

# Angels and Demons, Part 3

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March 26, 2006

Well, I want you to know that I haven't gone that long without preaching in a long time. But, it all worked out in the providence of God. Adrian Donato was good, and we got a chance for Steve Lawson [to speak]. Even though, you know, he's not very passionate, we thought, "We've got to have him." And then I couldn't wait to preach, of course, and then I got the plague. And I just could not do it, but I warned Tim Carns in advance enough, so he had that wonderful sermon prepared. And it was really great. There was a couple behind us [during the service] that were really hurting, and they said after the sermon, "That was just the sermon that we needed to hear." So God, in His providence, worked that out. And then, of course, I was already scheduled to go to Washington [state], so I went up there. I'm back now, though. And if the Rapture doesn't happen and the ceiling doesn't fall on me, we're going to get this sermon out if it's the [last] thing I do.

The great reformer, Martin Luther, wrote a hymn, and sometime around 1529 it became very popular among those who were, for the first time, being called Protestants, [a] title they received at the Diet of Spires. They were called Protestants because they protested against the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The hymn I am referring to is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." [It is] probably one of the more well-known hymns that came out of the Reformation. Luther, being a man of the Book, knew

that he was in a battle—that he was waging war, “not against flesh and blood. . . , [but] against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” [Ephesians 6:12]. And you may not have noticed it, but Luther has a very strong emphasis in that hymn on the unseen battle [in which] Christians are constantly engaged. In the first stanza he writes:

A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Luther acknowledges several things: 1) that we are in a spiritual battle; 2) that our battle is against Satan, our “ancient foe”; 3) that it is Satan’s purpose to “work us woe,” or [to] damn us; 4) that we should not underestimate Satan’s craft and power for, as Luther acknowledges, they “are great”; 5) [Luther] reminds us that Satan is driven by “cruel hate”; and 6) that among those on earth, Satan has no equal who can defeat him.

Luther addresses the spiritual battle we are [engaged] in a little further in the third stanza of his hymn, when he writes:

And though this world, with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us.  
The Prince of Darkness grim—  
We tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure,

For lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

Luther had it right. Our world is filled with devils whose sole desire is “to undo us.” If we are not saved, [Satan] wants us to stay that way, and if we are saved, he wants to entangle us in sin so that we do not give glory to God. Our world is filled with devils and they are more powerful, more crafty, more experienced, and they have greater intellects than we [do]. They have refined the art of deception for millennia. They all have their quadruple doctorates in deception, delusion, and false doctrine [so they can] attempt to get people to believe lies as if they were the truth.

Our hope, as Luther rightly said, is in the Word of God. God has willed “His truth to triumph through us” —not our experiences, not our intellects, but “His truth to triumph through us.” We have God’s truth and we can be confident that in the end, Satan will be defeated and, on judgment day, one little word will cast him into the lake of fire, where he will be done away with for ever and ever.

So, we’re on a sabbatical from our exposition of Luke to study angels, demons, and Satan before looking at Luke’s account of the Gerasene demoniac. As a matter of fact, Luke, because he’s a doctor, is really fascinated with the whole idea of demon possession. So, we’re going to keep encountering more and more situations in the Gospel of Luke [that deal with demon possession], and I thought it would be better just to blow out the whole topic and then we can get back into Luke and make some progress.

We’ve already looked at angels, their creation, their appearance, their numbers, and their ministry to both believers and unbelievers. This morning I want to focus on demons.

Because of the world’s influence on Christians, most do not have a biblical understanding of demons. If you were to read some of the books or articles that describe demons or demonic activity, most of those works—even in your average Christian bookstore—are all derived, not from the Bible, but from experiences people have had. Let me give you one example: C.

