

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren,

In past issues of this letter, emphasis has been laid upon conditions and circumstances which are prophesied for these last days. Specifically, a couple of those subjects were addressed. In this issue, the third of that list, given earlier, will be covered.

Though not significant in its own right, perhaps more relevant and demanding for attention is the subject of demonic activity—an activity which is occurring exactly as God said it would. Yet, few people are aware, or exercising commanded responsibilities as imposed by God. How members can hope to endure successfully the trials of these days and fail to live up to the instructions of our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ is a hazardous guess. The imperativeness and gravity of the above question will be made plain perhaps by the context of this letter.

Briefly stated, we are warned of four major things. 1) Satan is going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he can destroy (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:17). 2) He is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). 3) He, or one of his cohorts, is routinely playing "mind games" with unsuspecting members of the church (2 Timothy 2:25–26). And finally, 4) The faithful must be able to differentiate between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:1–6).

God has not left His children helpless. We have the Spirit of our Father which is much greater than any or all the spirits of the world. And if faith prevails we are endowed with that resolve by which we need not exist in turmoil or doubt. The truly called and chosen of God can and do know. They know the truth and will refuse to allow their heads to be turned by any perversion of that way of life, no matter how slick and enticing the package. They stand confidently in that which they initially received. They refuse to compromise—to adulterate the ways of God with a mixture of the ways of the world. They want the revealed ways of God—the doctrine of His holy, sacred Word. The ways God gave to Gentiles form no part of the perfect and glorious way which He gave to Israel. He demanded the ancients keep the two ways separate. He, likewise, today demands that they be kept separate. God's ways are not the ways of this world.

Such instruction sounds sufficiently simple until two things are factored into the equation. We must never forget the incredible pull of flesh, and carnal mind, and the adverse influence of an element of the spiritual world—Satan and his demons. What are some of the conditions to prevail in our time?

Last Day Conditions

As foundational material allow us to give you a number of Biblical quotes relevant to these last days. With this information in mind, explanations of the forces at work in this world will take on the proper relevance which they so justly deserve. The following are only a few of the texts which could be listed. Please read and ponder seriously.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world (1 Peter 5:4–9).

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats [foods], which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (1 Timothy 4:1–5).

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:23–26).

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them (2 Timothy 3:1–5, 8–9, 13–14).

More than belief is required. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:18–19).

Israel of old typified conditions of the new. "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:18–21).

And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations (Leviticus 17:7).

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what

their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith (Deuteronomy 32:16–20).

They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them (Psalm 106:34–41).

Demons

Who are demons? Where are they mentioned in the Bible? And, why are they a concern to mortal man? In the *King James Translation* of the Bible, the literal word "demon" is not mentioned. For whatever reason the translators elected to use the word "devils." The term "devils" is used a considerable number of times. As we shall soon see, most frequently the word "devil" does not refer to Satan himself but rather to those angelic beings who chose to follow him in rebellion against God.

Two considerations need to be addressed at this time. Without doubt those who are already influenced by a different spirit will be agitated by the essence of this subject. To them, the subject should have been left in darkness. Why? Because such people who hate the glare of truth—reality—darkness is preferable as Jesus Himself said (John 3:19–20). Further, in all probability there are some who will negatively react because they refuse to face the reality of the times in which we live. The wise and intelligent will be forewarned and thereby act with knowledge. We present the subject for the learning and protection of those who love God's truth and want with their very lives to remain faithful to it.

With the above caveat in place let us ponder the question fearlessly.

Again, who are demons? Without doubt they are spirit beings. They can take possession of human beings. Christ Himself was frequently confronted by such

powers and forces. He had to deal with them throughout His physical ministry. They knew Christ and what His purpose was here on earth.

