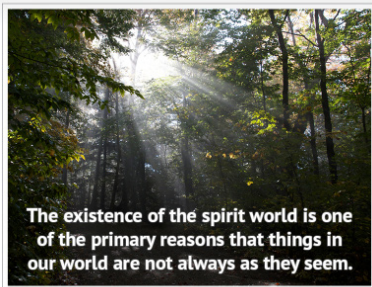


Our Daily Bread Christian University
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Our Daily Bread Ministries.



The Doctrine of the Spirit World

1. Q. What is the spirit world?

A. It is that invisible realm inhabited by holy angels who actively serve God for our good (Heb. 1:14) and by Satan's demonic forces who oppose God and seek to harm us (Eph. 6:12).

Its existence is one of the primary reasons that things in our world are not always as they seem. Our challenge is far greater than merely to deal with the visible details of life. Our primary struggle for well-being does not depend just on our flesh-and-blood relationships but also on unseen friends and enemies as well.

2. Q. What are angels?

A. Angels are created (Ps. 148:1-5), powerful (Ps. 103:20), personal (Lk. 1:26-38; 15:10), deathless (Lk. 20:36), spirit beings (Heb. 1:14) designed to worship (Heb. 1:6) and serve the Lord (Ps. 103:20), and to minister to believers (Heb. 1:14).

While natural observation does not reveal their importance to us, faith in the Word of God assures us that God's sovereign provision in our lives is often mediated by these invisible servants. Even more astounding is the assurance of the Scriptures that they do not always remain invisible. Because of this, the letter to the Hebrews urges us, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Heb. 13:2).

3. Q. Who is Satan?

A. Satan is an especially powerful angel who rebelled against





God. His act of rebellion is not described directly in the Bible but is alluded to in Isaiah's description of the king of Babylon (14:12-15) and Ezekiel's reference to the king of Tyre (28:11-19). He is also referred to in the Bible as the devil, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Belial, serpent, dragon, ruler of this world, god of this age, prince of the power of the air, angel of light, accuser, tempter, deceiver, murderer, liar, and evil one.

Because of his constant activity against God and the people of God, he is a far greater threat to us than any other enemy, personal or national.

4. Q. Who are the demons?

A. Demons are fallen angels who apparently joined Satan in his rebellion. Some are active as members of Satan's army (Eph. 6:12) while others have been imprisoned by God (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

These personal agents of Satan's evil empire can stimulate and arouse the worst capacities and desires within us. They don't make us evil, but they willingly dominate those who refuse to surrender their hearts to God.

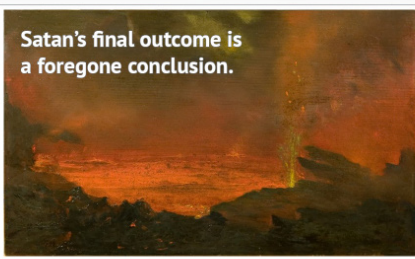
5. Q. What are the activities of Satan?

A. With the help of his demon followers, he plants false Christians among the true (Mt. 13:24-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). He seeks to devour the Lord's people (1 Pet. 5:8). He falsely accuses God's children (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-5; Zech. 3:1-10; Rev. 12:10). He rules over the unsaved world (Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). He deceives people through his outright lies (Jn. 8:44) and his cleverly designed thought-systems (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14-15; Col. 2:8,20-23; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 5:19). And he can possess nonbelievers (Mk. 5:1-13; 6:13; Acts 5:16; 16:16-18; 19:11-12).

We are constantly interacting with the workings of this evil strategist. Often, like Peter (Mt. 16:23), we are so unaware of the ways of God that even our good intentions can serve Satan's purposes. For that reason we must continually depend on the Lord's ability to lead us.

6. Q. What did Christ do to assure the ultimate defeat of Satan and his forces?





A. By His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus broke Satan's power (Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15). So the devil and his forces operate today as defeated foes who know they are doomed to the lake of fire (Mt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19; Rev. 20:10).

It is absolutely essential to keep in mind that Satan's final outcome is a foregone conclusion. His predetermined fate is a terrible reality that should help us to avoid either carelessness or despair.