Fred Dickason at first wrote a very good book on angels and demons. [He] then became a little more fascinated with the topic, and wrote a later work called *Demon Possession [and the Christian]*. And this is what he says:

I queried the demon regarding his undercover mind control. He admitted to controlling the brain through electrical and chemical changes. “We have power in that,” was his confession. Again, we do not take such as scientific evidence, but his confirmation of controlling the mind through the brain must be considered. Why would he give away such damaging information except he were under pressure from the Lord?<sup>1</sup>

That is amazing to me. Here Dickason thinks that because this demon has been told, “In the name of Jesus, tell me the truth,” that this demon is telling him the truth. And [Dickason] writes it in a book! And it’s one of the standard textbooks people read on the subject. He has fallen [where] C.S. Lewis warns about in his classic work *The Screwtape Letters*, when he writes: “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence, the other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”

You know, everyone I have ever heard of or known of who has really gotten into demons and demonic activity—*every single one*—has been deluded. Without an exception. Never forget that demons are willing to give you an experience in order to delude you, to deceive you. In fact, the Bible promises that Satan and demons perform false signs and wonders to deceive even the elect if it is possible [see Matthew 24:24]. I’ve talked to some Christians who were totally duped by experiences they’ve had. And they *have* had the experiences. The problem is that they’ve formed doctrine off of those experiences, oftentimes doctrines that specifically and directly contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. They take their supernatural, demonic experiences and actually elevate them above the Word of God itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Dickason, C. Fred. *Demon Possession and the Christian*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1989, p. 244.

Let me just give you an example of what I'm talking about. Let's just say that a Christian counselor starts counseling someone who professes to be a Christian, who has gone to church all his life, and who has quite a bit of knowledge about the Bible and can articulate the gospel easily. The counselor assumes that the person is a Christian. During counseling, [it becomes obvious that] the person is possessed. We'll just assume, for the sake of argument, that for certain the person is possessed by a demon. The Christian counselor remembers that Jesus cast out demons with a word, and so he says, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you, come out of that person." And, nothing happens. The counselor is stunned, and he's wondering, "What do I do?"

Then he remembers another text, where the disciples couldn't cast out a demon and so they came to Jesus and Jesus says, "Oh, these kind [of demons] come out by prayer" [see Mark 9:29], and so [the Christian counselor] falls on his knees, confesses his sins, petitions God, acknowledges God's power, and he says, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out!" And nothing happens. He doesn't know what to do. He racks his brain. Finally, frustrated and not knowing what to do, the counselor stops the session and says [to the demon-possessed person], "I'm going to make [another] appointment and I want you to come back." And then he thinks, "I'm going to get ready. And when this person comes back, that demon is coming out."

In between appointments, the counselor labors diligently to read everything he can on demon possession from the letters addressed to the Church [in the Bible]. All of a sudden he realizes that there is not a single thing said about casting demons out in all of the letters to the Church—not a single fragment. So, the counselor then turns to books, and journal articles, like the one [by C. Fred Dickason] I have just quoted from, [which are] written by other people who have had—you guessed it—experiences with demons. And the next time the counseling session comes around, the counselor feels he's ready because he's read books and articles written by people who have

dealt with these sorts of things and have had success, or experiences that are successful.

The [counselor] has some holy water, he has a big gold cross, he has Christian music playing in the background, and pictures of Jesus on the walls. He has memorized a Roman Catholic prayer of exorcism, and he thinks, “OK, now I’m boned up.” And when his patient comes in the office, instantly the demon starts speaking forth in another voice, and says, “Turn off this music and take down these pictures!” And the counselor is thinking to himself, “Aha! It’s working!” The counselor then pulls out the rather large golden cross and the person kind of shrinks back. The counselor then sits down, prays the Roman Catholic prayer of exorcism, sprinkles holy water on the person and, keep in mind, all the while the demon is snarling in this other voice and the person is writhing, and swearing, and is apparently in much anguish.

The counselor, seeing he is doing something the demon doesn’t like, gets more courage, is more convinced, and says, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who came in the flesh, I command you to come out of that person and to be cast into the eternal abyss.” Then there is loud hissing, snarling, and screaming, and the counselor is thrown on the floor. And then all of a sudden it becomes perfectly calm. [The demon-possessed person] is dazed, and sits up, and is clothed in his right mind. The demon is gone. It worked.

