

The Third Sunday in Lent

The Gospels are full of stories of evil spirits being cast out of people, Mary Magdalene had seven spirits cast out of her. Look at Gadarenes (GAD-uh-reens) man in Mark 5:9 "Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." I want you to listen very carefully to Mark 5:13 "And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea." We learn from the Gospels, that these evil spirits / demons are real and a person can be possessed by many. It doesn't take much for us to look around at society today and see great evil. People doing horrific acts of violence and murder against innocent people and children. Do you not believe these people are possessed by evil spirits?

But, then why, does it seem like we never talk about evil spirits in church and we especially never talk about evil spirits in daily life? We have become a people that doesn't believe in such things, in evil spirits, however, there is a great phenomenon in society to believe in Ghost, werewolves and vampires. It is the rage, top selling; TV series, movies and books. Yet, none of these are real, yes there is no such thing as a ghost in the way we define it. Since ghosts are so ingrained in our culture, let's debunk this once and for all! Plus this is going to help us in defining evil spirits.

Ghost is really the Old English / Germanic word for, wait for it, spirit. So when we say Holy Ghost, we are really saying Holy Spirit. We have come to believe that a ghost is some departed person's spirit that has remained to linger on this earth, because of some troubling event in their life, that has not let them cross over to the afterlife. For believers and non believers, at least subconsciously, if we believe in ghost, then when we die, we are not really dead, and that there is some type afterlife. Glad you asked about the afterlife, yes there is, it is called Heaven and Hell. When you die you only have two choices and yes your spirit will be alive. From the Bible we know that when you die, you either go straight to Heaven or Hell. God does not have a problem in your spirit crossing over into the afterlife. So what if, anything, are these so called aberrations seen by people, they can be only one thing, evil spirits.

So what are these evil spirits? Christ is clear in the Gospel readings that we battle against the principalities and powers of the other dimension. Who are these other principalities that are attacking us; they are the powerful forces of the fallen angelic beings headed by Lucifer. They are vicious fighters that will stop at nothing to bring you down and mankind. Be warned, the stronger you become in Christ, the stronger the attacks will become. These angelic beings where do they come from?

The Archangel Lucifer, whose name means "Light Bearer", rebelled against God and who through pride, coveted the Throne of God and the worship that belonged to God alone. This resulted in a mighty war in Heaven. Lucifer, along with one third of the angelic host was defeated by the Archangel Michael and was cast down from Heaven to the earth where he became known as "Satan", a name which literally means; "Adversary" as well as "Devil", which means, "Accuser of the brethren."

Angelic beings come in many different types; and were created for specific tasks and they have various levels of authority which include: "Thrones", "Dominions", "Seraphim", "Cherubim", "Angels", "Archangels", "Guardian Angels" and more we don't know about. Angelic beings are immortal Celestial Spirits created by God. They are created to represent Him and to guard His interests. They were created before God created the world and do not have corporal bodies, but they can manifest themselves in human form. An example of this is seen in the account of Lot regarding Sodom and Gomorrah and one of my favorites from the apocrypha in Tobit, the Archangel Raphael.

We know from the bible that angelic beings are countless in number. In Revelation 9:16 it says "Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them." Think, God's cavalry alone is two hundred million, what is the count of the rest. Like the number of Guardian Angels or Angels? So, what is the number of the third of angelic host that fell? We have no idea or could probably even conceive of the number, but I will say it is a lot of evil spirits!

Angelic spirits are pure spirit beings and are referred to as a 'company' rather than a 'race'. They are always referred to in the masculine gender. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that because angels are referred to as a company and not a race, they cannot procreate; they are pure spirit beings with no need of a body or its attributes. In whatever body they might have appear in to us, they are only apparent bodies for our comfort. Therefore, when someone claims they have seen a ghost, they have seen a angelic spirit and one can even say, a evil one at that. Just to summarize, ghost are not the spirit of a dead persons, but of evil spirits or cast down angelic beings. Don't think I want to see a ghost.

In the bible when Jesus is casting out demons or evil spirits, He is casting out falling angelic beings trying to destroy us and to do evil deeds on this earth.

