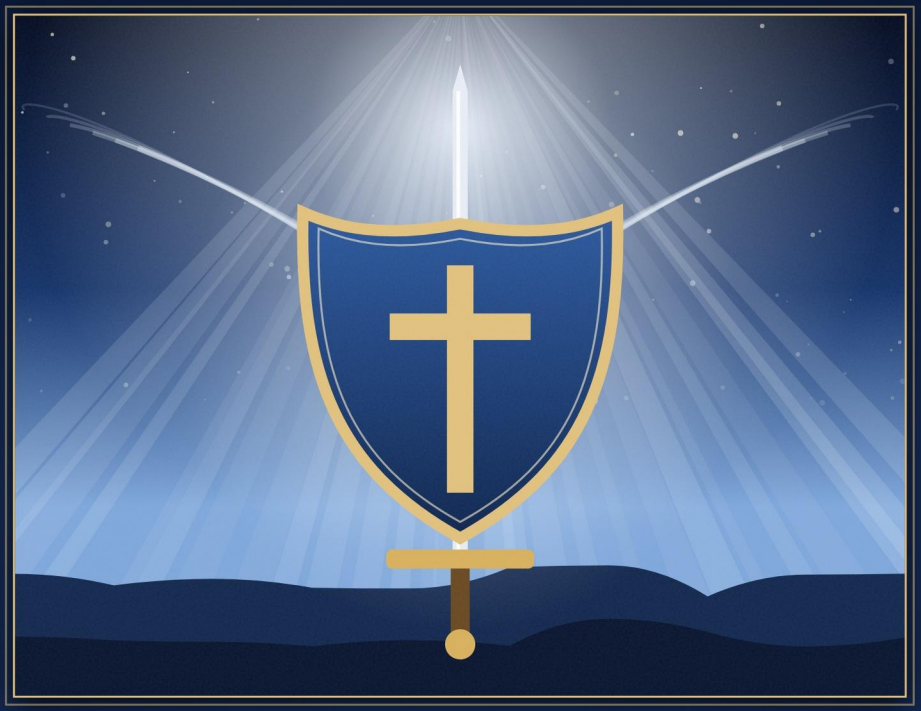
A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Angels, Demons and the Armor of God

Short Studies for the Christian Life



An honest look at the unseen battle and the One who has already won it

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Angels, Demons and the Armor of God

What the Bible Says About the Unseen Battle

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Angels, Demons and the Armor of God: What the Bible Says About the Unseen Battle

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Introduction

> *because in Him all things were created, the **things** in the heavens and the **things** on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him.*
>
> Colossians 1:16 (SLB)

People are fascinated by angels and demons. Bookstores sell angel figurines, calendars, and books about angel encounters. Movies and television are full of demons, exorcisms, and haunted houses. Ask ten people what angels are, and you will get ten different answers, many of them from Hollywood and very few from the Bible.

I have led many Bible study groups, served as a lay pastor and preached. Along the way I met plenty of believers who either ignore the spiritual world or get pulled into ideas that are not in the Bible. I wrote this book for everyday Christians who want to know what Scripture actually says about the unseen battle. When we stay grounded in the Word, we do not have to live in fear or confusion.

There are two ditches people fall into on this subject. One is to ignore the spiritual world completely, as if nothing is real except what we can see and touch. The other is to become obsessed with it, seeing a demon behind every problem or looking for angels instead of looking to God. The Bible avoids both ditches. It tells us plainly that angels and demons are real. It tells us enough to be wise and alert. And then it keeps pointing us back to Jesus Christ, who created all things, “the

visible and the invisible," and who has already won the victory.

Translating the SLB word for word showed me how easy it is to read my own ideas into a verse instead of letting the text speak. When you stick to what is written, the truth gets clearer. The same habit applies to spiritual warfare. If the Bible does not say it, we do not need to build a doctrine on it.

What This Book Covers

The first three chapters look at the unseen world and at angels: what they are, and what they do. The next two look at Satan and demons: who they are, what they do, and what they cannot do. Chapter 6 walks through the armor of God in Ephesians 6, piece by piece. The last chapter looks at Christ's victory over the enemy and how the story ends.