And there is much praise and the person is comforted, given some counsel, told to read his Bible, told to pray, and told to come to church faithfully. The counselor is amazed. He hoped it would work, and it worked. And [now] he is a believer in these things. He has seen it with his own eyes and heard it with his own ears. He has empirical data to prove this method [of exorcism] works. Word gets around, and pretty soon, he’s considered the local demon expert because he has had some experiences. He starts seeing himself as an expert in exorcism. He begins to get more and more referrals and has the same experience over and over again. He writes a book and more and more people adopt his method, and guess what? They all have the same experiences, and in every case it seems to work.

Now, what has happened here? I'll tell you what has happened: That counselor has been totally duped, totally hoodwinked, deceived, and deluded. He has been led astray and doesn't even know it. What the man doesn't realize is that people he assumes are Christians are not. He is just deceived into thinking they are because they have some religious background. He is deceived into thinking that he has the authority to do what Jesus and the apostles did, but he does not. He has forgotten the Scriptures that say [that] even Michael the archangel did not dare pronounce against Satan a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you" [see Jude 1:9], and that those who do revile angelic majesties, the Scriptures say are false teachers [see Jude 1:4–8].

[The counselor] is deceived into thinking that there is such a thing as "holy water" and that the holy water has some sort of effect on those who are demon-possessed. He is deceived into thinking that there are canned prayers that can force demons to leave people. He is deceived into thinking that pictures of Jesus have some sort of powerful effect on people who are demon-possessed, never stopping to realize [that] we don't even know what Jesus looked like. He is deceived into thinking that a golden cross has some sort of power against demons. He is deceived into thinking that he is an expert exorcist.

He is totally in the dark, though, instead of the light. And he has accepted many lies and doesn't even know it. And though he fancies himself as some sort of spiritual warrior [against Satan and demons], in reality he is working for Satan to deceive other people. He is exactly the opposite of what he thinks he is. The whole thing is so convoluted [that] he is doing 180 degrees the opposite of what God wants him to do because he has had some experiences.

And that is what is happening in the world today. You can go to any Christian bookstore and find there's lots of stuff just like this. Junk. Theological junk—lies cloaked as truth. The demons rejoice in their deception of this Christian counselor and how that Christian counselor, though a God-

fearing man, is now working for them to deceive others. They praise their satanic leader.

Turn to Matthew 7, which is the end of the Sermon on the Mount. This text teaches everything—I am so amazed at the Sermon on the Mount, when I go through here, how many cool things are in here. But I want to focus on one little strain of thought: this whole idea of being deceived. Jesus is talking about the end times when people are going to stand before Him on judgment day. And Jesus says [in] Matthew 7:21–22: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ” And [then] Jesus declares to them something very interesting: “I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS” [7:23].

Notice that [these people] think they’re saved, but are not. They think they are in the Church because they gather with the Church, but they are not. They think they are doing good works, but instead are sinning. They think they are doing good works in the name of Jesus, but [they] are not. They think they are prophesying, casting out demons, and performing many miracles by Jesus’ power, but [they] *are not*. Now, can you get any more twisted than that? Can you get any more convoluted than that? I mean, imagine being at church, and growing up, and doing all these things, and [then] you stand before the Lord, and He says, “Sorry. You’re a child of Satan. You were just sinning. Into the lake of fire you go.”

These people are totally deceived, deluded, and duped. They think they’re Christians, [but] they’re the children of Satan and they don’t even know it. They’re doing Satan’s work, not God’s, and they don’t even know it. They are the spiritually dead, the spiritually blind, they are held captive by the archenemy of God, waging war against Christ in Christ’s Church, or at least among Christ’s people. And Jesus describes these people as “many” [see Matthew 7:22].

