

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MBC:

1. Church workday is this Saturday at 8:30am. All are welcome to come and work on projects around the church.
2. On Saturday, November 8th from 2:00-4:15pm, there will be a Ladies Afternoon Tea. Come and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship, tea, and encouragement to live thankful lives from our guest speaker. Bring a sweet or savory tea time treat to share.
3. To prepare for the preaching of the word on this coming Lord's Day, we would encourage you to meditate on the passage ahead of time. The worship service's sermon will be from Hebrews 4:14-16.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: *Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper* - We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; to show, in a solemn and beautiful symbol, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is the public allegiance pledged to Christ and His visible bride and, therefore, united with local church membership. It is thus also prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of the bread and cup, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8; Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:27-28; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts and Epistles; 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-7.

WISDOM: "[The benefit of the Lord's Table] is due...not to the elements in the sacrament, but to one's reception of the word by faith." - Luther

WORD: *"Divine and Demonic Rituals"*, 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Suggested questions:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-22. Was there anything that particularly challenged, impacted, or confused you from this Sunday's message?
2. What's truths from 1 Corinthians 10:16-18 will you keep in mind as you take the Lord's Table?
3. How does the connection between idolatry and demonic activity inform how we approach unbelievers in our lives?

DIGGING DEEPER: What Are Demons, and How Should Christians Think about Them?

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-are-demons-and-how-should-christians-think-about-them>

What Are Demons and How Should We Think about Them?

Jon Nielsen

What Are Demons?

Demons are spiritual beings created by God. It is extremely important to begin, as with angels, with the fact that demons were created by God. Since nothing exists that God did not create, the logical conclusion is that God made the demons to be his good servants—like the angels. Demons have right beliefs about who God is; they have known about him from the beginning of their existence, even though they chose to rebel against him!

While the Bible is not explicit about exactly how the demons were turned toward evil, it seems likely that they are fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and pursuit of evil. So demons were created by God, but turned against him in hatred, rebellion, and destruction.

Demons, like angels, are spiritual beings; they do not have physical bodies. They therefore do not live, grow old, and die like human beings, but exist in a spiritual state. Because of this, they have significant power and influence in the world, although not nearly to the extent of the almighty Creator God, who rules over them (and at whose name they tremble).

Demons are fallen, evil, and in the service of Satan. The very essence of demons, according to Scripture, is evil to the core. While we do not know when their rebellion—their “fall” from heaven—actually occurred, we know that demons are now completely fallen, desperately evil, and in the service of the prince of demons—Satan himself. We will learn more about Satan specifically in the pages to come.

Demons are under the judgment of God and bent on destruction. Because the demons are fallen and evil, they are under the judgment of God; Jesus Christ will finally judge all evil—including the evil of Satan and his demons, and they will be thrown into the lake of fire forever (see Rev. 20). The demons know this! They know that their doom is sure, and they are therefore desperately wicked and bent on destruction. One way that they seek to destroy, according to 1 Timothy, is through deception—leading people away from the true gospel of Jesus Christ. We will learn more about this just below.

Demons, then, are spiritual beings—fallen angels of sorts—who were created by God but followed Satan in his rejection of God’s rule. They are under the judgment of God and are desperately evil—bent on destroying as many people as they can before the final judgment. But while they have significant power and spiritual influence, they tremble at the name of Jesus and at the power of God.

The Purpose of Demons

Let's now examine together their purpose and actions in this world, according to Scripture. Our goal is to think rightly about these evil spiritual beings—especially their ultimate fear at the name of Jesus Christ. James tells us that the demons accurately discern God's identity and power—so much so that they “shudder” (or “tremble”) at the thought of him (James 2:19). Even so, they are servants of Satan who oppose God; they will be judged eternally for their willful rebellion against him.