What This Book Does Not Repeat

My book *The Secret Things: Mysteries of the Bible, Hidden and Revealed* already covers several puzzles connected to this subject: the sons of God and the Nephilim in Genesis 6, the angel of the LORD, the spirits in prison in 1 Peter 3, and the one who restrains the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2. I mention those briefly here and point you to that book for the full discussion. It is free on my website.

Each chapter ends with questions for personal reading or a small group. At the back is a short chart of what the Bible does and does not say about angels and demons.

Chapter 1: The World We Cannot See

> *And he said, "Do not be afraid, for more **are** those who **are** with us than those who **are** with them."*
>
> 2 Kings 6:16 (SLB)

The king of Aram was at war with Israel, and he kept losing. Every time he planned an ambush, the prophet Elisha warned the king of Israel. So the king of Aram sent an army of horses and chariots by night to surround the town of Dothan, where Elisha was staying, to capture him.

> *And the attendant of the man of God rose early to arise, and he went out, and look, an army **was** surrounding the city, and horse and chariotry. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my lord! How shall we do?" And he said, "Do not be afraid, for more **are** those who **are** with us than those who **are** with them." And Elisha prayed and said, "LORD, please open his eyes, that he may see." And the LORD opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; and look, the mountain **was** full of horses and chariotry of fire all around Elisha.* (2 Kings 6:15-17)

Elisha's servant saw the enemy army and panicked. Elisha saw something else. He wasn't pretending the danger wasn't real. He knew there was more going on than his servant could see. When God opened the young man's eyes, the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire.

I drifted from God more than once through my own bad choices, even after my baptism, in 2000 and again in

2013. In those seasons I lived for what I could see and handle myself, and the spiritual battle was background noise to me. Coming back to the Word showed me that ignoring an enemy does not make him go away. Understanding the unseen world starts with taking God's Word at face value.

More Is Real Than We See

That story shows us something the whole Bible teaches. There is a real spiritual world around us that we normally cannot see. Paul says Christ created “all things... the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities” (Colossians 1:16). Some of those invisible beings serve God. Others have rebelled against Him. And Paul says our real battle is with them.

> *because our wrestling is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual* ***forces*** *of evil in the heavenly* ***places****.* (Ephesians 6:12)

When a coworker lies about me, or my family is torn apart, or a whole culture turns against God, it is easy to think the people in front of me are the whole story. Paul says there is more. Behind the evil in the world are spiritual forces of evil. That doesn’t excuse people for their sins. It does help me see who the real enemy is, and it reminds me to fight with the right weapons.

Created, Not Gods

Everything in the unseen world was created by God. Angels and demons are not gods. Satan is not God’s equal opposite, like a dark twin. He is a created being who rebelled, and he is limited by the God who made

him. Psalm 148 calls on the angels and all the hosts of heaven to praise the LORD, “for He, He commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 148:5).

That means we never worship angels, pray to them, or look to them for help in place of God. Paul warned the Colossians about people who were caught up in “the worship of the angels” (Colossians 2:18). Even the apostle John, overwhelmed by everything he saw in Revelation, once fell down to worship an angel. The angel stopped him at once.

> *And I, John, **am** the one seeing these things and hearing. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he says to me, “See **that you do** not! For I am a fellow slave of yours and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”* (Revelation 22:8-9)

Keeping Our Balance

C. S. Lewis wrote in the preface to *The Screwtape Letters* that there are two equal and opposite errors people can fall into about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe in them and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. I think he was right, and the Bible keeps us between those two errors. It never tells us everything we would like to know about the spiritual world. It tells us what we need to know to trust God, resist the enemy, and keep our eyes on Christ.

Study Questions

1. Read 2 Kings 6:15-17. What did Elisha see that his servant could not?

2. According to Ephesians 6:12, who is our real battle against? How does that change how you see people who oppose you?
3. Why is it important to remember that angels and demons are created beings?
4. Why did the angel stop John from worshiping him (Revelation 22:8-9)?
5. Which ditch do you tend toward: ignoring the spiritual world, or being too fascinated by it?

Chapter 2: What Angels Are

> *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are about to inherit salvation?*
>
> Hebrews 1:14 (SLB)

The word “angel” comes from a Greek word that means “messenger.” The Hebrew word in the Old Testament means the same thing. Sometimes these words are even used of human messengers. But most of the time they refer to spiritual beings God created to serve Him.