I hope that scares you. I hope that makes you feel a little uneasy. It makes me feel uneasy. I hope it motivates you to pursue biblical discernment about the condition of your own soul and what is really true and what is not. And you might be thinking to yourself, “Well, Jack, come on. You have my attention now, and you’ve scared me a little bit, but what’s the cure here? I mean, how do I know what’s true and what’s not?” Well, here it is: The only hope to keep from being deluded is to relentlessly and slavishly study the Word of God and interpret it accurately. That is the only way. God has willed His truth to triumph through us over Satan.

A while back, [my family and I] went to the science center. I had never been there before—my kids had been there a bunch of times. And we were going through, and there was a little magic-show display. You can run back there—you kind of crawl through this little hole—and you get in there and you kneel down and you put your chin on this little chin rest. As soon as you do that, all of a sudden there’s applause and the curtains start rising and everybody who’s standing there sees a talking head with no body. No body! And you look, and there’s your son, a head with no body. And you get closer and you look, and there is no body. And you get closer and you look and there still isn’t one. There is no body there! Of course, you know, being intelligent, you’re thinking, “Well, heads do not talk without bodies. And, I am sure that this is some sort of trick or delusion, because heads separate from bodies do not laugh like that.” And it’s not until you go on a little further and see the diagram [explaining it] that you realize that it is an illusion. It is an illusion created by mirrors. And then you go back and you look again. And you still can’t see how they do it, even though you’ve been told the answer. It’s still amazing. It’s still convincing.

I just want you to know, Satan and demons are way better than that. They are way, *way* better than that. They are *master* deceivers. They can get you to think that there are heads without bodies that can talk. And it’s not until you study the Word of God and accurately interpret it that you can know how Satan’s tricks are done. There are even times when people know

the truth and still believe the lie because it is so convincing. I've talked to people and they've said, "Well, you know, this is what happened."

And I said, "Well, what does the Word of God say?"

"Well, yeah, but this is what happened."

"What does the Word of God say?"

"I know it says that, but I'm just telling you. . . ."

"*What does the Word of God say?*"

And you can tell that they *want* to believe the lie so badly, because they've had some sort of encounter or experience. Listen, just because you encounter a head with no body, it doesn't mean that it's true. No matter how convincing it may seem, never believe anything that is contrary to the Word of God.

So, all of that was introduction. This morning, I want to talk to you about demons: where they came from, what they are, and some of the things they do. Next time, we'll look at Satan.

The first thing is: You need to know what demons are and where they came from. Demons are holy angels who have fallen or rebelled. How do we know this? In Matthew 25:41, in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus, speaking of the judgment of Satan and demons, says, "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.' " Here we learn that demons are referred to as the "devil's angels." This is interesting because God didn't create demons, he created holy angels, and yet, some of those holy angels have rebelled against God. And so, when Jesus is judging these unbelievers, He lets them know that, "Unbelievers, because you did not receive Me so as to be saved, you get to go to the place I have prepared for Satan and his angels to go."

Revelation 12 [is a similar text]. Here, John is describing some sort of event that is happening during the Tribulation period, and he says in Revelation 12:4 (and I'll just give you a commentary): "And his," that is, Satan's, "tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven," "stars" here are a reference to angels, "and threw them to the earth." This tells us [that] the

number of holy angels that sided with Satan and became demons are one-third of all [the angels] that God created. “And the dragon,” another name for Satan, “stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.” So, what it’s describing here is this desire of Satan’s to devour this woman’s child—the woman here is referring to Israel, and the child is Christ. Look down at verse 7: “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war.” So notice [that] John refers to Satan and demons as “the dragon and his angels.” Look down at verse 10: “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren,’ another title for Satan, “has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.”

It is clear from these verses that demons are angels who rebelled, with Satan, against God. They were holy angels originally, but now, because of their rebellion, they are demons. The number of them is . . . a lot. We don’t know how many, but in a previous message we learned that there are thousands upon thousands and myriads of myriads [of angels] [see Revelation 5:11], which is lots. And so Luther had it right when he said, “And though this world, *with devils filled*, Should threaten to undo us.” There are a lot of demons working for Satan right now to damn the souls of men and to deceive Christians into believing lies.

