Demons on a Leash

Ephesians 6:12

INTRODUCTION:

A. Importance of a Leash
   1. Definition: A line for leading or restraining an animal . . . The State of being restrained . . . For restrain or control
   2. A leash allows one to have control over the movements of another.
   3. The larger the animal, the larger and stronger the leash that is used.

B. Haunted houses . . . ghosts . . . demons—our Western culture can't seem to get enough of the spirit world.
   1. The latest Gallup poll indicates that:
      a. 42% of Americans believe in demon possession.
      b. 37% believe in haunted houses.
      c. 32% believe in ghosts.
   2. Not just Americans are enthralled—40% of the British believe in haunted houses, too.

C. Though interest in the paranormal is widespread, the majority of people are skeptical.
   1. They discount all spirit activity, going so far as to deny the existence of Satan and demons.
   2. Atheists stated this view succinctly in a sign they planted next to a manger scene last Christmas at the capitol building in Olympia, Washington: "There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world."

D. For some the subject of demons then and now is troubling.
   1. Demons appear some 70 times in the Bible.
      a. 4 times in the Old Testament
      b. 66 times in the New Testament
      c. Demon – 20 times
      d. Demons – 49 times
      e. Evil spirit – 2 times
   2. No fewer than 9 recorded times Jesus cast demons out of people.
   3. In Luke 7:33 John the Baptizer was accused of having a demon.

4. In John 7:20 Some people accused Jesus of having a demon.
5. In Matthew 12:24 the Pharisees accused Jesus of receiving His power from “Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.”

E. What is the Christian position? . . . What does the Bible teach about demons?
   1. Clearly, outright denial of Satan and demons is not the answer.

      That view rejects the revelation in the Bible and the phenomena witnessed clearly and broadly in many lands and societies.
   2. Unless we have a biblical view of God, mankind, and the spirit world, we will not have the perspective to understand the evil that plagues our world.
   3. Demons are spoken of as spiritual beings, at enmity with God, and having power to afflict man not only with disease, but, as is marked by the frequent epithet "un-clean," with spiritual pollution also.
      a. They "believe" the power of God "and tremble." James 2:19,
      b. They recognized the Lord as the Son of God, Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:41.
      c. They acknowledged the power of his name, used in exorcism.
      d. They are fully aware and know that at an appointed time in the future they will be cast into the torments of an eternal fire. Matthew 8:29.
      e. The description is precisely that of a nature akin to the angelic in knowledge and powers, but with the emphatic addition of the idea of positive and active wickedness.

F. Ephesians 6:12 – “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SATAN’S ROLE

How does the Bible throw light on this problem? The biblical answer is connected to the fall of Satan and his angels and his role in the fall of the head of all mankind, Adam.

How could a good and powerful God allow evil spirits to trouble us since the very beginning?

First, let's recall several truths about the nature of God, the limitations on fallen angels, and God's final judgment.

THE GOD FACTOR. The same Bible that presents the inception and continuation of sin and evil also presents God as One who is holy, righteous, and perfect in all His ways and who hates evil (Deuteronomy 32:3–4).

- He is sovereign, omnipotent, and in control.
- He has no potential successful rival (Isaiah 41:4, 43:13; Revelation 4:11). Evil did not rise up apart from His control; otherwise, He would not be God.

It seems best to say that God, for good reasons, allowed evil to come into being. Believers confess that God is the Author of a plan, a perfect plan, that included allowing His creatures to choose to sin (Isaiah 45:7; Acts 14:16). His ultimate good purpose must be best served by such a plan.

- Perhaps He allowed angels to sin so that He might give a concrete example of the wretchedness and degradation of sin.
- Perhaps He used the test to gain a group of angels to serve Him from choice and love while others fell. By this means He could show in specific form His hatred and judgment of sin, as in Pharaoh's case (Romans 9:17–18). We would never know the magnitude of God's grace in preserving most of the angels and in the costly redemption of unworthy, sinful man. The price of our redemption is the death of the eternal Son of God, who became our God-man Redeemer.

THE ANGEL FACTOR.

Satan's pride led him to fall. Satan was the lead angel, but in pride he deliberately chose to sin against his Creator. The responsibility falls on him, not on God in any way. The angels who joined Satan planned their rebellion despite all they knew of the greatness and goodness of God.

Moreover, Scripture reveals that God is sovereign over these evil spirits and has always limited the expression of their sin and its

devastating effects. **He allows it for only a finite time between Satan's fall and His coming judgment**. Further, He controls the magnitude of Satan's evil even within that time frame (Psalm 11:4–7, 96:1–13; Romans 2:1–16).

THE JUDGMENT FACTOR. God in His righteousness has condemned sin in the fullest sense. He has judged it throughout human history. He also judged it in awesome dimensions in the sacrifice of His eternal Son, a sacrificial punishment more than all creatures combined could ever suffer. Ultimately, God will forever punish Satan, his demonic hordes, and all other evildoers in the lake of fire, and He will banish sin forever from the universe at the end of this world. (Revelation 20:10–15, 21:4–5).

