

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Who is Jesus Really? Part 7 – Holy One of God May 14-15, 2005

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leadership Development: Sunday, May 29, 1 – 3 PM in the Sanctuary. New Small Group Training information as well as *Biblical Guidance* and *How to Grow Your Group* breakout sessions. Lunch will be served at 1 PM. R.S.V.P. by May 23 by email to: melissak@therocksandiego.org

Where is the USA in Scripture? Join Pastor Dan for a four week series on Hosea. Class begins on Monday, May 29 in the Sanctuary. For more information, or to register, visit www.therockuniversity.org.

Be Jesus' Hands and Feet: June 4-5 & 11-12 The Rock will be collecting gently used clothing, non-perishable food, and cold medicines to be distributed to the SHARE Ministry and the San Diego Rescue Mission.

Men of the Rock: Join us for an overnight fishing trip in Mexico **June 10-11**. \$199 (includes permit). Just a few more spots are available! For more information, or to sign up, contact Aric Curtis at 619.207.7628 or aric.curtis@dhs.gov.

Married Couples of the Rock: Our 3rd Annual Married Couples Retreat is coming **July 15 – 17**. What unsaved couple will you invite to join us at La Quinta Resort and Spa? Stop by the Small Group table for more information or register online at: www.therocksandiego.org.

Women of the Rock: What's Your Identity in Christ? Join us for a weekend with Nancy Stafford **August 12-14** at the Calvary Chapel Conference Center in Temecula. Registration forms available online at <http://www.therocksandiego.org/ministries/womens/>.

Tijuana House Building: Your group can come together and build a simple shelter for a family in Mexico. Put some action to your faith and plan to join us during any of the following dates: **September 10, October 29, December 3, or January 28**. For more information, contact Ed Crenshaw at 858.571.3427 or tjhousebuilding@therocksandiego.org.

Review

1. **Demons fear the Lord. If the demons know who Jesus is, why do they oppose Him?**
2. **Demons are fallen angels. Is there a difference between a fallen angel and a demon?**
3. **Did God create evil?**

Reminder: As we conclude this series, the big test is coming this weekend! Is your group going to make the grade? Previous quizzes and study materials can be found in the Message section of our site: www.therocksandiego.org.

Purpose: To recognize when we live our lives because of faith rather than a lack of faith

Connect:

1. The demon possessed man was changed after he met Jesus. Share some obvious changes that you went through when you met Jesus (was it your language, appearance, the company you kept?)
2. Have you ever made a decision to do something in your life that was completely dependent on faith? Have you ever made a decision out of lack of faith?
3. Discuss one or two things you have learned throughout this series that have helped you better understand and defend the identity of Christ.

Grow:

Read Luke 5:12 – 15

4. How would you describe the faith of the man with leprosy?
5. What are the moments in your life when you go to Jesus to say “If you are willing...”? In what ways do you want to be healed?
6. Presently, are there circumstances in your life that you can choose to view “through faith” or through a lack of faith? How does viewing the circumstance “through faith” change the way you live life each day?
7. What is the difference between believing that Jesus is God and living your life in a way that shows you believe Jesus is God?

Live It:

8. Specifically, how can we pray that God to increase our faith?
9. How would you answer a non-believer with the following question: Why do bad things happen to good people?

Keep reading for additional study and discussion materials!

What Does the Bible Say?

Who or what are demons?

A brief survey of Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament words:

"Noun, daimon 'a demon,' signified, among pagan Greeks, an inferior deity.... In the NT it denotes 'an evil spirit.' Some would derive the word from a root da—, meaning 'to distribute.' More probably it is from a similar root da—, meaning 'to know,' and hence means 'a knowing one.'

They disseminate errors among men, and seek to seduce believers, 1 Tim. 4:1. 'Demons' tremble before God, Jas. 2:19; they recognized Christ as out of human beings by His own power. His disciples did so in His name, and by exercising faith, e.g., Matt. 17:20. Acting under Satan (cp. Rev. 16:13,14), 'demons' are permitted to afflict with bodily disease, Luke 13:16. Being unclean they tempt human beings with unclean thoughts, Matt. 10:1; Mark 5:2; 7:25; Luke 8:27-29; Rev. 16:13; 18:2, e.g. they differ in degrees of wickedness, Matt. 12:45. They will instigate the rulers of the nations at the end of this age to make war against God and His Christ, Rev. 16:14. See DEVIL."
(Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)

In addition,

"The 'principalities and powers' here referred to are the formidable enemies that had held man in subjection, and prevented his serving God. There can be no doubt, I think, that the apostle refers to the ranks of fallen, evil spirits which had usurped a dominion over the world. The Savior, by his death, wrested the dominion from them, and seized upon that they had captured as a conqueror seizes upon his prey. Satan and his legions had invaded the earth and drawn its inhabitants into captivity, and subjected them to their evil reign. Christ, by his death, subdues the invaders and recaptures those whom they had subdued."
(Barnes on the New Testament, Vol. 7, pg. 266)

A brief overview of Satan/demons in the New Testament:

Jesus said that the devil has "his angels" (Matt. 25:41). These are more commonly called demons, or evil or unclean spirits.