Demons are called by other titles in the Bible, they are called “unclean spirits” [see Matthew 10:1; Mark 1:27, 3:11, 5:13, 6:7; Luke 4:36, etc.], “wicked” or “evil spirits” [see Luke 7:21, 8:2; Acts 19:12, etc.], “deceiving spirits” [see 1 Kings 22:22–23; 2 Chronicles 18:21–22], “spirits of demons” [see Revelation 16:13], “spirits of divination” [see Acts 16:16], “lying spirits,” and, as we learned, “Satan’s angels” [see Revelation 12:4–10]. [You must] realize that since Satan is the leader of demons, a lot of times the activities of demons are attributed to Satan. In other words, Satan can only be in one place at a time, but his demons are everywhere, and since he is their

general, and they are his soldiers, the Scriptures attribute a lot of demonic activity to Satan's activities, since he is their leader.

Now, one of the things that you need to be careful of when you study demons is [that you] don't think of them as "people" who live in the spiritual realm. They are not. They are much greater than and much higher above people, and they are extremely crafty and intelligent. Imagine what it would be like to live for 7,000 years, to have a photographic memory, to remember everything you've ever learned, and to labor relentlessly, tirelessly—never having to sleep—on deceiving people. To learn how to deceive them in many ways, to get them to believe lies, and you continue to grow over the millennia in your evil and wicked craft.

Satan and his demonic legions are far, far wiser than even the greatest intellects among men. Eve, in her perfect, sinless state, was *easily* led astray into believing an entire bushel of lies in a very short amount of time. I mean, just remember what happened. In just a span, just a very short amount of time, what did Satan accomplish? He had Eve believing all sorts of things that were convoluted and Eve didn't even know it. When you think about it, there wasn't a whole lot that Eve needed to know. Don't eat from that tree. I mean, is that difficult? That's it! There weren't 613 commandments in the Old Testament [for her to know], there was one rule: No eat[ing] of that tree. And that's it! [But] by the time Satan worked her over—in about five minutes—he had her believing a whole ton of [untrue] things.

So, that's where demons came from, and that's what they are. Now let's talk about what demons do. You need to know what demons do. Demons can possess unbelievers. Some people think that demons can possess Christians, but be assured they cannot. It is a theological *impossibility*, which we will address in a future message. They can possess those who *think* they are Christians, but are not. But if someone is truly saved, the Scriptures say the evil one cannot touch them [see 1 John 5:18]. But what is demon possession? Demon possession is when one or more demons take total control of a person from within. That's it. They take over from within. And when they

do this, according to the Scriptures, it causes a lot of different, interesting side effects.

For instance, in Matthew 9:32, we read, “And as they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him,” that is, to Jesus. And if you read on, Jesus casts out the demon and the man is no longer dumb. So, in this instance, this man had an apparent illness, but the illness was really the demon in him causing that illness. That was a symptom of the problem, which was demon possession.

In Matthew 17:14–18, we read this:

When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and he is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.” And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.

Notice that in this text, the demon made this young man appear to be a lunatic, or out of his mind, or self-destructive. Have you ever encountered anyone like that? It makes you wonder, doesn’t it? We will learn when we get to [the passage on] the Gerasene demoniac that demons can also cause people to have supernatural strength. And Luke, because he’s so fascinated by this, he describes demon possession with more detail than anyone else. In Luke 9:39, we read about a demon-possessed person who is described with these words: “A spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves.” That sounds like a grand mal seizure, doesn’t it?

In Luke 13:11, Luke writes: “And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and

could not straighten up at all.” Jesus went on to heal the lady, but it was on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees protested. When Jesus describes the woman, he describes [her] as someone “whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years” [13:16]. Of course, Satan wasn’t there—it was a demon—but it was attributed to Satan since [demons] work for him.