7. Q. How can we defeat Satan?

A. We who have placed our trust in Christ can overcome Satan in our daily lives by submitting to God and resisting the devil (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9); by being aware of his strategy and avoiding the sins that give him a foothold in our lives (1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 4:26-27; 1 Tim. 3:6-7); by putting on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11-18); and by totally rejecting all forms of occult activity, including magic, spiritism, and witchcraft (Lev. 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Dt. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19; Mic. 5:12; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

The Doctrine of the Future

1. Q. What happens when a person dies?

A. The person's soul-spirit leaves his body and goes either to Hades, where he consciously awaits resurrection, judgment, and eternal punishment, or to heaven, where he consciously awaits resurrection, judgment, and eternal reward (Lk. 16:19-31; Jn. 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-24; Heb. 9:27).

This universal and personal fact should constantly influence and shape our attitude toward the present. Each of us lives on the edge of a future that is continuously devouring the present and entombing it in the past.

2. Q. When will believers receive their resurrection bodies?

A. Believers in the church age, both living and dead, will receive their resurrection bodies when Christ returns at the rapture—that time when He comes back to catch up living believers and conclude the church age (1 Cor. 15:52-58; 1 Th. 4:13-18). Old Testament believers will receive

1. What happens when a person dies?



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their resurrection bodies immediately following the great tribulation (Dan. 12:1-3).

These new bodies will last forever. Our present struggles to cope with the problems of disease, handicap, and physical appearance are temporary inconveniences, not permanent injustices.

3. Q. When will Christ return to catch up believers and conclude the church age?

A. It may take place at any moment, at a time when many will not expect Him (Mt. 24:44). Therefore, we should always be ready (Mt. 24:45–25:30) and living in such a way that we will not be ashamed when Jesus returns (1 Jn. 2:28–3:3).

4. Q. What will take place on earth in the absence of the church?

A. The world will go through a time of confusion and distress marked by the rise of a world ruler depicted in Scripture as the “beast,” “man of sin,” and “Antichrist,” who will blaspheme God’s name and persecute all who turn to Jesus (2 Th. 2:1-12; 1 Jn. 4:1-3; Rev. 13:1-18). While he is violently opposing God, he and the rest of mankind will experience supernatural judgments from heaven (Rev. 6–19). He will be defeated by Christ Himself at His return (Rev. 19:11-21).

5. Q. Why will God send supernatural judgments on the earth during this time?

A. God will use these judgments to display His wrath against the wickedness of unrepentant mankind (Isa. 13:6-16; Rev. 16:4-21), to lead a great multitude to saving faith in Christ (Rev. 7:9-17), to bring about the conversion of the nation of Israel (Ezek. 36; 37), and to bring in a golden age when Israel’s promised Messiah will rule as King of the earth for 1,000 years (Isa. 2:1-4; 11:1-10; Jer. 33:14-16; Rom. 11:25-27; Rev. 20:1-6).

6. Q. How will Christ’s earthly kingdom end?

A. After 1,000 years, God will release Satan (Rev. 20:7) and give mankind one more opportunity to choose between obeying Him or the devil. Multitudes will make the wrong

choice and join in one last rebellion (Rev. 20:8-9). At this time, God will supernaturally defeat His foes (Rev. 20:9-10), purge the present earth-system with fire (2 Pet. 3:10-13), and assign Satan, fallen angels, and all Christ-rejecting persons to eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10-15). Then He will create a new heaven and a new earth where those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will serve Him forever (Rev. 21:1–22:5).

In this light, our Lord said, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mk. 8:36-37).

Conclusion: Without Love We Are Nothing

As we conclude, let's remember that right doctrine cannot exist without love. We can't think rightly unless our thoughts are motivated by the love of God.

It's easy to forget this. It's hard to remember that knowledge without love is like a head without a body. Too often, those who know their doctrine are marked more by self-centeredness and arrogance than by approachability and love.

Paul knew that while knowledge puffs up, love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). He knew that all of the knowledge in the world minus love equals nothing. He wrote, “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2).

Then the apostle went on to describe the love that will show whether or not we have right thinking. He wrote: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13:4-8 NIV).

It's love that motivates us to correct misbelief and to pursue the truth of God.



*Love
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