job 2:6: “And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”

Not only does Satan tempt people to do evil, but he also has the power to strike people with diseases – and *he can even kill people*. The case of Job makes this very clear.

As if all of that were not enough, the devil and his minions can even perform miracles:

2 Thessalonians 2:9: “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”

Revelation 16:14: “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

Paul explains that our chief problem in life is not other people or wicked men, but the evil

spirits of darkness. He warns us that we are not wrestling against flesh and blood (that is, against human enemies) but instead we are fighting demonic powers and darkness:

Ephesians 6:11: “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.”

Now we will take a look at how to fight the devil.

Fighting The Devil

The book of James tells us that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us:

James 4:7: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

How do we resist the devil? By doing the other activity the verse talks about – we need to submit ourselves to God. When we submit ourselves to God and choose to do His will, we are taking a stand for what is right and against what is wrong. We are choosing to side with God and against the forces of darkness. Submitting ourselves to God is an active measure – it attacks that which is evil.

The book of Ephesians has a lot more to say about this. Paul tells us to take on the whole armor of God so that we can resist the devil and fend off his attacks (because he is going to attack us). This is a long passage, so I'm going to take a look at each piece.

First, we are told to put on the armor of God:

Ephesians 6:11: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

As we saw earlier, we *do* have an adversary. The devil is going to attack us, and when he attacks we will need to put up a fight. Putting in the armor of God will help us stand against him. Paul goes on to explain that the real problem in our life is our struggle against the forces of darkness:

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.”

When the Bible says “spiritual wickedness in high places”, it actually means spiritual wickedness in *heavenly* places. Think back to the book of Job. Do you remember how Satan went before God Himself and accused Job? That is the sort of “spiritual wickedness” that the verse is talking about. Our real enemy is the devil and his minions. Our real problem are his attacks against us. We are

not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against the rules of the darkness of this world. Our true enemy – whether we realize it or not – is demonic.

In order to fight them we must take the whole armor of God, so that we may stand against them:

Ephesians 6:13: “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.”

It is possible to stand against them. It is possible to overcome their attacks and find victory. In order to get that victory, the first thing we need is the truth:

Ephesians 6:14: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The truth is a critical defense against evil. The Bible tells us that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan often uses lies in his attacks – for example, look at the lies he told to Eve in order to tempt her to eat the forbidden fruit. When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness he used half-truths and deception. We need to possess the truth and understand it, so that we can spot his lies and reveal them for what they truly are. Knowing the truth is a solid defense against evil.

However, just knowing the truth is not enough. It is possible to know the truth and still do evil. That is why we also need the second thing the verse talks about – righteousness. We must not simply know the truth; we also have to live in the truth. It is not enough to just understand the truth; we must walk in it. If we seek righteousness, do what is right, and submit ourselves to God, then that is a very powerful defense against evil. That is how Jesus Himself defeated Satan – He revealed Satan's lies for what they were, and He refused to fall into temptation but instead chose the path of righteousness. Walking in righteousness – and seeking righteousness – is a powerful defense against evil.

But that is not all that we need. There is still more:

Ephesians 6:15: “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

It may seem strange that the gospel is part of the equipment that we need, but remember that we are called to do more than simply withstand attacks – we must be on the offensive! We are not called to simply stand still and let evil attack us; we need to be on the move, preaching the gospel and spreading the message of Jesus Christ far and wide. The gospel should be literally moving us to action – in fact, it should be *the very reason why we are moving*. If we have left it behind then we have lost something critical. Jesus has called us to spread the gospel to every person, and that is exactly what we should be doing.

Another critical part of our armor is faith:

Ephesians 6:16: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

When evil attacks it tries very hard to spread fear and doubt. Fear is one of the greatest tools of demons – they try very hard to terrify people and make them so full of fear that they are unable to do anything productive. Fear, however, does not come from God. God has not given us a spirit of fear! When we are afraid and are in doubt, we should take up the shield of faith in use it. Faith is the antidote to fear. When we are in fear we *must* choose to trust the promises of God. When things look dire we *must* take God at His Word and believe. Fear can be conquered by faith. Doubt can be destroyed by

faith. It is our shield, and it is well able to quench the devil's fiery darts. We will not get very far without faith.