So scripture guarantees that God is in full control of His creation; He did not cause evil, but He will judge all evil.

DEMONS THROUGH THE AGES

Demons have always opposed God, His purposes, and His people. In the Old Testament days, demons brought attacks against God's nation, Israel. They influenced men to set up idols that were in fact worship to them.

Today, demons also oppose the Church, Christ's body. They promote false doctrine and divisions, they produce false teachers and followers, and they incite persecution. No other religion of the world receives such opposition and deadly persecution. Satan and demons hate the Messiah—the Creator who became the Savior—and anyone who follows Him.

Satan and demons have not faded from the scene. They continue their evil activity. Their activity is more blatant in some places than others, but their presence is still experienced worldwide. However, Satan and his fallen angels are going to know ultimate defeat, and God will throw Satan and his angels into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7–10; Matthew 25:41).

God has a beautiful and wonderful place in which His children will enjoy His presence and provisions forever. Throughout eternal ages, righteousness will permanently rule (2 Peter 3:13); and Satan,

demons, and human evildoers will be forever punished. By God's goodness and grace, those who obey Christ will enjoy a wonderful world where there are no more fears, tears, pains, or deaths. There will be no recycling of evil. Evil will be forever banished (Revelation 21–22).

DEMONIC ACTIVITY IN THE WORLD

Demons are alive and active today, but we can rest in the reality of our Father's gracious and powerful control.

According to the Bible, demons are real spiritual and personal beings, not just forces or phenomena in the physical and psychological realm. Various Bible passages reveal that they have intellect, emotions, and will. They think, hate, and choose plans of action against God, Christ, and mankind. They especially hate Christians because Christians belong to Christ and are foes of Satan.

The Scriptures provide many details about demons.

- They are spirit beings created by God and responsible to God (Colossians 1:16).
- They are creatures limited in space, time, and powers. They have become morally perverted and are called "unclean spirits" (Matthew 10:1) or "evil spirits" (Luke 7:21).
- They promote immoral and sensuous lifestyles (2 Peter 2:1–18).
- They cause false teachers of depraved minds to oppose the truth and appeal to carnal and selfish impulses (2 Timothy 3:6).
- They sow false followers of Christ in the world (Matthew 13:37–42).
- They blind the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing God's salvation through faith in His Son (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).

Demons promote primitive religions, magic, superstition, and worship of evil spirits. They are the dynamic behind idolatry and their devotees, whether worshipers of the gods Marduk, Asher, Zeus, Jupiter, Apollo, Ra, Diana, Aphrodite, or a host of lesser manmade deities. Witchcraft and astrology are among the earliest false religions that they have inspired in the minds of men. Satanism stands out among their more recent promotions.

Demons were behind idol worship. When people thought they were worshipping another god, they were in fact, although in ignorance, worshipping demons.

Leviticus 17:4

They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them through their generations.

Deuteronomy 32:17

They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know. To new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear.

2 Chronicles 11:15

Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made.

Psalm 106:37

They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.

1 Corinthians 10:20-21

Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

1 Timothy 4:1

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

The Bible reveals that demons have invaded and sought to control humans (Luke 22:3–4). The Greek word for "demon possession" denotes "demon-caused passivity." It is used of an internal control manifest in either physical or psychological problems.

DEMONIC OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIANS

Demons—those rebellious angels who followed Satan—especially target true believers who are a threat to them. At least sixteen passages in the New Testament address demonic opposition to Christians. Perhaps their greatest deceptive device is that of counterfeiting (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).

- Satan sought to be like God, and so he imitates some of God's powers (as did the magicians in Pharaoh's court) and distorts God's message.
- Christians must beware of any changes to the gospel of God's saving grace in Christ.
- Satan promotes legalism, as well as license (Galatians 5:1–4, 13–14). So Christians must guard their lives by following God's truth and depending upon the Holy Spirit, lest they let their sinful desires overrule God's will.
- Demons tempt and seek to lead true believers astray from following Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).
- They promote rebellion and encourage slander against God and men (Genesis 3:1–6; Revelation 12:9).
- They abhor the grace of God and attack the character of God by causing people to think of Him as dominating, restricting, and vengeful.
- They attack a Christian's confidence and commitment to Christ, and in their place they insert accusing thoughts.
- They tempt people to lie, to commit sexual sins, to be preoccupied with this world's values, to rely on human wisdom, to be proud in spiritual matters.
- They bring discouragement and division, both doctrinal and relational.
- They incite persecution, prevent service, and infiltrate the church. In each case, we have a choice to make—to give in or stand firm in Christ.

Demons know that the salvation available to Christians is not available to them. We are going to live with God forever . . . they can't. They made their decisions in the distant past . . . Their fate is

sealed . . . And their days are numbered! How blessed we are to be able to make choices that will deliver us from their fate.