The chief demon is Satan (which means "the adversary"), also called the devil (one who leads others astray), Beelzebul (lord of the flies), the evil one, the enemy, the tempter, or the prince of this world.

7 books of the OT and every book of the NT refer to Satan.

More than any other section of Scripture, the Gospels often mention demons, but as with angels, the Gospels do not answer all our questions—they simply give us incidental information about demons as they touch on the story of Jesus.

Demons caused a wide variety of problems for people: illness, muteness, blindness, screaming, partial paralysis, unusual strength, convulsions, wounds and insanity. Some people were completely possessed by multiple demons; others were only partially influenced.

Jesus used his own authority over them. He gave that authority to his disciples (Matt. 10:1; Luke 10:17), but they were not always successful (Mark 9:18), and false converts were also able to cast out demons using the Name of Jesus (Matt 7:22; Also refer to Judas).

Satan is the chief enemy of the gospel (Matt. 13:19), but he cannot stop it. Jesus defeated him in several ways. Jesus resisted his temptations (Matt. 4:1-11), liberated his captives (Luke 13:16) and thwarted his desire through prayer (Luke 22:31-32).

In a parable, Jesus described himself as tying up Satan and taking his possessions (Matt. 12:29). He spoke of seeing Satan fall (Luke 10:18). Through his death on the cross, Jesus drove Satan out (John 12:31-32). Satan was condemned (John 16:11).

Just as our salvation and God's kingdom is already here, but not yet in its fullness, so also is Satan's defeat. He has been defeated, but he still works against the gospel. Jesus predicted that victory would be complete at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39-42; 25:41). There is a time appointed for the devil and his angels to be punished (Matt. 8:29).

Who did the demons believe Jesus was; what is His relationship to them?

The following shows 3 important things about the relationship between Jesus and the demons/Satan.

1) The demons knew very well who Jesus was, calling him **the Son of God** (Matt: 8:28-30), **the Holy One of God, Jesus of Nazareth** (Mark 1:23-26), and **the Christ**. (Luke 4:41) Also see Acts 19:14-16. Satan tempts Jesus in the desert by asking him questions to prove He is the Son of God, but Satan does not ask because of lack of knowledge.

2) Jesus has absolute authority over the demons. They plead with Him that He not send them into the abyss before the appointed time, and also must ask His permission to be driven into the herd of pigs (Mark 5:1-13). Jesus also repeatedly ordered them to not speak about who He was. (Mark 3:11-12)

3) Even though in His humanity Jesus was tempted in the desert by Satan, Jesus is the creator of all principalities, including Satan and the demons. (Col 1:15-17/ John 1:3)

Can I believe it?

The most appropriate question to ask when trying to discover if something is objectively true is, "how does what I am being taught mirror the world I live in (i.e. reality)?" In other words, do we see the existence of evil in the world? If so, where does it originate?

If someone were to attempt to test the validity of the claims previously discussed (Jesus vs Satan) they would expect to find some things manifested in the world [in the material realm].

1) We would expect to see all kinds of wickedness including murder, rape, violence, crime, ethnic cleansing, mass murder, suicide, torture, pedophilia, pornography, etc.

2) We would expect to see this conflict between the demons and Christ existing today such as the name of Christ blasphemed in the culture, the followers of Christ ridiculed and persecuted, the attempt at exterminating the things of God (removing prayer, bible, worship, and any reference to God or Christ from society).

3) We would expect to see many religions mimicking the teachings of Christ yet distorting or perverting them, and in doing so, causing destructive behavior- i.e. cults, the occult, false religions. (David Koresh/ Jim Jones/ The Children of God/ The Watchtower Society) Thousands have died from refusing blood transfusions and organ transplants/ thousands more from suicides.

How can I apply it?

1) Believers have authority over demons. No human being, in themselves, is any match for the devil. So we must not resist him in our own ability or name. **Remember, we are talking about authority over the devil, not power over him.** We are not more powerful than the devil, but we do have more authority as believers in Jesus Christ.

2) Jesus destroyed the work of evil at the cross (Demons/Satan)

Just as a policeman in uniform has the backing of the entire government and all its forces, so do believers have the backing of God and all His forces, when we stand as believers in Jesus' Name.

