

DEMONOLOGY
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INTRO: Some years ago, after many years of preaching, for the first time I spoke on the most important subject of all, God. A right view of God will affect every area of one's life. It will affect how one dresses, talks, lives, makes a livelihood, what one listens to, what one reads, what one watches, what one thinks and a host of other things. But it is also important to realize that there is a huge battle taking place between God and the one we know as Satan or the Devil. It is the battle of the universe. And this battle is for the heart, or mind of people. Man is an incredible creation, and to gain man's heart so that man would truly learn to know Him and trust Him, and thus glorify Him is God's primary objective above everything else. To steal that glory and gain possession of man's heart is the primary objective of the Devil. When you learn to recognize this, you will see it everywhere.

In these messages we want to stay as strictly with Scripture as possible and where I speculate I will seek to tell you so. It is the Bible that is our authority in the spiritual realm of truth we spoke about last Sunday. In these message we will be looking first at the existence of demons, then second, we will look briefly at what the OT has to say about the subject, then the NT and then at dealing with these powers of darkness.

Now, there is a huge battle going on in the universe. This battle is between God and Satan, and the mind of man is the battle ground. This battle involves both the physical part of our being as humans, and the spiritual part. I want to try to give us somewhat of an idea of the immensity of this battle, and in what a small space it actually takes place. When God created man, He created a highly complex being. We know somewhat of the complexity of the body. We know far less of the complexity of the relationship between the body and the soul and the spirit, but it is there as well. Look briefly at 1 Thessalonians 5 (read 23).

I want to seek to give you an idea of where this battle is taking place in the physical universe, and then the spiritual part of our being. I will be showing you a short video that will picture the vastness of the universe and the complexity of the body. This video will take us as far out into the universe as man at this point has knowledge of

and then it will take all the way back and show us the smallest part in man science has discovered so far. I called Eric Hovund to see if he had anything that would illustrate the physical universe and I told him what I wanted to convey. He said he did not have something like that but recommended the one I will show you. This video was not made for the purpose for which I am using it and was not done by believers. But as you watch it, think of God, in the third heaven doing battle in the heart of man. And from this you will see how vast is the universe in which this battle we are talking about rages. That battle rages in the minds of the couple in the video and in every other mind on earth. So we'll watch it now.

(Video here.)

Now the third heaven is farther away than the video showed. And when you go all the way through the physical universe from as far away as where God's abode is down to man, there on earth each person possesses not only a body, but a soul and a spirit as well. And both the soul and spirit of a person are immaterial and for that reason doctors or physicians can never discover them. So let me try to illustrate the soul and spirit of man and some of their functions.

(Soul and Spirit here.)

And so, when you consider the physical aspect of this battle, God Almighty resides past that second heaven we saw in the video in the third heaven. And when you travel from the third heaven into the second heaven and then through all those light years of space and finally reach the galaxy called the Milky Way, and travel a long, long, long way into that galaxy, there you finally reach the blue planet, or earth as we call it. And there on that earth, which is so small in the Milky Way galaxy which is so small among the stars, there on that tiny earth dwell tiny beings called human beings. And in a small part of that tiny being, the brain, functions that aspect we call the mind and there the greatest of all battles is being fought. And you and I are in that battle, and so is every other human being. And in that mind, in the thought life of that person, either God or the devil will win.

Now the spiritual nature of man is not our subject. But it is my view that God, Satan, and evil and good spirits when given access communicate to us through the spirit part of

man. And the mind interprets that data, and you and I act and live according to what we allow in or don't allow in. When we listen to wrong things, we can open the door to evil spirits. When we listen to the right things, it can do wonders for us spiritually. When we eat or drink certain things, whether good or bad, they will affect us accordingly. For example, alcohol and drugs can open doors to demons. When we see certain things, we can open the door of our spirit to bad spirits and so on.

Now all of that is part of another subject, but I have told you this to say that as I see it, it is through all of the complexity of body, soul and spirit, that both God and Satan battle for our mind and our will. It is in the mind that the battle of the universe takes place. It is there that either God or the devil win. And man, in this body, has the capacity to take in messages from the spiritual realm and then act, either in cooperation with God in this gigantic war, or work in cooperation with the devil. And what I will try to do in this series of messages is give us a greater awareness of some of the dark side of this battle.

From this, let me say that God has communicated all divine truth necessary for life and godliness to man through His Word. Anyone who will truly learn in his heart who God is and what He has in store for those who learn to trust Him, and who will learn who the devil is and what is in store for his followers, will give up anything and everything that would hinder him or her from learning to trust God. On the other hand, the devil will do absolutely anything to keep man from this knowledge. He will trap and ensnare and entangle absolutely everyone possible, with doubts and anything that will keep that person from trusting God. He is the destroyer. Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

From this we learn then that the Devil is truly man's enemy. It is a known law of battles that the better one knows one's opponent, the better is one's chance of winning the battle. So Paul says of us as believers that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11). However, the truth of the matter is that much of the Church is ignorant of Satan's devices. What is happening in church music alone is evidence for that.