Spirits, Created by God

Hebrews calls angels “ministering spirits, sent forth for service.” They are spirits. They don’t have physical bodies the way we do, though at times they have appeared in human form. Abraham fed three visitors who looked like men (Genesis 18), and Hebrews says some people “have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

Angels were created by God, through Christ (Colossians 1:16). The Bible doesn’t tell us exactly when, though God tells Job that when He laid the foundations of the earth, “all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7), which suggests they were there at creation.

How Many?

The Bible says there are vast numbers of angels. John saw angels around God’s throne numbering “myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands” (Revelation 5:11). A myriad is ten thousand. Hebrews speaks of “myriads of angels” in the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22).

When Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword, Jesus said He could ask His Father for “more than twelve legions of angels” (Matthew 26:53). A Roman legion was several thousand soldiers.

Angels the Bible Names

The Bible names only two holy angels.

Michael is called “the archangel” (Jude 9), meaning a chief or ruling angel, and “one of the chief princes” (Daniel 10:13). He is linked with protecting Israel (Daniel 12:1) and leads God’s angels against the dragon in Revelation 12:7.

Gabriel brings messages from God. He explained visions to Daniel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21), announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah, and announced Jesus’ birth to Mary (Luke 1:19, 26-27). He told Zechariah, “I am Gabriel, the one standing before God.”

Other names you may hear, like Raphael or Uriel, come from books outside the Bible, not from Scripture.

Cherubim and Seraphim

The Bible also describes special kinds of heavenly beings. **Cherubim** guarded the way to the tree of life after Adam and Eve were sent out of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Golden cherubim were made on the cover of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:18-22), and Ezekiel saw them in his visions. They are not chubby babies with little wings, as many paintings show. **Seraphim** appear in Isaiah’s vision of the Lord on His throne.

> *Seraphim were standing above Him; six wings, six wings **belonged** to each one: with two he covered*

> *his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And this one called to this one and said, "Holy, holy, holy **is** the LORD of armies; the fullness of all the earth **is** His glory."* (Isaiah 6:2-3)

Their name likely comes from a Hebrew word meaning "burning." Even these holy beings cover their faces before God.

What Angels Are Not

- **Angels are not people who have died.** This is one of the most common ideas, but the Bible never teaches it. Angels and people are different kinds of beings. Hebrews 12:22-23 lists "myriads of angels" and "the spirits of righteous men made perfect" separately. Jesus said that in the resurrection people will be "like angels" in that they do not marry (Matthew 22:30). Like them in one way, not turned into them.
- **Angels are not to be worshiped or prayed to.** We pray to God, through Jesus Christ.
- **Angels are not all-knowing.** Peter says the angels "desire to look intently" into the gospel (1 Peter 1:12), and Jesus said not even the angels know the day or hour of His return (Matthew 24:36).
- **Angels are not everywhere at once.** Only God is. The angel sent to Daniel told him he was delayed by the prince of Persia for twenty-one days (Daniel 10:13).

The Angel of the LORD

In the Old Testament there is one figure called "the angel of the LORD" who speaks as God, is called God, and receives worship. Hagar, Moses, Gideon, and others met Him. In *The Secret Things*, I explain why I believe this was the Son of God appearing before He was born at

Bethlehem. That is a different subject from the created angels we are looking at in this book.

Study Questions

1. What does the word “angel” mean? What does Hebrews 1:14 say angels are?
2. What does the Bible tell us about Michael and Gabriel?
3. Why do you think the seraphim cover their faces before God (Isaiah 6:2-3)?
4. Many people believe loved ones become angels when they die. How would you answer that kindly from Scripture?
5. What limits do angels have? Why does that matter?

Chapter 3: What Angels Do

> *Bless the LORD, His angels, mighty ones of strength, who do His word, obeying the voice of His word.*
>
> Psalm 103:20 (SLB)

The Bible shows angels doing many kinds of work. All of it is service to God, and much of it is service to God's people.

Writing a study on every book of the Bible and translating the SLB made me set aside what I thought I knew about angels and look only at what the text says. A lot of the popular picture of angels comes from culture, not Scripture. Angels are God's messengers and servants, not something to focus on. Keeping our eyes on the text protects us from chasing ideas God never taught.

They Worship God

The first thing angels do is worship. The seraphim in Isaiah 6 cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of armies." In Revelation, myriads of angels around the throne say, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain" (Revelation 5:11-12). When Jesus was born, a multitude of the heavenly army appeared to the shepherds praising God (Luke 2:13-14). Angels never point to themselves. They point to God.