There are a few other things that we need:

Ephesians 6:17: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”

Salvation is *vital* when fighting the devil. If you are not saved then you have already lost. No one can successfully fight the devil without the Holy Spirit. If you have rejected God and are out on your own then you are guaranteed to lose. Your only hope is to become a Christian. All Christians in this age are sealed with the Holy Spirit – and it is impossible to be possessed by the Holy Spirit and by an unholy spirit at the same time. Not only are Christians immune to demon possession, but since they have the Spirit of God in them they have the power they need to resist the devil and actually defeat him. Salvation is *essential*! It is the only way to achieve victory.

We also need the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Note that while shields are defensive, swords are offensive weapons. The Bible tells us that this sword is a very powerful and potent weapon:

Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

When the Bible is preached – when we tell others what it has to say – it has an enormously powerful impact. It changes hearts and minds. It turns sinners into saints. It convicts and chastises. It is *powerful*, and it should not be abandoned. We should stand by the Bible and use it at every opportunity. There is a great power in the Word – a power that is often neglected in our time. The devil very much wants to move us away from it, and there is great pressure on the Church to neglect the Bible and talk about something else. This is a tremendous mistake. The devil is not threatened by other things; he is threatened by God's words. It is the Bible that is a threat to him, and it is the Bible that we should be using.

Finally, we must also remember to pray – not just for ourselves, but for all the saints:

Hebrews 4:18: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

There is great power in prayer. We should cast all our cares upon God, for He cares for us. We should ask, so that we might receive. We should pray for one another so that we might be healed. Prayer is not futile; it is vital. When a Christian prays he is making a request to an all-powerful God – a God who not only loves him, but who sent His Son to die on his behalf. The book of James tells us that the prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Armed with the armor of God, we will have what it takes to stand in the evil day and to resist the wiles of the devil. He will attack us, but God has given us what we need to withstand him. We have the ability to overcome him – but the lost do not. They are utterly helpless, and that is what we will look at next.

Demon Possession

As was said earlier, it is impossible for any Christian to be possessed by a demon. This is because, in this age, all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 1:13: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Ephesians 4:30: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

This is so important that Paul said that if you do not have the Holy Spirit then you are not a Christian at all:

Romans 8:9: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Having the Holy Spirit within us does *not* make us immune to the devil's attacks, but it *does* make us immune to demon possession. Satan may still attack us, tempt us, and perhaps even make us sick (as he did to the apostle Paul) and kill us (as he did to Job's children), but he *cannot* possess us. It is utterly impossible for the devil to force us to do his bidding. He can tempt us to sin, but he cannot *force* us to sin. That is a very big deal. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we *can* resist the devil and we can overcome him. We do not have to give in to temptation and we do not have to do evil. We have the power to win.

The lost, however, are in a very different situation. Since they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, there is nothing in their lives that is keeping demonic influences out. They actually *can* be possessed by demons, and that is a very serious matter.

Demon possession is a rare thing, especially in this country. Possession is not the same thing as being tempted to do something that is wrong. In cases of possession, demons (which, remember, are actually spirits, so they are not physical beings) take up residence inside a person and force them to do their bidding. They act like parasites – powerful, evil parasites. The effects of this are catastrophic.

We can find a number of cases of this in the New Testament. For example:

Mark 5:2: “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.”

This passage gives quite a ghastly description of demon possession. First, we see that this man had incredible, supernatural strength. People had tried to bind him with chains, and the man utterly tore them apart. There was simply no way to bind or imprison this person. Supernatural strength is not unusual in cases of demon possession; we see it in other cases as well. For example:

Acts 19:14: “And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

This demon-possessed man was able to overcome *seven other people* and abuse them to such an extent that they fled from him naked and wounded. Seven people should have been able to restrain one man, but not this time. Likewise, in the case that Mark related, chains should have been able to imprison him, but they were useless because he had supernatural, demonic strength.

This man was also wild and out-of-control. He dwelt among the tombs and spent night and day howling. He was out of his mind and utterly out of control. He could not dwell among civilized people; he was wilder than any animal and was extremely dangerous. Not only was he dangerous to others, but he was also dangerous to himself – the Bible says that he cut himself with stones. He was possessed with an evil spirit of destruction.

Also notice that in these cases, when the person spoke the people were actually talking with the demon. In Acts 19:15 we see that it was the *evil spirit* who answered him.

