



A QUICK GUIDE TO: **{Demons}**

Where do demons come from?

A biblical answer for the origin of Satan's demonic forces can be found in Revelation 12:4

"Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

Then, just 3 verses later (Revelation 12:7-9) we learn the meaning of this:

"Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

What do demons do?

Simply put, demons are involved in every part of Satan's program — opposing God, preventing people understanding the Gospel, opposing God's people, attacking the church, tempting people to sin and thwarting the spread of the Gospel. Much is made of their part in causing sickness, but although there is an example in the Bible of a woman who had "a disabling spirit for eighteen years," Jesus describing her as someone "Satan bound for eighteen years" (Luke 13:11, 16), we have no warrant for directly attributing all physical illness to satanic or demonic activity.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:10-12)

What *don't* demons do?

Chi Alpha does not believe in spiritual warfare as it is defined and practiced by some well-meaning but misguided believers. Verses are taken out of context or carried to extreme interpretations by some to arrive at meanings that go beyond the clear statements of Scripture.



For example, some have taken an isolated instance in which Jesus asked a demon its name (Legion, Mark 5:9) to mean that the "demon" behind every sickness or malady has a name and must first be identified and then cast out of a person. But we are not commanded in Scripture to seek or know the names of spirits in order to deliver individuals from evil.

Another common misguided and heretical conclusion is that demons can take control of believers as well as non-believers. We believe that Satan can only **oppress** believers, but that he can never **possess** and control them. Those who follow and belong to Jesus are God's property (thus *He* possess them; *Matthew 12:29*) and are children of His kingdom.

We recognize and teach that even though God and Satan are real entities in our world today, there are also experiences in life that are not caused by or attributed to God or Satan. An accident because of a moment of careless inattention does not mean that a demon caused the mishap. God may have allowed something to happen, but neither can He be charged with responsibility.

How can I tell the difference between good and evil spirits?

A general guideline can be helpful. Angels (good spirits) are God's agents and act in accordance with his will. Demons (evil spirits) have aligned themselves with Satan and act in opposition to God and his children. Thus, if a supernatural event is witnessed, or being is encountered, or phenomenon is performed...if it is heavenly and good it will always point to God and give him glory, but if it takes attention off of God and points to some other source you can be confident it is evil and demonic in nature.

A warning needs to be given to all at this point, that an overzealous preoccupation with demonic influences in our lives can result in an attitude of irresponsibility, or not feeling accountable for our own actions and failures. We must not resign ourselves to a fatalistic attitude (that what will happen cannot be avoided) nor should we swing the other direction entirely and ignore the existence and impact of the unseen world around us.

The key is that we *know* Christ. Instead of concentrating on Satan and how he and his forces work, we must stay in touch with the One in us who is greater than the one in the world (1 John 4:4). The gift of discernment of spirits is available for those instances when a greater understanding of the immediate presence and power of the demonic is essential.