

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

The world around us is not only physical, it is also spiritual. Both the physical and the spiritual are equally real and interact with each other daily. In the spiritual world are God, multitudes of angels, Satan, and a smaller number of demons.

In the last 100 years or so, the western nations have largely come to disbelieve these things, and often act as if the physical world is all that exists. As a result, they make many decisions that are detrimental and self-destructive, and either ignore the effects or explain them away in physical terms. But for billions of people in other countries, the spiritual world is a very real part of everyday life, and that life is often difficult as evil spirits rule and control their daily decisions.

But neither one of the two extremes need to be. Through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, God has given us the correct understanding of the spiritual world and the keys to live in it with the power and authority of God. Through these we are able to do God's will without the interference or oppression of evil spirits and to be able to enjoy some of the peace and blessing that God originally intended for Mankind.

GOD'S KINGDOM

First of all, we must understand that God rules supreme over everything, with Jesus at His right hand. God created everything and even Satan is subject to His restrictions. (*Dan 7:9-14, Job 1:9-12*)

The earth was originally created to be a paradise, but Man's unbelief and sin caused him to be evicted from that perfect world. Satan hates mankind and works with his followers to tempt us, enslave us, torment, and kill us. But the good news is that no one needs to choose evil or be oppressed by the devil. God has revealed Himself to Mankind and has provided a Savior to set us free from all the power of the devil.

To carry out God's work are millions of angels. These spirit beings are loyal to Jesus and do His work in the universe. They apparently outnumber the demons by a ratio of two-to-one. Some of their activities are:

1. Answering prayers.
2. Arranging circumstances to bring people to salvation
3. Delivering messages from God
4. Helping the saints on earth
5. Battling against evil spirits.
6. Escorting saints to heaven upon their death
7. Executing God's judgement
8. Acting as Guardian Angels, and
9. Praising and worshiping God

Although they are usually invisible, they can make physical appearances at times. Contrary to ideas portrayed in pictures, angels in the Bible always appear as being male – sometimes as strong warriors, sometimes with wings, and sometimes in white, shining clothes. They can appear as human beings also and the Bible says some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Angels are mentioned a lot in the Bible and especially in the New Testament.

It is important to understand that angels are created beings, not people who have died. They are, and will always be, angels. They do not marry, they cannot be saved, they serve God, and are not to be worshiped.

They are sent by God to help us, and any messages they bring will conform to those already revealed in the Bible.

THE ENEMY

Demons, on the other hand, are apparently angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God. They have been cast down to the earth and even the lower regions under the earth. They have various ranks and roles making up a chaotic hierarchy largely held together through fear, suspicion, and force. Each demon is a specialist in some kind of sin (such as greed, lust, jealousy, pride, anger, revenge, theft, lies, and murder) and there are apparently demons which control certain geographical areas, which is why one place might be well known for one kind of sin while another might be a have a reputation for something else. But it is the people's actions in each place that determine what spirits will prevail.

Demons hate people and want to destroy them any way they can. They are the ones who give people thoughts and ideas of sin in all its forms. When a person gives in to a particular temptation, the demon that suggested it can then enter that person's body to gain control of them to one degree or another. The person then finds himself prone to thinking and acting the same way again, and the influence of the demon becomes even greater. In the end a person can be completely controlled or even possessed by these evil spirits and then find himself unable to stop doing things that he knows are wrong or destructive. Demon oppression is often the real problem in many cases of addiction, mental illness, and debilitating physical conditions, and demonic activity is also the explanation of occult, spiritist, or paranormal events. (*Mk 9:17, 25; Lk 13:11; Acts 16:16-18*)

When a person allows a demon to have influence over him by giving in to temptation, that evil spirit will often lead that person to related activities controlled by other demons until the person is controlled by several evil spirits. The person's physical appearance begins to match that of the demons, and the look on his face begins to take on an appearance of greed, lust, anger, or whatever the spirit is that controls him. Satan then leads that person down a path of destruction, whether through things that cause a slow death like a sexually transmitted disease, lung cancer from cigarettes, or liver disease from alcohol; or something more immediate like suicide or drug overdose; or Satan will lead him to do things that destroy his reputation, get him imprisoned, or maybe lead him to kill others. In any way possible, though, death is Satan's intent for every man. (*Jn 10:10*)

The good news of Jesus, however, is that we do not have to submit to these temptations if we belong to Him. There is a way out. The Bible says, “There is no temptation overtaken you which is not common to man; God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape so that you are able to endure it.” (*1 Cor 10:13 NIV*)

And most powerful in God’s ways of escape is the authority we have as children of God when we are born again in Jesus Christ. (*Mk 16:17*) Satan then has no authority over us unless we allow it. The devil may continue to act like he has control over us if we don’t know or enforce the authority we have over him, but the truth is that any Christian can rebuke an evil spirit any time and command it to leave. When faced with a temptation that you know is not from God, simply speak to the evil spirit involved. Name it by name (Lust, Greed, Pride, etc.) and tell it to be silent and leave you in Jesus’ name. Don’t submit to it for a moment. Fight back. Tell that demon to leave and it will.

The same is true of spirits that may have come to control you due to sins of the past. Simply admit your sin to God. Ask Him to forgive you, and then command that spirit to leave your body and keep commanding until something happens. There should be some sign as the demon leaves and you will find that you will no longer be enslaved to the sins that once held you. And should the demons try to come back, just rebuke them as already described so that they and their cohorts will stay away from you.

This is one of the most powerful keys to being free as a believer. The Bible says we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices. We do not have to submit to temptations, sin, curses, witchcraft, or any other power of the devil. We do not need spiritists or mediums to know the future. We have authority in Christ to rebuke the devil and cancel curses. And we have a special privilege as children of God to talk to Him, hear His voice, and ask Him to send His holy angels to fight on our behalf and bring peace and blessing to our lives.

“This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me declares the Lord.” (*Isaiah 54:17 NIV*)