3) Believers are never told in scripture to fear the devil or demons. Instead, we are told that if we submit to God and resist the devil he will flee from us. (James 4:7)

4) Realize that we are in a spiritual battle, and that this is a battle that is fought by spiritual means. (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:10-18)

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the [demons]. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both...” The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Common Questions from Non-Believers

Question: If God is all good, all powerful, and all loving, why would He allow evil/Satan/demons to exist? (Couldn't God have just judged Satan before man fell?)

Answer: to show His glory through overcoming evil; to show His glory through His Son; to punish sin and reveal his righteousness; to be able to redeem and bring about a change in His people.

Question: If God created all things, did He create demons and Satan? If so, is God responsible for the actions of Satan?

Answer: Yes, He created Satan and the demons.

Why? To show His glory through His Son and to show His wrath. And no, God is not responsible for the actions of Satan just as He is not responsible for the evil actions of humanity even though He created humanity. Read Job 1-2. Satan wanted to destroy Job, and God allowed Satan to do everything but kill Job. God allowed this to happen to prove to Satan that Job was righteous because he loved God, not because God had blessed him so richly. God is sovereign and ultimately in control of everything that happens. Satan cannot do anything unless he has God's "permission". God did not create evil, but He allows evil. If God had not allowed for the possibility of evil, both mankind and angels would be serving God out of obligation, not choice. He did not want "robots" that simply did what He wanted them to do because of their "programming". God allowed for the possibility of evil so that we could genuinely have a free will and choose whether we wanted to serve Him or not.

Question: If God is so merciful why doesn't He give Satan and fallen angels a chance to repent?

Answer: Satan (Lucifer) was one of the highest angels, perhaps the highest (Eze 28:14). Lucifer knew God in all His glory. For Lucifer and the other angels to rebel despite what they knew about God, it is the utmost of evil. As a result, God does not give Satan and the other fallen angels the opportunity to repent. Further, the Bible gives us no reason to believe they would repent even if God gave them the chance (1 Peter 5:8). The Bible tells us that one of the things God judges on is how much knowledge of Him a person possesses (Luke 12:48). The fallen angels, then, are even much more deserving of God's wrath because of the exceedingly great knowledge they had about God. They also are never shown in scripture to be repentant.

Question: Why would God allow Satan to tempt believers (His children)?

God uses everything in the life of the believer for good (Rom 8:28), even temptation and sin. A Christian is being formed into the image of God through the Holy Spirit, but also through a variety of life experiences (trials, sin, temptation, victory over sin, etc). All are things that form a person into the image of Christ. Also, even though we are now redeemed, we are still in a struggle with the flesh and are still in a fallen world. The bible says that for a time, Satan is the god of this world. We would have to be removed from the earth at the point of salvation for us to avoid any sort of conflict with the devil. But through these struggles and trials, we are brought from one level of glory to another.

Question: Can the devil read our thoughts?

Answer: Satan is nowhere near to being the equal of God. God is omnipotent: He is all-powerful. God is omniscient: He is all-knowing. God is omnipresent: He is present everywhere. The devil, in sharp contrast, does not reflect these divine attributes. Satan is very powerful, more than any man, and more powerful than most angels. But he is not anywhere near to being the equal of God. His knowledge is limited, and he can't know all of our thoughts. And while God can be everywhere at the same time, Satan can be in only one place at one time. However, he does not work alone. He has his minions, his demon forces that do his dirty work (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Different titles/actions of Satan

Serpent----- Genesis 3:1-14
Lucifer----- Isaiah 14:12
Cherub----- Ezekiel 28:14
Energized David----- I Chronicles 21:1
Afflicted Job----- Job 1:7-2:10
Opposes Israel----- Zechariah 3:1-9
Tempter----- Matthew 4:3
Prince of Demons----- Matthew 12:24, Acts 10:38
Incites False Doctrine----- I Timothy 4:1-6
Perverts God's Word----- Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:10-11
Demon Possession----- Matthew 12:22-29
The Adversary----- Zechariah 3:1
Behind Judas----- John 13:2, 27
Caused Ananias to Lie----- Acts 5:3
Blinds People----- 2 Corinthians 4:4
Harm Christians----- I Peter 5:8
Leader of Demons----- Ephesians 6:11-12
Works In Unsaved----- Ephesians 2:2
Father of the Unsaved----- John 8:44, Matthew 13:24-43, Romans 9:7-9, I John 3:4-10
Does Miracles----- 2 Thessalonians 2:9
Liar----- John 8:44
Prince of the World----- John 12:31, 14:30
Blinds People----- Luke 13:16
Fallen Angel----- Matthew 25:41
Sows Tares----- Matthew 13:38-39
Snatches the Word Away----- Matthew 13:19
Bound In the Millennium----- Revelation 20:1-3
Enemy----- Matthew 13:39