Now, in some cases demon possession results in a *loss* of senses:

Matthew 9:32: “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”

Since the man was possessed he could not talk. That does not always happen, but it did happen in this case.

Adults are not the only people who can be possessed. Children can be possessed as well:

Mark 9:17: “And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.”

Here we find out that this particular person had been possessed *since he was a child*. Children are *not* immune to this. You can see that this child exhibited many of the same symptoms of the case we looked at earlier – the same violent, out-of-control, self-destructive behavior.

It turns out that even animals can become possessed:

Matthew 8:31: “So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.”

Demons prefer to possess people, but when that is not an option they are willing to possess animals as well.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no cases of demon possession mentioned in the Old Testament. All of the cases that we read about are in the New Testament. This may seem strange, but it makes sense if you think about it. Demonic activity was at its height when Jesus walked the Earth. During that time Satan concentrated all of his efforts on the places where Jesus was located. The reason why he would do this is obvious – he wanted to hinder Jesus from carrying out His ministry. It's really not at all surprising that Jesus would constantly be coming across people who were possessed.

Jesus explained this when He said that He was binding the strong man so that He could loot his house:

Matthew 12:29: “Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”

Jesus went through the countryside, casting out demons and driving the darkness away – and then He sent out His disciples, who preached the gospel. Since Jesus had first bound the strong man, His followers were able to spoil the devil's house. Since Satan had already been pushed back, the disciples were able to be much more effective and met with much less resistance. Yes, they were still persecuted, and yes, they still had problems, but things were not as bad as they could have been.

However, demon possession has not gone away. It still exists. The difference is that it is rare – just like it was in the Old Testament. Satan is no longer concentrating all of his efforts on one tiny piece of real-estate, the way he did back in the time of Christ; now he has an entire world to trouble.

Demon possession is much more common in countries that either have a heavy occult presence or that worship demons. They are very rare in Christian nations or in areas with a strong Christian presence. Think of it this way: Christians are the light of the world, and demons cannot stand the light – they vastly prefer the darkness. In places that are saturated with the light, there is very little room for darkness to exert its influence and power. However, places that are filled in utter darkness are very inviting. Those are the sort of places where you would expect to find possession – and that is why possession is rare in all but the very darkest of places.

Now, it is possible to *invite* demons into your life. There are real Satanists who actually do delve into the occult, and who worship demons and invite them into their lives. These people actually *try* to become possessed. I am not going to go into the details of this because there are some things that should not be discussed. You are *much* better off not knowing how to worship or summon demons. The Bible says that we should be wise concerning righteousness and ignorant concerning the deep things of evil. It is a very bad idea to know the deep things of Satan.

So, unless you spend a great deal of time in parts of the world that are filled with devil-worship,

you will probably not come across anyone who is actually possessed. Remember, mental illness and demon possession are two very different things. It is possible to be mentally ill without being possessed. When it comes to possession, it is really best to let a seasoned professional study the case and make a determination. How that determination is made is a question that is well outside the scope of this paper.

Exorcism

Let me say right up front that it is probably a bad idea for you to try to perform an exorcism. If this is the first time you have ever studied this subject then I can say with confidence that you have no idea what you are doing. The reason I bring this subject up is *not* so that you can go out there and start trying it on your own; it is so that you will have an understanding of the Biblical principles that are involved. I want you to know enough about this subject so that the next time you see an exorcism performed on television, you will be able to point at it and laugh at how ridiculous it is. I want you to understand the truth.

However, exorcisms are a serious business. It takes a professional to diagnose true possession (and tell it apart from mental illness), and actually casting the demon out is not something to be taken lightly. All demons are not the same, and all cases of possession are not the same either. Some demons can be cast out immediately while others require fasting and prayer. If you are not experienced in this sort of thing and if you do not have a really good grasp of the finer details then you should avoid this as much as you possibly can. Do not perform exorcisms yourself; instead have someone do it who is trained and who knows what they are doing.

Exorcisms are not a joke. In true cases of possession you are dealing with a person who has supernatural strength, demonic fury, and who is absolutely out-of-control. When the seven sons of Sceva attempted an exorcism in Acts 19:14 they were very nearly beaten to death by a single possessed man. Trying and failing this can injure or even kill you. It can be done – and Christians have the power to do it – but it is *not* a game and it should *not* be treated lightly.