THE TIME OF SATAN'S FALL

Job 38:7 says all of God's angels rejoiced in seeing God's creation of the world. Satan and his angels must have witnessed the creation of man, in particular, because one of Satan's desires was to rule over man (Isaiah 14:13). So we have some idea about when Satan was created—prior to the creation of Adam. But when did he fall? Obviously, Satan must have fallen before he tempted Eve and Adam (Genesis 3). Some have suggested that since God pronounced all His creation "very good" at the end of Creation Week (Genesis 1:31), the implication is that Satan had not yet rebelled against God. To them appear that Satan fell after Day Six of creation but before Adam's sin. The Bible does not indicate the exact time of Satan's fall.

After Satan rebelled, his character was corrupted as "the evil one" (1 John 3:12), his power became perverted, and God cast him and his followers out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12).

With this angelic fall, evil first came into existence. Satan and demons aligned themselves against God and mankind. Ever since then, they have spread evil throughout the whole world like an aggressive cancer.

Some people have proposed that there was an earlier creation before Genesis 1:1, when Satan sinned and occasioned judgment from God, thus causing the disorder described in verse 2. Rather than "the earth was formless and void," they translate it "the earth became formless and void." However, careful analysis of the Hebrew shows that this interpretation is untenable, and no prominent English translation follows it. Genesis 1:2 is a parenthetical statement in the flow of the narrative, describing the initial condition of the earth, when God first made it.

The first three days of Creation Week do not describe a renovation of a ruined, chaotic earth but the establishment of environments that God would fill with stars, animals, and humans on the last three days of Creation Week. Satan's fall and the introduction of demonic activity

into the world apparently came after the creation described in Genesis 1 and 2.

GOD'S PROVISION IN OUR BATTLE

Every believer is engaged, either knowingly or unknowingly, in direct conflict with Satan and his demons. This is the point of Paul's warning in Ephesians 6:10–18. If we Christians submit to God, we can depend upon His strengthening for this conflict. We must avail ourselves to God's provision of spiritual armor.

We should consider ourselves already equipped with the first three pieces of armor, which we received as a result of our place in Christ. We have the **belt of truth** because we are in Christ, who is the truth of God, and we need not seek truth within any other religion or philosophy. We have the **breastplate of Christ's righteousness** through our obedience to the Gospel. Our feet are covered by the non-slip **shoes of peace with God**, which we received through the blood of Christ. When we run into opposition, we must remember that God is not against us . . . **He is for us**!

In everyday life, we must consciously take up the next three pieces of armor. **The shield of faith** is confidence in God, His character, and His Word that wards off demonic lies. We must put on the **helmet of the salvation and hope** (certainty) of deliverance in the battle, for we are on the winning side. We are never to give up. Wielding the sword of the Spirit means living by and applying the appropriate sayings of scripture when we face the enemy, just as the Lord Jesus did when He was tested (Matthew 4:1–11).

GOD'S SOVEREIGN CONTROL

In facing Satan and demons, we believers can rest in the reality of our Father's gracious and powerful control. We know He has placed limits on our enemies. He did so in the case of Job, one of God's exemplary followers. In the first attack, the Creator allowed Satan only to touch Job's possessions, not Job himself (Job 1:12). In the second attack, God allowed Satan to touch only Job's body, not take his life (Job 2:6). After all of his trials, Job recognized the goodness and power of God (Job 42:1–6).

So God limits the demonic attacks in our world today. **Satan and his demons are on a leash, and we are under God's protection** (Psalm121:5–8). **Do they have the knowledge and power to do more to us than they do? Yes, but God will not let them! God has them on a leash.** That does not mean we will never face difficulties or trials, for those are part of this fallen world (and sometimes result from the direct attacks of spiritual beings, Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10). But it does mean we can trust God with whatever comes at us in the battle. We belong inseparably to the Lord (Romans 8:31–39). He guards us and keeps us as we trust in Him (1 Peter 5:6–7). We are to submit to God and resist the devil; then he will flee from us (James 4:7).

OUR AUTHORITY IN THE BATTLE

Demons are alive and active today, not to be dismissed or played with. To face successfully the evil in this world, no matter what form it takes, we must:

1. Recognize the reality and schemes of Satan and his fellow fallen angels.
2. Take our stand in the strength and authority of Christ.
3. Submit our lives to God.
4. Put on the full armor of God.
5. Boldly stand on the truths of God in the face of challenges and temptations by our leashed spiritual enemies.

CONCLUSION:

A. Lost people will reside exactly where Satan and his demons will reside, being punished just as they will be.
B. I am thankful for God's Word . . . God's Power . . . And God's timeframe that enables us to try and do what we are admonished to do in Jude 23 – " ". . . others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh." Let us begin with any who are present today . . .
C. God is in control! God has drawn the line for what Satan and his demons can do and not do. 1 Corinthians 10:13 – "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful;

He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

D. **Our sins helped nail Jesus to the cross**. **IF WE LIVE AS IF HE NEVER DIED**, **WE WILL DIE AS IF HE NEVER LIVED**!

E. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**