Jude made a very revealing statement. He said, ". . . the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitations, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (verse 6). Is there any place in the Bible which speaks of this revolt? Let us first in summary note Ezekiel 28:1–17. The first part of this text refers to a man—a king who was very arrogant. However, beginning in verse twelve, God makes it plain He is referring to another being—a being of whom things are said which could never be said of a mere man. For instance, the king of Tyrus was not in the Garden of Eden. He is called a cherub who was positioned by God. He was perfect in the day he was created. This Tyrus typified another more glorious being—a cherub. A cherub is an angel. This angel became defiant and therefore rebelled against God. In another parable given by Isaiah, God reveals other details regarding this angelic activity (Isaiah 14:12–14). Lucifer—a mighty and glorious angel—had decided he was not going to be subservient to God. He rebelled, attempting to make his office equal with that of God. The result? He was cast out of heaven—where he had had access to the very throne of God. When here in His own flesh body, Christ made mention of this very event. He said, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:16–18).

Lucifer, a brilliant angel had become a devil. Had other angels been affected by this evil behavior? Indeed! Let us now turn to Revelation 12:1–9. In verse nine Satan is characterized as a great dragon. He deceives the whole world. At some point in time he and his angels had been cast out of heaven. The very event which Christ said He had seen. In verse four, we are told one-third of the angels followed him in revolt. Satan and these angels are the ones referred to by Jude—the angels which kept not their first estate. Lucifer became Satan, the adversary, and the other angels become demons. What the number of demons is no one knows for sure. In all probability, there are many, many thousands—perhaps multiple millions—of demons aggressively pursuing their damnable work here on this earth. These demons are very much against God's work—His work of saving man whom He had created later.

As Spirit Beings Demons Cannot Be Seen

Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:7). Spirit substance cannot be seen by the human eye (John 3:6–8). It is invisible (Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15–16). Yet, its

influence can be powerful—either for good or bad. It depends entirely what spirit is acting upon the mind of man. The fruits borne are the only way to judge—always after the fact (compare Galatians 5:16–25 and Ephesians 2:2–3). Evil spirits appeal to the force and strength of flesh. Why? In all probability the defiant rebelliousness of fallen angels is the very nature God created in human beings at the time of their physical creation.

These evil spirits cannot be seen, yet they must be resisted. Much greater detail will be given a little later. For the present, let us fully understand the invisibility of spirit beings.

The world is filled with false, evil, spirits. How many people of the church are aware of their presence? Of this world the vast majority may have some vague notion about demons, especially of Satan, but few will even come close to admitting a literal presence and an evil deceptive work which affects them all. For this reason, the world—including judges and other political or educational personnel—have little understanding of what is happening, or will happen, in these traumatic last days.

Spirit Beings Today

The world is the arena of much spiritual activity. In fact from that premise the world is filled with the offspring of both God, the Father and of Satan, the Devil. Christ made this fact very clear in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1–30, 36–42). Succinctly, He said, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (v.19). He further elaborated in another parable, in which He said:

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:36–42).

Does not this parable make it clear that among the true flock of God there are, and will continue to exist, some who are the offspring of Satan? No action will be taken against them. Why? Their true identity cannot be positively known by men. On the other hand, we are instructed about those whose daily behavior make it plain whose children they are. Also, there are those who are induced to separate themselves, manifesting who they are. In both these later situations God commands the faithful to avoid them, to have no fellowship with them. Remember, Satan is a deceiver. And no deceived person believes himself to be wrong. The standard of judgment must always be the Word of God, not the traditions of man. The Word of God which was originally delivered must be the standard of life by which we all live. Holding to that way of life we can confidently stand in the presence of Jesus Christ on that glorious day of His Second Coming.

Spirits, Good or Bad, Can Influence

Christ was a perfect example in all things. For reason, as purposed by God, Christ was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tried by Satan, a spirit being (Matthew 4:1). He was severely tried in three cardinal areas of human weakness. Would He compromise the truth of God for food? Would He compromise the truth for power and position? And perhaps of even greater meaning, by whom would Christ be ruled, God or Satan?