Again, Satan is out there, doing things, and he’s even causing what appear to be illnesses. You [may] ask yourself, “Well, Jack, how come people aren’t possessed today like they were in the New Testament?” Well, they are. The answer is: they are. The problem is that we don’t believe they are. We refuse to believe they are. Doctors never have on their [list of] possible diagnoses demon possession. They’re always after the symptom, they’re trying to cure the symptom: “Take this pill for this symptom, take this thing for this symptom.” They’re always after the *symptom*. But since doctors don’t believe in demon possession, they never think of that as being the root problem, and so they just treat symptoms rather than the root cause. Again, we’re going to delve into demon possession more in the future.

Another thing we learn that demons do is from 1 Corinthians 10. (We mentioned this text when we were looking at Christian liberties.) [In] 1 Corinthians 10:14, Paul says: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” He’s talking about eating meat [sacrificed to idols], saying, “Listen. Don’t go to the idol barbecue and grill in back of the pagan temple and have lunch, because someone might see you there and be defiled and think that you are participating in demonic, or satanic, or pagan worship. And in verses 19–21, he says:

What do I mean, then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Now, do you see what he's saying here? Because demons are behind idolatry, because they promote idolatry, because they deceive people into practicing idolatry, Paul says to sacrifice to an idol is really to sacrifice to the demon behind that idol.

I don't know if you've ever wondered how it can be that intelligent people will worship idols. You just think, "How can they do this?" They pray to them, they worship them, they ask them for things. I mean, the prophets just have a heyday with this stuff. You know, they [say], "Yeah, some guy gets a nice piece of wood and cuts a chunk off of it, carves it into an idol. The rest of the chips and the other piece, he cooks his dinner on it. And then he carries the idol around, and worships it, and asks it for things." And you just think, "Are you kidding me? That seems brainless. How brainless can they be?"

Yet people through the centuries, through the millennia, have worshipped idols. And you wonder, "Why?" All you've got to do is [listen] to the testimonies of those who have come out of idol worship, and witchcraft, and other pagan religions, and they tell you why. They had experiences, and those experiences were real, and enough to convince them that committing their idolatry was a good thing, a necessary thing, for them to do. Maybe they had their prayers answered, or some sickness healed, or had some conversation with someone raised from the dead.

You know, people do this thing called "channeling," where they allow demons to speak through them, and a lot of times when the demons speak, they speak in the exact same voice of grandmother so-and-so, who has died and gone away. Or they write out some letter or note and if you take that letter and you compare it to something the [dead] person wrote when they were alive, it's *identical*. And people get convinced about it. They think, "Oh, yeah! I talked to my grandmother!" No, you didn't! You talked to a demon. "Oh, they told me things, you know." Demon. "Yeah, but they had..." Demon.

Turn to 1 Timothy 4. [In] 1 Timothy 4, Paul talks about another thing that demons do. They not only promote idolatry, they not only possess peo-

ple—this is what we read in [1 Timothy 4:1]: “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” Here he talks about apostasy: those who fall away from the Christian faith because they have paid “attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” Now, granted, in almost all cases, the demons or Satan do not appear to people and teach them things. What they do is they deceive people and those people [become] false teachers who are used by Satan to lead other people away from the truth. The men and women that Satan and demons have deceived then become instruments for promoting the doctrines of demons.

Demons are behind false doctrine, and some of their doctrines may not even seem all that bad. If you look at [1 Timothy 4:3], he talks about men who “forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods.” And you think to yourself, “You know, that doesn’t seem all that scary. What’s the big deal about abstaining from marriage? I mean, we have a lot of singles in the church—there’re a lot of people who are not married and they’re fine. What’s the big deal about saying, you should stay single? Paul even says that if you have the gift, stay single.” Well, there’s nothing wrong with being single. There’s nothing wrong with wanting to get married and not having found the right person yet, or even having the gift [of singleness], where you realize, “You know, I just don’t have a desire to be married. I’m going to stay single the rest of my life.” That’s fine. But as soon as you start thinking that you’re a little bit holier, a little bit more righteous, or that you’re a little bit more endearing to God, or [that] God has a little more favor on you because you are single, you have bought into the doctrines of demons.