To understand how exorcisms work, let's take a look at how Jesus cast out demons. During His ministry Christ actually used a couple different methods. The common method in His day for casting out demons was to ask the demon its name and then use that name to cast it out. For example:

Mark 5:6: “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.”

The reason Jesus asked its name was so He could use its name to cast it out by saying something along the lines of “Legion, come out of the man”. In order to do that, though, you had to find out the demon's name. That meant it was impossible for anyone to cast a demon out of a man who couldn't talk – and that was why people were shocked when Jesus did exactly that:

Matthew 9:32: “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man

possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel."

When Jesus cast a demon out of a man who could not talk, He amazed Israel. What He had just done was impossible without the power of God; Jesus had just done something that had never been done before. According to their traditions, the only person who had that kind of power was the Messiah. By doing this Jesus was demonstrating that He really was the Messiah, the Son of God. This miracle was every bit as astonishing to ancient Israel as raising Lazarus from the dead. It was proof that Jesus was exactly who He said He was.

As you can see, the way Jesus cast out demons was simply by ordering them out. Jesus would say "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit", and the demon would come out. It was not any more complicated than that. Unlike what you see on television, there was no fancy ritual that had to be performed. You did not need a crucifix or holy water or a special incantation. Jesus simply told them to come out, and they came out. There was no special magic words involved. What made it possible was the power that Jesus had. Since *He* told them to come out, the demons had to obey. They had no choice.

Jesus gave His followers the power to cast out demons:

Matthew 10:7: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

The disciples cast out demons the same way that Jesus did – they just commanded the demon to come out, and it did:

Acts 16:16: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

The reason that Paul was able to cast out demons was because he did it in the name of Jesus Christ. Now, let me be clear about something. The reason it worked was *not* because he uttered the words "Jesus Christ" in his exorcism. As we saw earlier with the seven sons of Sceva, the phrase "Jesus Christ" is not a magical incantation. The reason it worked was because Paul did it as a Christian, *on behalf* of Jesus Christ. It is like when the American ambassador to France does something in the name of (or on behalf of) the United States. Since he is the American ambassador, he has the power to do things in the name of our country. Since we are Christians, we have the power to do things in the name of (or on behalf of) Jesus Christ. *That* is what "in the name of Jesus" means. It means we are taking that action on Christ's behalf. It is as if Christ was there doing it Himself – and since demons cannot resist Christ, they could not resist Paul either.

The reason the seven sons of Sceva failed is because they were not Christians. Since they were not Christians, they could not do things on behalf of Christ. They just invoked the name of Jesus like

some magical good-luck charm – and that mistake very nearly killed them.

Does that mean that all we have to do is walk up to someone who is possessed and order the demon to depart? Sometimes that works, but sometimes it is more complicated than that. Jesus told us that there are certain demons that can only be removed by fasting and prayer:

Mark 9:28: “And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”

There are times when it is possible to battle a demonic presence by casting it out in the name of Christ, and that alone is enough to defeat it. There are other times when it cannot be done without fasting and prayer. It simply depends on the type of possession. Of course, before any of this will work at all you must make sure that you really *are* dealing with demons, and not with something else entirely. You will never be able to cast a demon out of a man who is just confused or mentally ill, and that is where wisdom comes into play.

One critical thing to remember when dealing with this is that casting a demon out of someone can have very serious consequences if the person does not become a Christian afterward. In fact, it can actually make their lives much worse. Jesus explained why:

Matthew 12:43: “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.”

As you can see, demons are different, and some demons are more wicked than others. All of them are bad, but some are much *more* wicked than others. When a demon is cast out, the person's body is emptied of the evil spirit that used to be in it. If that person becomes a Christian then the house (or “body”) becomes filled with the Holy Spirit, and that defends the house against invaders. However, if the person does *not* become a Christian then the house stays empty – and an empty house is defenseless against evil spirits. In that case, the spirit that was cast out goes and finds other spirits that are even more evil than itself, and they *all* take up residence inside the person. In the final end, the person becomes much worse off than they were originally. The problem is not that the exorcism failed; it is that the person did not take advantage of the cure to fill himself with the Spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit then you can defeat the devil, but if you lack the Holy Spirit then you are defenseless against him.