

## **ReGroup 3/19/23**

### **Eternity: Angels and Demons, Part 2**

In the Eternity Past, God existed in Heaven, surrounded and served by His angels. At some point, God created the Angels, most likely in preparation for creating this universe that we exist in. As we learned last week, Angels are in constant service to God, but they also have always been part of His plan to communicate to Creation and take care of us. As we learned from **Hebrews 1:14**, angels are “ministering spirits” after all. They are like God in their substance, but subservient to Him and agents which facilitate His reign over our world.

Angels were not created to be robotic servants of God, however. They were created with a free-will. We know this because the Bible documents that one of the angels, namely Lucifer left his post as a cherub and sought to rebel against God. Back in our study on Hell, we read about Lucifer’s rebellion and fall from Heaven. If you would like a refresh on this, refer to **Isaiah 14:12-15** and **Ezekiel 28:11-19**.

Lucifer did not act alone, however. According to **Revelation 12:3-4, 7-9**, he was supported and joined in his rebellion by 1/3 of all the angels in Heaven! This is also supported by Jesus’ words in **Matthew 25:41**. We know that Lucifer became known as Satan, and his fallen angels, became his *demons*.

The age-old question is, “Well why didn’t God just destroy Lucifer and his angels”? As we’ve discussed before, with evil and sin unleashed on creation, God chose to put Satan and his demons *on a leash* - and use them to contrast everything good about Him and compel us all to all the more cling to Him. Make no mistake, Satan and his demons are accountable to God and tremble before Him. If they ever forget that, God is quick to put them in their place.

- For proof that the demons know their place, check out **Matthew 8:28-32** and **James 2:19**
- For evidence of God judging demons before the appointed time, consider the words of Peter in **2 Peter 2:4** and Jude in **Jude 6**. These verses refer to the story found in **Genesis 6:1-4**, where some of the fallen angels sought to further drag down creation by seeking to warp and deform humanity through unholy relationships. We can confidently understand “the sons of god” to be referring to angels based on **Job 1:6** and **38:4-7**.

## **Marching Orders**

While some fallen angels are indeed in chains awaiting the final judgment, most of them are wandering about, in service to Satan. In order to know how the demons operate, we must first discuss Satan's strategy. As you might expect, they take their orders from him and mimic his approach.

Perhaps the best description of Satan is found in **1 Peter 5:8**. This fits in with Satan's own admission of his tactics in **Job 1:7**. According to **John 10:10**, Satan's goals are to steal, kill, and destroy. He is constantly prowling and seeking to tempt us from trusting and obeying God. Since he is not omnipresent like God, it's safe to say that his demons *assist him* in carrying out his plans.

- What is Satan trying to take from us? He has no interest in taking our stuff or possessions, but rather he is trying to **steal the blessings** that we receive from staying close to Jesus.
- Satan seeks to **kill our relationships** with God and take away the opportunities that God has given us to serve and honor Him.
- His ultimate goal is to **destroy our souls** and sever our connection to God for all eternity.

Satan tempts us with all sorts of sin to remove us from God's Will. In his aim to separate us from God, He will also seek to separate us from where God wants us to be and the way God wants us to live. He will target every aspect of our lives in order to disrupt our fellowship with God. He doesn't just tempt us spiritually, but comes at us with moral, financial, and many more temptations.

None of us are above temptation. Consider Jesus' warning to Peter in **Luke 22:31** and Paul's message in **Ephesians 6:10-13**. Talk about the power of temptation and the power of Satan's pursuit. **Discuss how you have kept your focus on Jesus, but also share how you've learned temptation comes after even the most devoted believer.**

We must not ever assume we are above temptation, but we must also never fall for the lie that there is no way to overcome temptation. **1 Corinthians 10:12-13** covers both sides of this reality succinctly. Satan and his demons *are* persistent, but there is *always* a way of escape. See **1 John 4:4** for a word of encouragement and promise of victory.

The Bible tells us that Jesus set an example for us in how to withstand temptation. See **Hebrews 4:15-16** and **Matthew 4:1-4** and discuss Jesus' approach when facing Satan's fiery darts.

Satan always offers us **a counterfeit version** of what God has for us. Consider these truths:

- Fornication and adultery are **vain, cheap copies** of a godly marriage
- A life of selfishness is **far less fulfilling** than a life of love and service.
- Greed may make our net worth go up, but only generosity **fills our souls** with true joy and peace.
- Refuge from our stress, worries, and pain is offered through many avenues in this world, but none of them offer **true comfort and peace** like God's Spirit

Ultimately, it all comes down to a simple reminder that God offers us life, while Satan and his demons want to take away our capacity for true joy, peace, purity, and life itself. **Leviticus 18:5**, **Deuteronomy 30:19**, and **Proverbs 14:12** make it clear, that no matter enticing temptation may make sin appear to be, the life we *all want the most* is found in God's Will and by God's Way.

Satan and his demons tried and true strategy are not to come at us with pitch forks and torches, attempting to corner us and possess us. More often than not, they simply try to distract us and deceive us with something less than God's best.

Make no mistake, no one is able to make an inferior product look better than Satan, and his demons are *persistent at nagging us and tempting us*. Yet, there is always a way of escape if we call on Jesus and remember that *He is for us* and that *nothing rivals* His perfect will.

We heard earlier from Paul about adorning ourselves with the "whole armor of God", which can be summarized through the words of **James 4:6-8**. If we stay humble and remain hungry for God's will and guidance, we will resist the devil's pressure and always desire a closer walk with Jesus.

**Discuss what it means to resist/rebuke the devil and how Jesus always gives power to overcome sin. Why do you think we so often fail to take refuge in Jesus and stay on the path of life? Why do we choose something less than God's best? As true as all of this, we have all gave into the devil.**

## ***Demon Possession***

Maybe when you considered a conversation about demons, you expected it mostly focus on possession. While demon possession is definitely real, this is a small portion of the spiritual warfare they wage against us. As we've learned, demons are much more interested in tempting us to sin and entertaining us with sin. Certainly though, those who fall headlong into sin, open themselves up to being controlled and even possessed by the devil and his demons. Just know, it *never starts* with this.

**2 Corinthians 11:14-15** tells us that Satan and his demons disguise and dress themselves up, seeking *that we open the door* of our hearts up to them. However, it will become clear if we are leaning on God or something rooted in darkness. Nobody falls under the Devil's control unknowingly. If we begin to take directions from things completely empty and devoid of God's Word and godly principles, then we are making ourselves **dangerously vulnerable**. We don't have to be under the influence of the occult or obvious dark-things to be tempting fate - *anything* that is not take cues from Jesus' Lordship over our lives and the convictions He inspires, can have *the same effect* on us.

Jesus told a story about a demon being cast out of a person, yet returning to posses that person not long after. Read **Luke 10:24-26** to learn how simply staying away from evil isn't enough, but we must be filled with Jesus and things that He brings into our lives.

A Christian shouldn't worry about demon-possession, because we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We cannot be filled with *both* God and Satan. This is comforting to those who strive to serve Jesus, yet still struggle with sin, but it's a warning to those who claim to believe *yet* have a life full of sin.

**Before you dismiss, discuss these thoughts on demon possession and demonic influence, and how it is so important that all of us maintain an intentional connection to Jesus and not allow our hearts and minds to come under the influence of anything that stands contrary to His pure and perfect way.**