They Carry God's Messages

Angels brought messages from God at key moments: to Abraham about Sodom, to Daniel about the future, to Zechariah, to Mary, to Joseph in dreams, to the

shepherds, to the women at the empty tomb, and to the apostles in Acts. Now that God has spoken fully in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2) and given us the complete Scriptures, we don't need new messages from angels. Paul warned that even if "an angel out of heaven" preached a different gospel, he should be accursed (Galatians 1:8). Any "angel" whose message contradicts the Bible is not from God.

They Serve God's People

> *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and He frees them.* (Psalm 34:7)

Hebrews says angels are "sent forth for service for the sake of those who are about to inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). The Bible gives many examples. An angel shut the lions' mouths for Daniel (Daniel 6:22). An angel woke Peter in prison, made his chains fall off, and led him out past the guards (Acts 12:7-11). An angel stood by Paul in the storm and told him everyone on the ship would live (Acts 27:23-24).

Psalm 91:11 says God "will command His angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways." Satan quoted that verse to Jesus when he tempted Him to jump from the temple (Matthew 4:6). Jesus answered, "You shall not test the Lord your God" (Matthew 4:7). God's promise of protection is real, but it is not a dare to do something foolish.

Guardian Angels?

Does every believer have a personal guardian angel? Jesus said of little children, "their angels in the heavens continually see the face of My Father" (Matthew 18:10). That tells us angels are concerned with even the smallest

of God's people, and that children matter greatly to God. But the Bible doesn't say clearly whether each person has one assigned angel. What it does say is enough: God sends His angels to serve His people, and He Himself never leaves us.

They Carry Out God's Judgments

Angels also carry out judgment. The angel of the LORD struck the Assyrian army that surrounded Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day (2 Kings 19:35). An angel struck proud King Herod when he accepted worship as a god (Acts 12:23). In Revelation, angels pour out God's judgments on the earth during the tribulation.

They Will Come With Christ

Angels have a part in the events of the end. When Jesus comes for His church, "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). I believe that event comes before the tribulation. Then, at the end of the tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth in glory with His angels (Matthew 25:31), and "He will send His angels with a trumpet of great sound, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds" (Matthew 24:31).

They Rejoice Over Sinners Who Repent

One more thing. Jesus said, "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). When someone turns to Christ, heaven celebrates.

Study Questions

1. What is the first thing angels do in Scripture? What does that teach us?
2. Why don’t we need new messages from angels today? How does Galatians 1:8 help?
3. Name some ways angels served God’s people in the Bible.
4. How did Jesus answer when Satan misused Psalm 91:11? What does that teach about God’s protection?
5. Read Luke 15:10. How does it feel to know heaven rejoices when someone repents?

Chapter 4: Satan, the Adversary

> *Be sober, be watchful, because your adversary,*
> ***the*** *devil, walks around as a roaring lion,*
> *seeking whom he may devour.*
>
> 1 Peter 5:8 (SLB)

The name Satan comes from a Hebrew word that means “adversary” or “accuser.” He is called by many names in the Bible: the devil (which means “slanderer”), the evil one, the tempter, the ancient serpent, the dragon, the father of lies, and the ruler of this world. Each name shows something about him.

In about 40 years of work, I have seen how one person's dishonesty can split a team and tear down trust. That is the adversary's pattern too. Scripture calls Satan a liar and an accuser from the beginning. When we recognize his tactics, we can stand firm without returning evil for evil.

Where He Came From

God did not create Satan evil. Everything God made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Satan was a created angel who rebelled. Many teachers see a picture of his fall behind the words to the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14:12-15 and to the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:12-17, where pride leads to a fall from a high place. Those passages first speak to human kings, and believers differ on how far they describe Satan. What the New Testament makes clear is that Satan sinned “from the beginning” (1 John 3:8), that pride was at the root of it (1 Timothy 3:6), and that other angels followed him. Jesus calls them “the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41; see also Revelation 12:7-9).

What He Is Like

Jesus described him plainly.

> *You are of **your** father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from **the** beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks the lie, he speaks from his own **things**, for he is a liar and the father of it.* (John 8:44)

A murderer and a liar. Those two words sum up his work. He lied to Eve in the garden, and the result was death. He still works the same way. He twists God's Word ("Has God indeed said?" Genesis 3:1), he makes sin look good, and he accuses God's people.

