

Satan and Demons

Angels are immaterial beings, called spirits. They exist in the immaterial realm that we call the spiritual realm. This spiritual realm is the reality where God has existed forever. At some point, God created what the Bible calls a host of angels; their exact number is unknown. As created beings, angels have free will, just like you and I do. The host of angels were created to enjoy fellowship and communion with God, and they were privileged to watch God create the world (Job 38:4-7). In Job 38:7, angels are referred to as *“morning stars”* and *“sons of God”*.

One angel in particular, known as Lucifer (meaning, “light-bearer”), is spoken of in Isaiah 14:12. In some translations, the word Lucifer isn’t found, and instead you’ll see the phrase *“star of the morning.”* Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 are two passages that speak to Lucifer’s downfall. While these passages refer to human kings (the king of Babylon, in Isaiah, and the king of Tyre, in Ezekiel), they also figuratively speak about Lucifer. This means that what is said of the earthly king’s fall from glory, is jointly said about Lucifer. It’s not unusual for a prophetic passage to speak of a known local person while also seeing the same prophecy fulfilled in someone unnamed and distant. For example, several prophecies relate both to King David and to Jesus.

Lucifer was something of a chief angel in the heavenly realm. At some point, his heart turned to vanity and he desired to receive the praise and glory that he and the other angels had been giving to God. This raises an interesting question, *“How did evil originate in Lucifer’s heart?”* Angelic beings are made innately good, just as Adam and Eve were made innately good; having no corruption within them at their creation. Adam and Eve though had an external tempter; Lucifer, who manifested as a snake and tempted and deceived Eve. Lucifer though, while in heaven, had no external tempter. Somehow, and the Bible does not make clear how, evil came to be present in Lucifer’s heart. I suppose when free-will is present, even in an originally good heart, desires can come to pass which are sinful. Lucifer, desiring to become equal to, or greater than God, was now sinful. Additionally, Lucifer convinced one-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3-4) to join him in this futile and foolish rebellion, and these angels, along with Lucifer, were cast from heaven to earth (Revelation 12:9). Jesus says in Luke 10:18, *“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”* Lucifer and all of the demons are doomed to an eventual eternity in hell, which was created for them (Matthew 25:41). Lucifer and the one-third of the other angels cast out of heaven are known as fallen-angels (Luke 10:18), demons and unclean spirits (Revelation 18:2).

Other names of Lucifer

Various names of the enemy shed insight on what he does and who he is.

Satan: adversary

Devil: accuser

“the dragon” and *“the old serpent”* – Revelation 12:9

“the ruler of this world” - John 12:31.

“the prince of the power of the air” and *“the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”* - Ephesians 2:2

“the god of this world” - 2 Corinthians 4:4

“Beelzebul the ruler of the demons” – Matthew 12:24

“a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” – 1 Peter 5:8

“him who had the power of death” – Hebrews 2:14 (not as Lord and Judge, but simply as executioner)

“the accuser of our brethren” - Revelation 12:10

Types of his names, like “ruler”, “prince”, “god”, are not given to Satan because he has any supreme dominion over the world, but these indicate the influence or power which he has over the men of the world. Satan is sometimes depicted by mankind as a goat, or as a partial goat (perhaps with goat legs, or a human with a goat’s head) which was a common symbol of pagan idols from thousands of years ago; Leviticus 17:7, *“They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot.”*

The Bible tells us that God has allowed Satan and the demons to roam the earth until they are brought to judgment. Day and night, these unclean-spirits tirelessly strive to disrupt the kingdom work of the Lord on earth. They try to thwart

God's work in people's hearts, with the hopes of turning people from the Lord. Ultimately, Satan aims to bring as many people as he can into eternal separation from God in hell. Satan, having rejected God, wants all of God's creation to reject God as well. The good news is that Satan is not sovereign (meaning, holding ultimate control). God alone is sovereign. Wherever Satan is at work, he's acting by permission, and not because he has ultimate control. In short, Satan and the demons are on a leash. They can't directly kill people, or there'd be none of us alive. They can't control the weather, or there would be none of us alive. They can however, pervert, distort, tempt, empower, deceive, manipulate, etc., to bring calamity and confusion and turn hearts away from the Lord.

Your enemy is not a man

Ephesians 6:12, ***"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."*** You might think you have enemies in people, but you are ultimately turned against other men because of the spiritual battle that is being waged against you by Satan. Your real enemy is a spiritual enemy. Satan is the one tempting you to hate, tempting you to see fault in everyone but yourself.