We Are At War! From the moment you had your first cry in this world, you started being attacked. Every day, twenty-four / seven you are being attacked. The majority of people in this worlds walk around blind to the fact that there is another dimension. In the very first line of the

Nicene Creed it is clear; I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. If it was not of the utmost importance that we recognize this other dimension, the council of Nicaea would have not mentioned it in the first line. Hate to shock any of you, but spiritual warfare is real and is happening all round you right now! This war revolves around one thing, your salvation, the true angelic beings of God are trying to bring it to you and help you keep it once you have it. The evil ones are trying everything in their power to keep you from it and take it away from you. The evil ones want one thing, for you to doubt your salvation and/ or God.

Here is the Good News, that Jesus Christ is part of the Triune God, the trinity. Only God has power over these evil spirits. The reason why Christ drove out demons was to show us, he was God. In today's gospel reading in Luke, it is clear and He makes it clear of his divine mission, by particular proof of His power over Satan and his army of falling angelic beings. His conquest over these beings is sure indication of His great design in coming into the world, which was, to be the destroyer of the works of these evil ones. Jesus shows us this success, when casting out a evil spirit who had made this poor man dumb, in Matthew we are told he was blind and dumb. When Christ cast out this evil spirit by His words, the man spoke.

Remember in the opening paragraph I said; "I want you to listen very carefully to Mark 5:13 "And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea." Here it is people, "and at once Jesus gave them permission", if Jesus was not God, how could he cast out evil spirits / demons? Some claim, Jesus was a angelic being or great man bless by God. If he were a angelic being, then He would be equal to evil spirits. So the evil spirit would have fought Him, tried to destroy Him, would have never listen to leave that man. As for Jesus being a man, blessed by God, well there would be no way a being of higher power over man would have listen, period. Jesus can only be God!

Luke 11:17-19 is Jesus telling them He is God and not from the evil ones. "But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges." Satan and his fellow evil angelic beings would never attack one of their own. Once they have a person and are destroying them or destroying others through that possessed body, why would they leave. That is their purpose, to destroy mankind, make them doubt God and even to believe God doesn't exist. We see and hear it today all over our culture. How could there be a God? If there was He could never let all these evil things happen.

In Luke 20 He says: But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. What Jesus is saying to them and to you, the kingdom of the Messiah offers itself and all its advantages to you, and if you do not receive it, it is at your peril. I have the power over Satan, accept me and I will save you from Hell. Think about how easy He cast out this evil spirit, with just a finger, a word. He exerted divine power in a less and lower degree than in many other instances. His power over evil spirits is absolute.

In our final part of learning about evil spirits, let's look at Luke 11:24-26 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." There is a huge difference between a evil spirit being cast out of person and one going out. Those who Christ cast out, they will never enter that person again, for so was Christ charge. But if the evil spirit had gone out, whenever he saw fit, he could return.

Satan sometimes give charge over his forces to retreat, to be used better elsewhere. We see this today, many times people right after they have committed a horrific act look demon possessed, but months later look normal, act normal and are even remorseful for their acts. That is because the evil ones have left them, once a person is in jail or on death row, they cannot be used for evil again. Many that go to prison, come out doing even worst crimes than what they were put in for. Once you have been used, the evil ones can come and go as the please. It is scary to think that all evil spirits are not all alike in their wickedness, there are degrees to their wickedness, some worst than others.

But once we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, His power comes on us, to save us and help us. Which is the Holy Spirit and the full accompaniment heavenly angelic beings, to protect us and strength our will to do good. This does not mean we will not be attacked, it means we will be attacked even more than before. The evil ones do not need to attack non believers they already have them and they are under their control. Their prize is making a believer fall and especially to stop believing in God. Believe it or not these attacks are designed to make us even stronger in the faith. Every time we resist these attacks we grow stronger and we recognize them for what they are.

I leave you with John 3:16; "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Christ mission was to show the world that he was God and had power over Satan and his dominion. If you follow Christ, his protection will come upon you and help protect you from the attacks of the evil ones.