J.C. Ryle, in his work *Light From Old Times*, gives us a good example of the very serious demonic doctrine of celibacy—forcing celibacy, teaching people that if they do it [they] will be on some higher spiritual plane. Writing about the condition of the priesthood before the English Reformation, Ryle wrote this:

The blackest spot on the character of our pre-reformation clergy in England is one of which it is painful to speak. I mean the impurity of their lives and their horrible contempt of the Seventh Commandment. [(And you're sitting there, going, "I wonder which one that is." "Thou shalt not commit adultery" [Exodus 20:14, KJV])]. The result of auricular [(probably not a word you use very much, it just means hearing [private] confessions)] confessions carried on by men bound by their vow never to marry were such that I dare not enter into them. The consequences of shutting up herds of men and women in the prime of their life, in monasteries and nunneries were such that I will not defile my paper by dwelling upon them. Suffice it to say, that the discoveries made by Henry VIII's commissioners of the state of things in many so-called "religious houses," were such as it is impossible to describe. Anything less holy than the practice of the "holy men and women" in these professedly "holy retreats from sin and the world" the imagination cannot conceive.

Henry VIII was no paragon of virtue. For greed and political reasons he broke away from the Roman Catholic Church to start the Anglican Church—or what we know in America as the Episcopal Church—in order to seize their holdings, have autonomy, and kill [his] wife and marry a new one. [However,] he sent out his commissioners into these nunneries and these monasteries to see what was going on, and I am telling you [that] when Ryle says, "the imagination cannot conceive," that is exactly the truth. As the Roman Catholic Church began to evolve, the first ruling was made in AD 306 at the Council of Elvira that the clergy must remain celibate and that those who did not practice celibacy were to be excommunicated. Pope Siricius and the latter council of 384–394 made a similar ruling and a whole group of popes after him said the same thing: "If you're going to be a priest, you have to be celibate, whether you have the gift or not." Why? It is be-

cause it puts you on a little higher spiritual plane [than those who do not practice celibacy]. Buddhism teaches the same thing. So did other ancient cults. And this, people, is the doctrine of demons. History has borne out, even in our own days, that when you take a person who does not have the gift of singleness and you say [to him], “You need to be single,” then you create huge temptation and dens of iniquity.

The second doctrine that Paul mentions [in 1 Timothy 4: 3] is “abstaining from foods.” Now, to most, this really seems harmless. So, you don’t eat pizza. Big deal. But Paul says that if you tell someone that eating or drinking or not eating or drinking something is a sin, or [you tell him that] if you abstain from this or that it puts you on a little higher spiritual plane—makes you a little more acceptable to God, or makes you right before God—that is a doctrine of demons.

And if you’ve studied Church history, you know that there have always been groups who promote eating or abstaining from certain foods. “Don’t eat any meat on Friday unless it’s fish.” The idea is that you will be more godly, more acceptable to God, if you abstain from certain foods. This is a lie. A lie. Some even go so far as to think that if certain people do drink or eat certain things, that they can’t even be Christians. When you get to that place, you’re talking about a damning heresy, because you’re no longer trusting Christ and Christ alone to save you; you’re trusting in your abstinence or participation in some sort of food group. And that is a damning heresy.

Paul goes on to say in [1 Timothy 4:4–5]: “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by the means of the word of God and prayer.” You need to search your own mind. If you’re thinking to yourself, “Well, if people abstain from this, they’re a little bit more holy,” you’ve bought in to a doctrine of demons. It is *not* true. Food does not make you right before God. Now, granted, there are legitimate reasons for abstaining from things: you want to lose some weight, or you want to [follow the idea of] the moderate consumption of things, or you don’t want to cause a weaker brother to

stumble. But listen, food does not save you or make you righteous. And anybody who tells you that has succumbed to a doctrine of demons—that’s what Paul says.