He is also a deceiver who doesn't come in a red suit with horns. "Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). He is most dangerous when he looks religious, when false teaching sounds spiritual, or when sin is dressed up as freedom.

What He Does

- **He tempts.** He tempted Eve, and he tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). He tempts believers today (1 Corinthians 7:5).
- **He deceives.** He "deceives the whole inhabited world" (Revelation 12:9) and blinds the minds of unbelievers so they don't see the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- **He accuses.** He accused Job before God (Job 1:9-11). Revelation calls him "the accuser of our brothers... who accuses them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).
- **He opposes God's work.** He snatches away the word that was sown (Mark 4:15) and hinders gospel workers (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

What He Cannot Do

Satan is powerful, but he is on a leash. In the book of Job, he could not touch Job without God's permission, and he could go no further than God allowed.

> *And the LORD said to Satan, "Look, all that **is** his **is** in your hand; only against him do not stretch out your hand." And Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.* (Job 1:12)

He is not all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere at once. Only God is. He can tempt, but he can't make a believer sin. "God is faithful, who will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able" (1 Corinthians 10:13). He can accuse, but he can't condemn anyone who is in Christ (Romans 8:1, 33-34). He can attack, but he can't snatch a single one of Christ's sheep out of the Father's hand (John 10:28-29).

Our Response

Peter tells us to be sober and watchful, because the devil prowls like a roaring lion. Then he tells us what to do.

> *Be sober, be watchful, because your adversary, **the** devil, walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished in your brotherhood in the world.* (1 Peter 5:8-9)

"Resist him, firm in the faith." James says the same: "Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Notice the order. First, submit to God. Then resist the devil. We don't resist him in our own strength or by shouting at him. We resist him by standing firm in faith, holding to God's Word, and refusing his lies.

Study Questions

1. What do the names “Satan” and “devil” mean? What do they tell us about him?
2. Read John 8:44. How does Jesus describe the devil?
3. Why is it dangerous to think of Satan only as a frightening figure in red?
4. What limits did God place on Satan in the book of Job? Why is that comforting?
5. According to 1 Peter 5:8-9 and James 4:7, how do we resist the devil?

Chapter 5: Demons

> *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe, and shudder.*
>
> James 2:19 (SLB)

Demons are mentioned often in the Gospels. Jesus cast them out many times, and His authority over them was one of the clearest signs of who He is.

What Demons Are

The Bible calls them unclean spirits, evil spirits, and demons. They are best understood as the angels who followed Satan in his rebellion. Revelation describes the dragon sweeping "a third of the stars of heaven" to the earth (Revelation 12:4), and later speaks of the devil "and his angels" being thrown down (Revelation 12:9). Many teachers take the first verse as a picture of the angels who fell with him. Jesus spoke of "the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Peter and Jude also mention angels who sinned and are now kept in chains until the judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Those seem to be a special group, held in confinement, not free to roam. In *The Secret Things*, I discuss how this may connect with Genesis 6.

Jesus and the Demons

> *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, "Ha! What **is there** to us and to You, Jesus **the** Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy **One** of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" And*

> *the unclean spirit, having thrown him into convulsions and having cried out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all astonished, so as to question among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new teaching **is** this, that with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him?"* (Mark 1:23-27)

The demon knew exactly who Jesus was: "the Holy One of God." And it was terrified. Jesus didn't use any ritual or special formula. He simply commanded, and the spirit obeyed. The people were amazed: "with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

The demons knew Jesus even when people didn't. James says, "Even the demons believe, and shudder" (James 2:19). Knowing facts about God is not the same as saving faith. The demons know the truth about Jesus and hate Him.

Not Everything Is a Demon

The Gospels are careful here. They often list sickness and demon trouble separately (Mark 1:32-34). Not every illness is caused by a demon, and not every sin is a demon's fault. James says we are tempted when we are drawn away by our own desire (James 1:14). Blaming demons for everything can become a way to avoid repentance. And treating a medical or mental illness as a demon can do real harm. Get good medical care, and get good spiritual counsel too.

Can a Christian Be Possessed?