Below are several ways in which demons act in this world:

- **Deception.** In 1 Timothy 4:1–3, Paul warns Timothy about false teachings that are opposed to the gospel. Interestingly, Paul does not stop at simply identifying these teachings as false—he actually says that people who believe false things about Jesus are following the “teachings of demons” (v. 1). This makes sense, as demons are in the service of Satan, who is the father of lies and the king of deceit. There is an important point to be made here. The Bible seems to be suggesting that demonic influence actually lies behind false religions—any belief that opposes the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. People who reject Jesus have not just chosen a different religion. They are actually deceived by Satan and are serving him and his demons. In other words, there is no neutral belief in the universe. Every man or woman either believes in Jesus or believes some form of the teachings of demons, which are lies and deceit.
- **Possession.** In many accounts in Scripture, we see that demons can possess people, taking control of their bodies, minds, and hearts. One such account is found in the passage from Mark 5. The goal of such possession is total destruction and damage to the person being possessed (we can see that the demons' goal is only destruction through what happens to the pigs that Jesus sends them into). Only Jesus could conquer the control that the demons had over the life of the man in Mark 5. They had consumed him, and Jesus needed to break their hold on his life. It is important to note that the Bible nowhere suggests that demons are able to possess Christians—those who, through faith in Jesus, have the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. Demons would not be able to coexist with the Spirit in a believer. Demons, then, are able to possess only those who do not follow Jesus and are therefore living in sin, exposing themselves to demonic influence in their lives and hearts.
- **Various attacks.** The Bible also shows us that demons can launch various attacks in this world. While believers in Jesus cannot be possessed and controlled by demons because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, they can be influenced by the attacks of demons. While we do not know exactly what demonic attacks look like today, it seems biblical to assume that such attacks may be at the root of various evil things that occur in our world. God, in his sovereign plan, has allowed the influence of Satan and his demons to continue in this world until the day of his final judgment through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Demons, then, are spiritual beings in the service of Satan, who seek to deceive, possess, and attack people in order to oppose God's purposes and God's people in any way they can.

God's people, though, can be confident and secure in the power of Jesus Christ and in the presence of God's Holy Spirit with them and in them.

The Christian Response to Demons

We'll end our discussion of demons by examining the proper response to them, according to the Bible. How should we think about demons? How should we guard ourselves against their attacks? How should we remind ourselves of their eternal destiny? What is our ultimate hope in the midst of real spiritual warfare and demonic activity?

What is to be our ultimate perspective on these spiritual beings that oppose God and his people? Here are a few principles that should guide Christians in answering this question:

- We should acknowledge the struggle. First, it is important that as we read and study what the Bible has to say about demons and the spiritual world, we acknowledge that the struggle is real, intense, and dangerous. You are engaged in a real struggle that is bigger than flesh and blood! God claims every part of this world as his, and Satan and his demons oppose God's work at every step. The work of demonic powers is constant, and it is important that we do not act as if this work does not exist.
- We should beware of demons' deception. Second, based on 1 John 4, it is good for Christians to be on guard against the deceptions and lies of Satan and his demons. Remember, deception is one of their primary functions; they delight to deceive people with words and teachings that are opposed to the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ. When John calls believers to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1), he is urging them to compare every teaching or impulse that emerges in the world against the truth of the gospel—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to be the Savior of all who believe. We should remember that demons are constantly pursuing the deception and destruction of people by turning them away from Jesus, so we should be watchful.
- We should remember Jesus's power. John's words to Christians, in the midst of his warning about testing the spirits, are very encouraging. He reminds them that "he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). One thing that you must remember, if you follow Jesus Christ, is that the Holy Spirit of God is indwelling you, and his power and might far outweigh that of the most powerful demon—even Satan himself! Jesus can squash the efforts of the demons with just a word, and that power makes these evil spirits tremble. While we need to acknowledge the power of evil in the world, we should never imagine that it compares to the power of Jesus Christ—the risen and conquering King.
- We should take comfort in the promise of the final judgment. Finally, as we consider demons' work—their lies, evil, and attacks in this world—we should take comfort in the fact that there will be a final reckoning. Jesus will return to this earth as the Judge and will make all things right. Satan and his demons will be thrown into the lake of

fire (Rev. 20:10), death and sin will be finally defeated, and God's people will dwell with him in a new heaven and new earth that is free from the influence of sin and evil. This should be a great comfort for Christians as they continue to struggle to follow Jesus now.

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

18 Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 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. 22 Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?