1 Peter 5:8-10, ***"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."*** The Scripture speaks to the kind of sufferings that Christians will face. These sufferings aren't necessarily what Satan does directly to any one person, but rather, what he's behind. Satan's influence on corrupt and wicked people is great; using these men to be racist, destructive, violent, and overall instruments of calamity. As Christians experience these sufferings, Satan's plan is to get a believer to toss aside his faith, and in turn become a person of bigotry, violence, hatred, etc. This is one-way Satan devours believers. Satan also devours believers by bombarding them with temptations to lust, covet, or be prideful. These different types of attacks are not referred to as sufferings, which shows that Satan attacks us with both calamity and with pleasures. Has your faith been put aside because you've been lured into sinful pleasure? Has your faith been put aside because you've given in to hatred or violence? There's hope! God's grace is new every morning!

Satan and the demons have a hierarchy, similar to a military ranking system. These ***"spiritual forces"*** (Ephesians 6:12), are governed by Satan, who alone as chief tempter tried to bring down Jesus in the wilderness, but failed to do so (Matthew 4:1-11). In Mark 5:9 we see that a man is possessed by an amount of demons so great, that the demon hoard answers Jesus by saying, ***"My name is Legion; for we are many."*** This name, "Legion", is a military term that indicates ranking and order; showing that these demons were dispatched to the country of the Gerasenes where they were attacking Gentiles who were living there. Legion can refer to a different number of soldiers, depending on how the particular military group is counting, but is likely here in Mark 5 to mean a unit of 2,000.

Demon Possession

When the Bible speaks of demon possession, it's not to be understood in the way that Hollywood depicts it. Demons aren't long-fanged ghouls that lurk in the dark, or pounce on unsuspecting victims and control them like one does a puppet. Possession means ***"to accompany."*** This infers that a person has directly, or indirectly, invited the presence of demonic spirits. You've no doubt heard the expression, ***"Speak of the devil and he shall appear."*** This has a degree of truth to it, as sometimes people dabble naively in real Satanic practices and indirectly invite the presence of demonic spirits. Possession seems to happen when a person engrosses himself far enough into demonic activity so that a demon has been given the opportunity to accompany/possess him; the individual has surrendered a degree of control. Once this "invitation" has occurred, the possessed individual is in real trouble. The Bible depicts very real and graphic accounts of demon possession. This is why the Bible also strongly commands against the practice of demonic cult activities, like; spell-casting, séances, witchcraft, astrology, necromancy, tarot-cards, palm-reading, and games like Ouija boards, etc. People have been pulled into these sorts of things by innocent curiosity, only to have foolishly gotten in way over their head. These types of "black magic" appear fun, interesting, and prosperous, but that's Satan's subtle trap.

When demon possession is present, you frequently see the demon trying to bring the person into fits of self-harm; cutting, throwing oneself down, etc. In Mark's gospel we see demon possessed people slashing their bodies with broken pieces of pottery, and tossing themselves into fires or into deep water. Demons can't directly kill a person, but they'll try to indirectly kill.

Exorcism

Demon exorcism isn't necessarily a learned skill that one can go take a class on and become a licensed exorcist. Nor is there a particular method taught in the Bible. In fact, it's something incredibly serious and I have good reason to believe that not many people can have success in doing this. One of my Bible professors, a renown theologian, pastor, and Bible scholar, Elmer Towns, told a story about how he was unsuccessful in casting a demon out of a person. What I remember from his advice to the class, was, if you ever find yourself in a situation like this, address the Lord, not the demon. I don't doubt that the Holy Spirit that indwells all Christians is greater than the enemy in the world. But, this does not mean that a mere Christian, even a scholarly Christian, can outdo Satan. However, demon exorcism can and does happen. I've talked to more than one pastor that has successfully been a part of an exorcism, and their stories are scary and amazing.

In Mark 9 a man begs Jesus to cast a demon out of his son. Verses 17-22 reads, ***"Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" And Jesus said to him, "If You can?" All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up." When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."*** Powerful men, like the disciples, couldn't cast out this demon. Exorcism is not something to take lightly. Jesus said prayer was required to cast this demon out, but in Matthew's account of the same event (Matthew 17:21), Jesus said both ***"prayer and fasting"*** would have been necessary. In short, there's no singular method that "fits-all" with exorcism.

Prepare Yourself

1 Peter 5:8-10 says (in summary), ***"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert...resist the devil, stand firm in your faith."*** Here are some strategies to overcome Satan's attacks. Keep yourself sober-minded; as you dull your mind with drugs and alcohol, you can indirectly invite demonic spirits to meddle destructively in your life. Be on the alert; this means that Satan is ALWAYS seeking to devour you. It's not something that happens in season, where you can expect to take a break; Satan prowls continuously. Resist Satan by standing firm in the truth. James 4:7, ***"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*** Satan is an opportunist, preying on the weak and vulnerable.

Takeaways

- There is a very real spiritual world all around us that we can't know with our limited five senses.
- Don't underestimate the reality of the spiritual forces of evil; they are wanting to destroy you.
- Don't dabble in dark, mystical, cult, or black magic type of practices.
- If you believe you're in the presence of demonic spirits, pray to the Lord, don't address the enemy.
- Entrust yourself to the Lord and let His Spirit govern you day by day.