This question troubles many believers. I don't believe a true Christian can be possessed, or owned, by a demon. A believer has been "rescued out of the authority of the darkness" and brought into the kingdom of God's Son

(Colossians 1:13). The Holy Spirit lives in him (1 Corinthians 6:19), “because greater is the One in you than the one in the world” (1 John 4:4). The New Testament never tells a believer to have a demon cast out of himself. It tells him to resist the devil and stand firm.

But a believer can be tempted, deceived, attacked, and oppressed. Paul spoke of a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him (2 Corinthians 12:7). And a believer who keeps giving in to sin can “give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). The answer is not panic. It is repentance, prayer, God’s Word, and the help of other believers.

Stay Away From the Occult

God strictly forbade His people from having anything to do with the occult.

> ***There*** *shall not be found among you one who makes his son and his daughter pass through the fire, one who divines divinations, a soothsayer, and an interpreter of omens, and a sorcerer, and one who casts a spell, and one who asks a medium and a spiritist, and one who inquires of the dead. For everyone who does these* ***things is*** *an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God is dispossessing them from before you.* (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Fortune telling, spells, mediums, and trying to contact the dead were “an abomination to the LORD.” That includes things many people treat as harmless games today: Ouija boards, tarot cards, séances, and horoscopes taken seriously. They open doors that should stay shut. When people in Ephesus came to faith, many who had practiced magic brought their books and

burned them publicly, books worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:18-19). They made a clean break.

The Name of Jesus Is Not a Magic Word

Acts 19 also tells about some traveling Jewish exorcists who tried to use Jesus' name like a magic formula.

> *But some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to name the name of the Lord Jesus over those having the evil spirits, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul proclaims." And* ***there*** *were some, seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest, who were doing this. But the evil spirit, answering, said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with; but you, who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaping on them and having overpowered them, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.* (Acts 19:13-16)

"Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with; but you, who are you?" The power is not in saying a name. It is in belonging to the Person. These men didn't know Jesus. Our safety is not in formulas but in a real relationship with Him.

Study Questions

1. Where does the Bible indicate demons came from?
2. Read Mark 1:23-27. What does this passage show about Jesus' authority?
3. Why is it unwise to blame every problem on demons?
4. What verses help answer the question, "Can a Christian be possessed?" What can happen to a believer?

5. What occult practices are common today? What would a “clean break” look like (Acts 19:18-19)?

Chapter 6: The Armor of God

> *Put on the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil*
> Ephesians 6:11 (SLB)

Paul wrote Ephesians from prison, probably chained to a Roman soldier. He had plenty of time to look at that soldier's armor. At the end of the letter, he used it as a picture of how believers stand against the devil.

> *Finally, my brothers, be empowered in **the** Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil, because our wrestling is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual **forces** of evil in the heavenly **places**. Because of this take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all things, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod the feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace; above all, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the** word of God, through all prayer and supplication, praying at every time in **the** Spirit, and for this very **purpose** watching with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*
> (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Be Strong in the Lord

Notice where Paul starts: “be empowered in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” The strength is His, not mine. And the armor is “the armor of God.” It is God’s armor, given to me. I don’t make it. I put it on.

For years I thought I was managing my life on my own strength. Then on May 29, 2020, my wife caught me drinking and took me to my first 12-step meeting that same day. That day stripped away every excuse I was hiding behind. In recovery I learned that the belt of truth and the shield of faith are not put on once. They are put on every day. You cannot fight a spiritual battle on willpower.

Notice too what the armor is for. Paul says “stand” or “withstand” four times. The main goal is not to charge into enemy territory looking for demons to fight. It is to stand firm and not be knocked down. Christ has already won the war. Our job is to hold the ground He has taken.

The Belt of Truth

A Roman soldier’s belt held everything else together. It kept his tunic out of the way so he could move and fight. Truth does that for us. Satan is the father of lies, and the first defense against lies is truth: the truth of God’s Word, and truthfulness in my own life. A believer who lives a double life has left his belt at home.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate protected the heart and other vital organs. Satan is the accuser. He loves to tell believers they are too sinful for God to love. Our answer is the righteousness of Christ, given to us by faith (Philippians 3:9). We don’t stand on our own record. We

stand on His. And because we belong to Him, we also seek to live righteously, so we don't give the accuser true charges to bring.