Merrill F. Unger, in his treatment on Biblical Demonology says that in early church history, writers such as Justyn Maryr; Lactantius and Augustine dealt with this subject. They saw that such things as astrology, soothsaying, divination, necromancy and even adultery had their origin in demons. They saw that demons were behind wars and that demons were instrumental in setting up idols and so forth. But Unger says that after this early period of the church, teaching on evil spirits ceased for the most part. He writes, "For nearly a millennium and a half, for some strange reason, the true Biblical doctrine of demons was hardly spoken of" (pg. viii). By the 19th century, he says, "...the whole subject was sneered at by many as a superstitious idea which we had well get rid of, or was quickly passed over in theological circles" (pg. viii).

I might add that in those years when the true teaching on demons was lacking, superstition was rampant. When I think of my growing up years in the traditional church I went to, I knew there was a devil and that he was bad and so on, but I knew virtually nothing about evil spirits and the doors through which they might enter a person. Yet the morals I was taught, I think, safeguarded me a lot.

From the limited knowledge I have of the Church in general on this, it seems to me that for the most part the Church is ignorant of the activity of demons. Recently, in reading some material by J. Vernon McGee, he said, "Many years ago in downtown Los Angeles, I spoke on the subject of demonology in a Sunday evening series, and we averaged about three thousand people in attendance at each service. Some of my preacher friends kidded me about it. One friend with whom I played golf said, 'McGee, you will do anything to draw a crowd! Now you are speaking on demonology'" (Volume III:960-61, Zechariah).

I might add, however, that in more recent years, the study of demonology has been revived. For example in 1972, Hal Lindsay wrote a book called, "Satan is alive and well on Planet Earth." In 1994, Merrill Unger's book called, "Biblical Demonology" was published, and other works have been written as well. But before we get into these messages I want to give two warnings. Here is the first warning. Do not belittle the topic of demonology. One of the fatal flaws of military strategies is to underestimate the enemy. The Bible says we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. But if we question the existence of demons, we are ignorant,

not only of his devices, but his demons. Number two, do not become obsessed with this subject. It is not Satan, but Christ who should be our focus. I have heard this warning by a good number of teachers on the subject: Do not see a demon behind every bush. It is easy to become consumed with this subject. That is another tactic of the devil. So the one danger is to underestimate the subject before us, and the other is to go to seed on it. Remember these as we proceed with this subject.

And because I know the devil will trouble some of you because of this message I want us to bow our heads for a word of prayer: Lord God Almighty, Jehovah God, we acknowledge You to be the one and only true God by nature. We come to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son who shed His blood that we might have life. I pray now in particular for those who will be troubled by spirits because of what they heard this morning and the evil one will lie to them and use their weaknesses against them. So I ask You Lord God and I trust You to answer our prayer here, that You will withstand the evil one in those cases. When these people pray to You and ask you to give them the victory, I pray that You will do that and that You will give them peace for we ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

So, let me add that though we are not to see a demon behind every bush, yet they may be more prevalent than many of us realize. My daughter spoke with Warren Smith about evil spirits and mentioned we need to be careful not to see a demon behind every bush. But he said, "There is a demon behind every bush." For those who have an understanding into the powers of darkness, they know it is much more prevalent than most of mankind and even most Christians understand. Yet I caution us to be careful. Satan would have us caught up with this thing until we are consumed with this and thus we could be misled. Or he deceives us into thinking there is really no such a thing, and we find ourselves in unbelief about this whole matter, and we are misled in this way. There is a healthy balance in between. So, while we will be spending some time on this, I do so in order that we will not be in ignorance or in unbelief about demons. But on the other hand I want to warn us about the other extreme.

And then, before we get into these messages, I want to encourage you to learn what to do when you meet the evil

one. When one opens a subject like this, it cannot be helped but that the evil one will seek to trouble some of you. So, number one, memorize James 4:7. It is not hard. It says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Number two, learn how to resist him. Learn to pray to fend off the powers of darkness. And when you pray, pray in the full name of Jesus. Pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The man I have consulted so many times in these matters says we should come to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This fully identifies the One we are praying to.

When the Lord Jesus died and rose again, he defeated the devil. So remember, the devil is a defeated foe. But we need to learn how to tap into that defeat. You may come down with a real depression, or you might not be able to get this subject off your mind. Then say something like this, "Satan, you have been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ. I am His child. I have repented of my sins and received Him as my Savior. And now, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to leave me." Sometimes you may wish to sing to overcome him. Sing songs of the blood of Christ and of the cross. Do this until he leaves.

Let me warn about one other thing. This subject can lead to all kinds of superstitions and fear. You can overcome that by sticking to the Bible on this subject. Don't let your mind go all over speculating. And with regard to fear and becoming obsessed with this subject to where you cannot let it go, learn immediately to pray. Pray and sing hymns, especially those that deal with the cross or the blood. Say something like this, "Lord Jesus, I thank you for shedding Your blood for me. I ask you to cover me with your blood and I rebuke the spirits that are troubling me. I trust You Lord and I will think on those things that are lovely etc..."

Generally, in this day of so called enlightenment we are not too easily given to too much superstition. Our greater danger is unbelief in the supernatural realm of evil spirits. We are like the man who said to Jesus, "I believe, help my unbelief." We believe there are demons but somehow it is so far away as to not have much value to our daily life. Then we also have medical terms to describe demon activity and thus we bury this subject and keep it hidden.

Merrill Unger points out four difficulties in the study we are undertaking. He says, "First, there is the problem of

the silence of revelation; second, the problem of the accuracy of interpretation; third, the problem of the prevalence of superstition; and fourth the problem of the preponderance of doubt" (Unger pg. 2). When he talks about the problem of silence, he means there are so many things we would like to know, but they are not given to us in Scripture. For example, the subject of the origin of demons. We do get some information, but for many, it will seem quite scanty. We conclude with Deuteronomy 29:29 that the secret things belong to the Lord our God. We are content to know that God has revealed to us all He wanted us to know. The problem of interpretation is accurately putting together the information we do have in order to deal with the problems created by demons.

The problem of superstition in this area is huge. Unger writes, "It would be difficult to find a subject anywhere replete with more fantastic distortion and unbridled extravagance than popular demonology uncontrolled by the truths of divine revelation", end quote. For example, in Roman Catholicism one of the reasons for burning candles all over the place is to keep evil spirits away. I have not time to share, but the religions of the world are rife with demonic ideas. All over the world, all throughout the world religions, demonism thrives. In the Muslim world. Unger says, "The enslavement of paganized peoples and those in Mohammedan lands is appalling. 'Many superstitious beliefs hold the people bound all their lives. They become slaves to every practitioner of magic or trickery. This is true of the Mohammedans as well as the pagans" (89). This is very true as well among the Chinese. No matter where you go, demonism haunts the world and superstitions abound. Yet, in the modern world, where superstitions abound in the rest of the world, here doubt or even denial abounds. Everything is explained scientifically and the existence of demons is denied as altogether superstitious. And yet, when you come to the Bible, the evidence of Satan and demons is everywhere present.

Now, maybe you say, "Pastor Phil, I really do not wish to know more about this subject. I would prefer to leave it out. I have always gotten along without knowing it and I am uncomfortable with the idea of learning more about it. Actually, I get quite uncomfortable with this subject." I understand. I confess I felt the same way about giving these messages. I have actually gone through quite a battle

in order to do this first message. I had some good reasons not to do these now or at all.

So let me add one more introductory matter. When I did the message on the fear of God I noted that there are three words for fear in the original NT. There is what I would call reverential fear. It is the word *eulabia* (ex. Heb. 5:7). Then there is the word *phobia* from which we get all our words like claustrophobia. It is a healthy fear. For example, when we unexpectedly come upon a bear, fear strikes the heart. If we did not experience that fear, our life would often be terminated early. It is the word used in the phrase, 'the fear of God.' But there is another word for fear. It is the word, *delia*. It is a cowardly fear. We find this in 2 Timothy 1:7 which says, "For God has not given us the spirit of *fear*; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Our subject wants to bring about that kind of fear but we need to overcome that. The Bible is not shy to mention demons and we need to have some understanding of them. According to Scripture, Satan is a defeated foe for those who belong to Jesus Christ through salvation. When we trust in Christ, He is the victor over the evil one.

CONCL: And so, to conclude, let me summarize like this: There is a battle that has now gone on in man from the day Adam and Eve sinned. It goes on in every normal mind. In all the vast universe, this battle is fought in the mind of man. Man is made up of three major parts; body, soul and spirit. The body is the realm of the physical and the physician. But the soul and the spirit are immaterial and are the realm of the spiritual. For information about this part of man, we must have the Bible. And from the Bible we learn that the battle goes on in man's heart, or the mind. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind."

And maybe you say, "I thought you said the heart is the mind." Both the Hebrew OT and Greek NT do not have a word for mind. The word here is *dianoia*. It comes from the storage part of the mind. In my understanding, it literally means a 'thinking through'. Whenever we are thinking things over of the past, that is material stored in the storage part of our mind, we are to love God, let Him be the foremost in our thinking. If we do this, we will not let the devil take over our thinking, and God will win in our

hearts. Christ won the victory for us, so we can be victorious. So Romans 8:37 says, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." I would translate the words 'more than conquerors' as 'superconquerors'. Remember this.