Abstaining from marriage and foods are just two examples [of demonic doctrines]. If you turn over to Colossians 2, Paul gives us a couple more examples. Paul says this in Colossians 2:20–23:

If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourselves to decrees, such as, “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

None. They *do not* sanctify you. They *do not* save you. And those are just two examples.

One more text: Revelation 16. [In] Revelation 16 we learn a little bit more [about] demonic activity. We mentioned it and I just want to make sure it is confirmed by the Word of God before we close up here. This is speaking of the Tribulation, where three unclean spirits are sent forth by Satan. John says, in Revelation 16:14: “For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.” Here we see how demons are able to perform signs, and to deceive and manipulate kings and entire nations. Imagine that. And all the while, these people think they are doing what’s right. They’re just pawns of Satan.

And if you are sitting out there and you are saved, praise God! But if you’re not, you just need to know this—this is what the Scriptures say: you are a child of Satan. You are held captive by Satan to do his will. Satan

is working in you. And you may think, “Well, Jack, I go to church.” It doesn’t matter. He’s working in you while you’re among believers. “Yeah, I know I’m not a believer, but Satan is not controlling me.” Yes, he is. You are deluded, you are deceived, you are in darkness. And there is only one cure, and that cure is for you to repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you do that, God will transfer you from the kingdom of darkness and move you to the kingdom of His beloved Son. You will cease [being] a child of Satan and you will become a child of God. The Holy Spirit will open your eyes. You will see the truth. You will see your sin. You will see the delusion that you are in, thinking you could be religious and yet escape Satan’s control.

Jesus died on the cross and made a sufficient sacrifice that God is willing to accept on your behalf if you are willing to receive Jesus as your Savior. He paid the just punishment and penalty that you deserve, and He is willing to save you *right now*. To forgive you *right now*. To adopt you *right now*. So that the evil one will not touch you, so that [Christ’s] spirit will be in you, so that “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” [1 John 4:4]. And then you will begin to really have victory, because for the first time you will be right with God and have the resources that God supplies so that Satan will not jerk you around on his delusional chain.

So, you need to cry out to God in your heart and receive Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you will be rescued, and you will be changed. And believe me, the blinders will come off. All you’ve got to do is hear the testimonies up here during the evening services when people are getting baptized, and you will hear over and over again, “I was so blind. I was so clueless.” Yeah, but if you had talked to them [before they became Christians], they knew what they were doing. They weren’t blind. They weren’t deceived. Oh, yes, they were. Everyone is [deceived] who doesn’t know Christ.

But if you do know Christ, as you leave here today, realize that “this world with devils filled” threatens to undo you. Realize that demons are experts in deception and that you must not trust in experiences you’ve had, but

in the Word of God alone [as the basis] of your doctrine. You need to realize that Satan is working overtime to keep unbelievers deceived so that they don't come to Christ. His favorite delusion is to make them think they're Christians because they come and worship among the saints. Beware of the doctrines of demons that do not conform to the Word of God, and, finally, do not be ignorant of Satan's schemes. Study the Word of God and it will show you how his tricks are performed. And it's the only source that will. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You [that we were] able to look at demons this morning. Father, we don't want to have an unhealthy interest in them, and yet we do not want to be ignorant of their schemes. We want to understand the gravity of the situation that we are in, that we are in a spiritual battle, that demons are filling this world. Father, they are working night and day to render Christians ineffective, to entangle them in sin so that they do not give You glory. [They are working] to promote idolatry. And, Father, [they work] to teach false doctrines so we believe lies, thinking they are true. And, Father, if there is somebody in here this morning who has never repented of their sins (which I'm sure there is), and is a child of Satan, I pray right now [that] your fear, your dread, would fall upon him/her and that You would grant him/her repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth. That he/she would be saved and believe and [be] adopted into the family of God so he/she can experience full forgiveness and peace. [That he/she would see] what a great blessing it is to have Your resources and the Holy Spirit living within him/her to guide him/her and seal him/her until the day of redemption. Father, do it for Your name's sake and for Your glory. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.