Feet Ready With the Gospel of Peace

Roman soldiers wore sturdy sandals with studs on the bottom, so they could keep their footing. The gospel gives us sure footing. We have peace with God through Christ (Romans 5:1), so we can stand firm. And we are ready to carry that good news of peace to others.

The Shield of Faith

The Roman shield was large, about the size of a door, and covered most of the body. Arrows were sometimes dipped in pitch and set on fire. Soldiers would soak their leather-covered shields in water to put them out. Satan's "flaming arrows" are temptations, lies, doubts, and fears. Faith, trusting God and what He has said, puts them out. Faith is not a feeling. It is taking God at His word when the arrows are flying.

The Helmet of Salvation

The helmet protected the head. Many of Satan's attacks come at the mind: doubts about whether I am really saved, despair about the future. The helmet of salvation is the confidence that I belong to God, that Christ has saved me, and that He will finish what He started. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul calls the helmet "the hope of salvation." Our hope includes His coming for us, which protects our minds from despair. The helmet and the breastplate go back to Isaiah 59:17, where the LORD Himself "put on righteousness like the body armor, and a helmet of salvation on His head."

The Sword of the Spirit

The only offensive weapon in the list is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Jesus used this sword in the wilderness. Every time Satan tempted Him, Jesus answered, “It has been written,” and quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). The devil left. We need to know God’s Word well enough to use it when we are tempted. That’s one reason memorizing Scripture matters so much. My mini book *Fasting and Other Habits of Faith* gives a simple way to start.

Prayer

Paul ends with prayer: “through all prayer and supplication, praying at every time in the Spirit.” Prayer is not a piece of armor. It goes alongside the armor, and it is how the soldier stays connected to his Commander. And notice that Paul says to pray “for all the saints.” We don’t fight alone. We stand together and pray for each other.

Putting It On

How do I put on the armor? Not by imagining myself buckling on a belt each morning, though some people find that a helpful reminder. I put it on by living it. I hold to the truth. I trust Christ’s righteousness and live rightly. I stand on the gospel and share it. I trust God’s promises. I rest in my salvation. I read, memorize, and use God’s Word. And I pray. Those are ordinary things. They are also the weapons of a spiritual war.

Study Questions

1. Where does Paul say our strength comes from (Ephesians 6:10)? Why does that matter?

2. Paul says “stand” several times. What does that tell you about our part in the battle?
3. Which piece of armor do you most need to “put on” right now? Why?
4. How did Jesus use the sword of the Spirit in Matthew 4? How can you do the same?
5. Why does Paul end with prayer for all the saints?

Chapter 7: The Victory Is Already Won

> *The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from **the** beginning. For this **purpose** the Son of God was revealed, so that He might destroy the works of the devil.*
>
> 1 John 3:8 (SLB)

Some people picture the spiritual world as an even fight between good and evil, with the outcome uncertain. The Bible doesn't. The battle is real, but the result is certain. Jesus has already won.

Leading Bible studies over the years, I have seen believers carry guilt for sins Christ has already paid for. Opening Scripture and showing them what Jesus finished at the cross lifts a weight they could not drop on their own. The enemy wants us fighting for a victory Jesus already won. Remembering who holds the outcome changes how we face today.

The Cross Defeated Him

> *having stripped off the rulers and the authorities, He made a public display **of them** openly, having triumphed over them in it.* (Colossians 2:15)

At the cross, Satan thought he had won. The Son of God was dead. But the cross was where Jesus "stripped off the rulers and the authorities" and "made a public display of them," like a Roman general leading defeated enemies through the streets in a victory parade. How? Satan's greatest weapon against us was our guilt. He could accuse us, and he was right. But Jesus paid for our sins in full. The accuser has nothing left to accuse.

> *Since therefore the children have shared in flesh and blood, He Himself also likewise partook of the same, so that through death He might render powerless the one who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and might set free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery throughout all their life.* (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Jesus took on flesh and blood so that through His death He could "render powerless the one who holds the power of death." The fear of death kept people in slavery all their lives. Jesus broke that slavery. A believer does not need to fear death or the devil.

The Battle Continues, for Now

If Satan is defeated, why is there still so much evil? Because his final sentence hasn't been carried out yet. Think of a war where the decisive battle has been won, but fighting continues until the enemy finally surrenders. Satan is still "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31) in the sense that he holds sway over people who don't know God. But his time is short, and he knows it (Revelation 12:12).

