

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE DEVIL & DEMONS?

DATE: SUNDAY, 20TH OF SEPTEMBER 2020 | SERIES: BIG QUESTIONS - PART 4

REVELATION 12:7-9

Then war broke out 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 snake called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

- This Sunday, the 27th of September, Joseph Fa'afiu will be sharing in our online service. Joseph, together with his wife Lydia, leads Navigators Church, in Auckland New Zealand. He preached at CityHill Church in 2018 and it is great to have him preach for us again.
- On Sunday, the 4th of October, we begin meeting in our church building again. There will be three services: 7:30am, 9:00am and 6:00pm. It will be essential to book your seat for the service you wish to attend. The 9:00am service will also be broadcast live.

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message?
2. Steve quoted William Blatty, "As far as God goes, I'm a non-believer. But when it comes to the devil – well that's something else. The devil keeps advertising; the devil does a lot of commercials." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

START THINKING

1. Since the devil aims to live in constant rebellion against God, when we sin (which is a rebellion against God), we are joining with his aim. How should this change our perspective on sin - think of things like "little white lies?"
2. Read Revelation 12:7-9. What does it tell us about the devil that God did not need to participate in throwing him and his followers out of heaven - the good angels were strong enough to do this on their own? How does this verse show us that we don't need to fear the devil?
3. Looking at some of the series available on streaming platforms, Steve commented that many options are unhelpful for us - they're like mental junk food. How careful do you think we need to be about what we consume in this way?

START SHARING

1. Would anyone like to share a time when "conceit or deceit" tempted you to sin - when pride tempted you to stumble, or something sinful seemed, at the time, very attractive? This could be as simple as being tempted to gossip with a neighbour, or speaking cruelly to a family member.
2. Read Colossians 1:15. This is an incredibly triumphant verse! When

we have received salvation, we have received victory over the devil and his schemes! Would anyone like to share about your experience of surrendering your life to Christ and stepping into His victory?

START PRAYING

Steve mentioned that "none of us are okay" when it comes to salvation - we all need Christ because He is the one who rescues us from sin, death and the devil. Let's thank God today that He has done the work for us - that our victory is in Him!

Note to leaders: If there are members of your group who are not Christ-followers, please create an opportunity for a salvation moment: Would anyone like to accept Jesus' salvation for the first time today? Please pray this prayer out loud: Lord Jesus Christ, I am sorry for doing things my own way. I am sorry for deceit and conceit and allowing those to distract me from what you have for me. Thank you for dying on the cross to save me from my sin. Please forgive me for my pride. I choose to follow You from today until the day that I die and to be with You forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

START DOING

Steve spoke about living with humble awareness and not allowing ourselves to drift into sin in any area. Set a time this week (even putting it into your diary/ calendar) to prayerfully examine these areas of your life: Work, relationships, finances, and what you are consuming (books, TV, conversations, etc.). Ask God to reveal any attitudes, habits or ideas that are leading you into conceit or deceit, or allowing you to drift away from holiness in any of those areas. When He does, ask for His guidance and help in choosing holiness, starting right away.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday was the final week in our "Big Questions" series. Last week, Steve unpacked some of what the Bible says about angels, and this week he tackled what the Bible says about demons and the devil - so actually, both weeks are about angels - good angels last week, and bad or fallen angels this Sunday.

William Peter Blatty who wrote and produced the Exorcist said 'As far as God goes, I'm a non-believer. But when it comes to the devil - well that's something else. The devil keeps advertising; the devil does a lot of commercials.' Looking at the headlines, you may have also felt that the devil sometimes seems more active than God, but we hope that Sunday's message filled you with faith, hope & confidence!

1. Where did the devil come from?

- His existence in the Bible is acknowledged from the very beginning (Genesis 3) right through to the end (Revelation 20)!
- Jesus spoke of him "*He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.'*" (Luke 10:18) and resisted his temptations (Matthew 4:1-11).
- There are two main words used in the Bible to describe him:
 - the devil (Greek) - "slanderer" (someone who speaks against)
 - satan - "the adversary" (the enemy)

These words make it clear that Satan does not stand for anything, but rather is against everything - against us, against God, and against all goodness and joy.

There is very scant Bible information about the origin of the devil. There is no chapter written about it! God doesn't give him that much attention. There are some clues in 3 passages: Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28 and Revelation 12.

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star (The King James version uses "Lucifer), *son of the dawn!...You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God... But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.* Isaiah 14:12-15 (prophecy of the king of Babylon).

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty... You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you... So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Ezekiel 28:12-15 (lament over the king of Tyre - again most likely about the devil)

The ideas in both of these passages seem too big to refer to a human king, so it is most likely that the passages refer to the devil.

Then war broke out 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 snake called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth and his angels with him. Revelation 12:7-9.

Jesus did not need to participate in this fight - the other angels alone were strong enough to cast him down! This tells us that we don't need to fear the devil - he is not nearly as powerful as God!

From these passages, we deduce that the devil is:

- A created angel
- Who rebelled against God
- Was expelled from heaven
- Along with other angels (who followed his lead - also Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4)

The Bible doesn't say at any point that unclean spirits (demons) are the angels who chose to follow the devil, but as there is no other explanation for them, most theologians conclude that this is the case.

Since Satan is an angel, and last week we said that angels do not have all knowledge, cannot be in two places at once and do not have all power, we know that Satan doesn't have and can't do these things. This should banish fear, because God is all-knowing, everywhere, and all-powerful! Many people have a picture of GOD vs devil (good vs evil) - but it is actually: God, who is more powerful than anything, then God's angels versus fallen angels/demons, and finally mankind at the bottom of the power scale!

2. What is the devil's aim?

- To live in constant rebellion against God (when we are rebelling against God by sinning, we are joining with the devil in his aim of living in rebellion!)
- To subvert (to undermine) God's beautiful creation - through DECEIT & CONCEIT - deceit: showing something as good that is actually really bad for us. Conceit: Pride - thinking we know or are better than God.

Our first introduction to the devil, in Genesis 3, has him deceiving Adam and Eve, subversively tempting them to make the wrong decisions.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

Spiritual evil is at work in the world behind everything that subverts God's beautiful creation, but the devil can't force anyone to do something - he can only tempt. Sin is when we give in to our own evil desires, doing those wrong things we are tempted to.

3. So what happens to the devil and other fallen angels?

By the end of all things, the devil and his angels will have suffered three defeats:

a. Initial Judgment

'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Luke 10:18

b. The Cross

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Colossians 1:15

This is an incredible verse! I don't need to win a victory over Satan, because Christ has already done it! I live in His victory. In a moment of apparent defeat, Jesus was, in fact, sealing His victory over the devil and all his demons!

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
1 John 3:8

c. Christ's return

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur ... They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:10

'Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me ... into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41.

Hell was not originally prepared for humans. It was prepared for God-rejecters - which at the time of creation was Satan and his horrible horde. When humans choose the side of the devil by rejecting God, they suffer the same fate as their master.

4. How should we respond?

a. With grateful confidence

In Christ, we have been set free from the power of sin, the devil and death!!! We could do none of these things by ourselves, but Christ has done them on our behalf! We get to live for Him and with Him, with grateful confidence that we do not need to win victories over death and sin because He has won them for us. We get to live out that victory by living in and following Christ.

b. With humble awareness

...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes - 2 Corinthians 2:11

We have a slanderer who is trying to trip us up using conceit and deceit, so we must be on our guard not to side with the devil by drifting into sin in any area, whether finances, marriage, friendships or anything else.

The opposite of deceit and conceit is holiness - it is so powerful, pure and victorious that the devil would like to convince us that it's not something we should pursue! Every time I choose to say "no" to sin and "yes" to what God has for me, I am stepping more and more into this beautiful, clean, holy way of living in humble awareness.

c. With our eyes on Jesus

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Hebrews 12:1,2

If we are always looking for the devil, trying to see his schemes all around us, we can't be looking at Jesus. We don't need to pray against the devil; we must pray to God! He is over all, and He is the one who takes care of all things.