Somewhere within the scope of Christ's test lies the basis for each and every test man throughout the ages has experienced. Christ, setting an example for us, acted perfectly within the requirements of the Word of God. He was not deceived by the temptation. His confidence rested perfectly in the promises and assurances of the Word of God. His Father had spoken. He did not doubt Him for an instant. Christ resisted Satan; then, as promised, Satan fled from Him.

The called of God are said to be led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:18). Though they do not see a form or shape they are mentally influenced by the power and purpose of that substance. The promise of Christ is that the Holy Spirit of God would guide the called into all truth and remembrance (John 16:13–14). It is a Spirit—a Spirit which because it cannot be seen by human eye will not be received by the world, the unconverted (John 14:16–18). They do not see it nor do they know it. The only human beings influenced and led by the Holy Spirit are those called of God, converted, and who willingly obey God.

On the other hand there are other spirits which have had a powerful influence in the affairs of men. We are told the entire world has been deceived by them

(Revelation 12:9). Satan, with his fellow renegades are constantly at work (Matthew 13:24–30). Their hateful activity, though not always understood, is occurring among the called of God. For this reason the ability to differentiate is imperative. Teachers and other servants of God cannot be accepted at face value. The Apostle Paul explained this problem (2 Corinthians 11:14–15).

Both God and the workers of iniquity come through human agents. The need for the faithful children of God to know the true servant of God is absolute. Therefore, God must have given them a way by which to know.

The Holy Spirit of God consistently throughout the ministry of the twelve apostles, and later the Apostle Paul, inspired, directed, and protected the servants of the Eternal God. History records this as a fact. Yet, at the time of the experience, there can be no doubt, those involved tested, tried, or somehow knew the power (spirit) influencing them was the Holy Spirit, not some demon's power.

Those servants knew they were being led and influenced by the Spirit of God. They had applied the standard of judgment by which they could know. Only a cursory review of the historical data of the times in which the apostles lived is needed to make that fact clear. There was considerable demonic activity occurring. Yet, the servants of God knew which spirit was which. They knew the command and influence of the Holy Spirit. At the same time they knew when Satan or a demon was actively and aggressively attempting to thwart in some sinister way the work God had given them to do. Is the need any less today?

Granted, there are spirits which are not of God. But, what is wrong with them? Are they not powers by which human beings have done superhuman feats? Have they not done miracles and wonders? Are they not prophesied to do very great things in these last days? Indeed, but, the fundamental purpose for which these activities are wrought is wrong—injurious, destructive, hateful. Only the end result is ultimately revealing. The facts involved will be undeniable at that time. Our Father who knows and understands all things—from the beginning to the end—warns us against falling prey to any such influence. He knows the consequences. He wants us to avoid the penalty.

What are the problems with Satan and his demons? Can we know, understand, and avoid such influences?

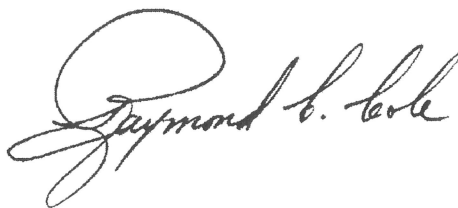
Character Defects and Activities of Other Spirits

In the very Word of God, we are told some spirits are evil; some are unclean; some are wicked; some are familiar; and some even take complete possession of human beings.

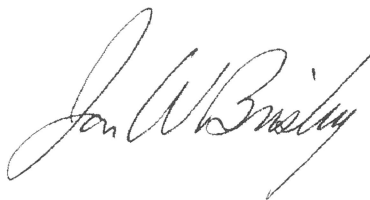
Until a fuller explanation is given, may we suggest that you read and contemplate the example of Acts, chapter sixteen. In all probability there are areas of business today which are under the influence of demons. When the subject is completed, hopefully sufficient information will be at your disposal so that judicious and vital decisions can be made.

Due to page constraints and other factors the second part of this subject must be held up until a future *Monthly Letter*. Due to the severity of the problem and the prophesied scope of influences we would like to give you a thorough coverage. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Your servants in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'J'.

Jon W. Brisby