Paul tells us that something restrains the full outbreak of lawlessness until the right time (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7). I believe the restrainer is the Holy Spirit working through the church, and that when the church is taken up to meet the Lord before the tribulation, that restraint will be removed. I explain this more fully in *The Secret Things*.

How It Ends

The Bible tells us how the story ends, in two steps. When Jesus returns to the earth in glory at the end of the

tribulation, Satan will be bound and locked in the abyss for a thousand years while Christ reigns.

> *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut him in, and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; and after these things he must be released for a little time.* (Revelation 20:1-3)

After the thousand years, he will be released for a short time, will deceive the nations one last time, and then will be thrown into the lake of fire forever.

> *And the devil who deceives them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet **are**; and they will be tormented day and night to the ages of the ages.* (Revelation 20:10)

That is the end of the devil. No more tempting, no more lies, no more accusing. My *Revelation Bible Study* walks through these events in order.

Living as Victors

What does this mean for us now?

- **We don't need to be afraid.** "Greater is the One in you than the one in the world" (1 John 4:4).
- **We don't need to be fascinated.** When the seventy disciples came back excited that the demons were subject to them, Jesus told them not to rejoice in that, "but rather rejoice that your names were written in the heavens" (Luke 10:20). Our joy is in our salvation, not in power over spirits.

- **We do need to be alert.** The enemy is defeated but still dangerous. Stay sober and watchful. Put on the armor.
- **We do need to stand together.** Pray for each other. Speak the truth to each other. Don't let a brother or sister fight alone.

Whose Side Are You On?

There are only two kingdoms. Paul says that before we came to Christ, we "walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Every one of us started on the wrong side. But God "rescued us out of the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). If you have never trusted Jesus Christ, He invites you to come to Him now. He defeated the devil for you. My free book *The Road Home* explains how to turn to Him.

Study Questions

1. Read Colossians 2:15. What did Jesus do to the rulers and authorities at the cross?
2. How did Jesus' death set us free from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)?
3. If Satan has been defeated, why is there still so much evil in the world?
4. What happens to Satan in Revelation 20? How does knowing the end help you today?
5. Read Luke 10:17-20. What did Jesus say His disciples should rejoice in most?

A Closing Word

> *Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet quickly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* ***be*** *with you. Amen.*
>
> Romans 16:20 (SLB)

There is a real battle going on around us, and it is bigger than any of us. But you don't have to be afraid of it. The hills around Elisha were full of horses and chariots of fire. More are those who are with us than those who are with them. And above them all is the Lord Jesus Christ, who created every angel, defeated every demon, and will soon put the devil away forever.

Stay close to Him. Put on His armor. Hold to His Word. Pray for one another. And look forward to the day when the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet.

What the Bible Does and Does Not Say

The Bible says	The Bible does not say
Angels are created spirits who serve God (Hebrews 1:14)	People become angels when they die
Michael and Gabriel are holy angels (Jude 9; Luke 1:19)	Raphael, Uriel, or other named angels (those names come from books outside the Bible)
Angels worship God and refuse worship (Revelation 22:8-9)	We should pray to angels or ask them for help
God sends angels to serve His people (Psalm 34:7)	Exactly how many angels watch over each person
Satan is a created, fallen being (1 John 3:8)	Satan is God's equal opposite
Satan is limited by God (Job 1:12)	Satan can read your mind or be everywhere at once
Demons are real and fear Jesus (James 2:19)	Every sickness or sin is caused by a demon
Believers are rescued from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13)	A true believer can be owned by a demon
The occult is forbidden (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)	Ouija boards and tarot are harmless fun
Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10)	The outcome of the battle is in doubt

About This Book

Angels, Demons and the Armor of God is a short Bible study on the unseen spiritual world.

It shows what angels are and what they do, and clears up common ideas the Bible does not teach, such as people becoming angels when they die. It looks at Satan, where he came from, what he does, and the limits God has placed on him, and at demons, Jesus' authority over them, the danger of the occult, and why a true believer cannot be owned by a demon. One chapter walks through the armor of God in Ephesians 6 piece by piece. The last chapter shows that Christ has already won the victory and tells how the story ends.

Each chapter ends with study questions for personal reading or a small group. A chart of what the Bible does and does not say about angels and demons is at the back.

All Scripture quotations come from the Steadfast Literal Bible, which is free to read at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb.