

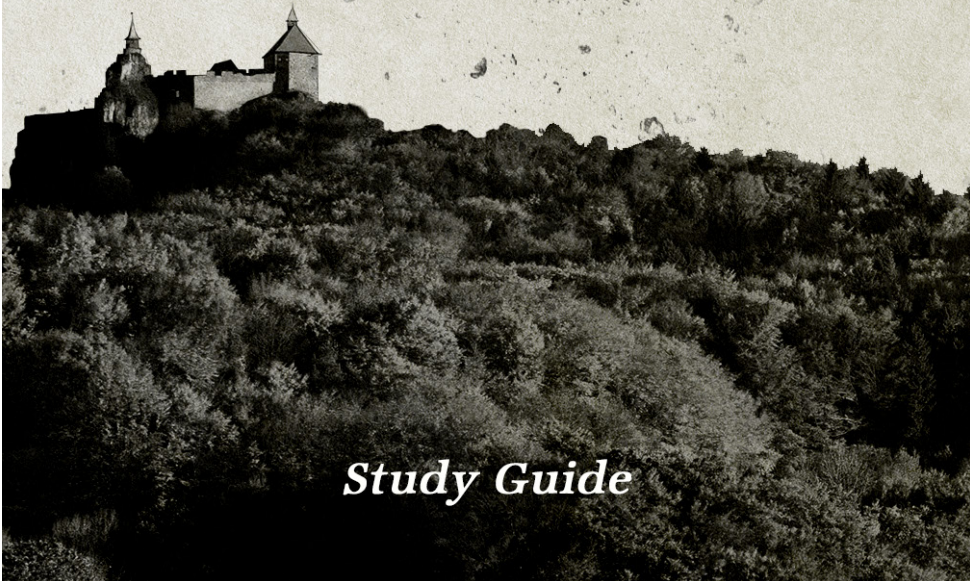


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF EDMOND

Kingdom of Darkness

KINGDOM OF LIGHT

Angels, Demons, and the Unseen Battle Around Us



Study Guide

Kingdom of Darkness, Kingdom of Light: Angels, Demons and the Unseen Battle Around Us

There is an unseen battle raging around us—two kingdoms, one already defeated and on that has triumphed, waging a war in this world. The Kingdom of Heaven, alive in us, holds back the Enemy who so seeks to destroy everything God loves—including you and me. The Bible details several confrontations that Jesus and even followers of Jesus had with demons. For Jesus, casting out demons was nearly as common as healing. In other parts of the world, confrontations between the Church and the demonic, the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness, is common. In America its becoming more common as our culture embraces the darkness.

Please join us at First Presbyterian Church of Edmond for this very important series that transform the way we see the world and live out our faith. This is one series that can literally change your life.

January 7
Colossians 1:9-14

Two Kingdoms

January 14
Luke 8:26-33

Jesus and the Legion

January 21
Ezekiel 28:1-10

The Falling Daystar

January 28
Acts 19:11-20

Encountering Evil

February 4
Ephesians 6:11-13

Prevailing Over the Powers

February 11
Ephesians 6:14-19

Preparing for Battle

1 **SHARE** who you are

2 **CARE** for one another

3 **READ** and **PRACTICE** scripture

4 **PRAY** together

5 **INVEST** in people

6 **SERVE** community

7 **CREATE** and **SEND** leaders

NEW LIFE,
through **JESUS,**
for **EDMOND**
and the **WORLD.**

Week 1- Two Kingdoms

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

The Bible teaches that our greatest struggle is not merely against flesh and blood but against powers that we cannot see, that exist around us but are not readily apparent in the way physical, tangible things are. The Kingdom of Darkness and the Kingdom of Light are the two realms of this world—one is headed by Jesus and the other is under the dominion of evil. The mission of evil is to cause pain and lessen human beings, to make us less than human. Jesus wants us to know the fullness of humanity, what it means to grow in the fullness of the image of Jesus Christ.

1. How aware are you of a struggle going on between forces of darkness and forces of light? Have you ever had an experience you cannot explain in any way other than forces which cannot be explained with a 'natural explanation?' How did Jesus address supernatural evil forces during His ministry? (**Mark 1:21-26**)

2. What did Paul tell the Colossians he never ceases to do for them? (**Colossians 1:9**) If we are amid a battle between two kingdoms—one of darkness and one of light—why is prayer so important? (**Romans 8:26-27**) What are some of the things that Paul asked God to do for the Colossians? (**Colossians 1:9-11**) Which of those things speak particularly to you? Is there anything you believe you particularly need?

3. For what did Paul give thanks in His prayers? (**Colossians 1:12**) How has God qualified us 'to share in the inheritance of the saints in light?' (**1 John 1:5-10**) What is the origin of our light? Does it begin with us or Someone else? (**John 1:9-12**) Why is it important that we do not look to

Week 2- Jesus and the Legion

Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

Luke 8:26-33

Three of the Gospels tell a story of a demon-possessed man on who lived on the Eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, the side where the Gentiles lived. He was possessed of great strength, he cried out and tried to injure himself. He lived in a cemetery. The demons within in him knew Jesus' identity and begged Jesus not to send them into the eternal place intended for Satan and his demons. Jesus commanded them entirely. They submitted without a fight and Jesus sent them into a herd of pigs where they were destroyed. What does this encounter teach us about the battle between the Kingdom of Darkness of the Kingdom of Light?

1. Do you believe there are such things as demons? Why or why not? If not when the Bible talks about demons to what do you think the Word is referencing? Have you ever had an experience with something you believe was demonic? What happened? Have you ever seen the Holy Spirit triumph over darkness?

2. Why do you think the demon-possessed man went to meet Jesus rather than running from him? What does this suggest about the powers of darkness in this world and to whom they are subject? (**Colossians 1:15-**

17) What does this tell us about this world and what does it suggest about our life? (**Romans 8:31-39**)

3. How do the demons immediately submit to Jesus? (**Luke 8:28**) Why do you think they submitted to Him? How did the demon Jesus encountered at the Capernaum synagogue react to Him? (**Mark 1:23-26**) What does this demonstrate about Jesus' sovereignty over this world? If they are so destructive, why do you think God allows the devil and his demons to exist? Why do you think God allows His children to die? (**John 11:1-4**)

4. What is the name of the demon? (**Luke 8:30**) What does that name mean and what does it tell us about how demons can impact someone? What do the demons beg Jesus not to do? (**Luke 8:31**) What is the place they begged not to go? (**Revelation 9:1-3, Revelation 20:1-3**) What happened to the demons instead? (**Luke 8:32-33**). Why would the demons prefer death to the abyss? What does that suggest about hell? (**Mark 9:47-48**). Is death or hell better?

NEXT STEPS

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you a place, an institution, a situation or perhaps even someone you know who is struggling with evil or might be under a supernatural influence. Confidentially or maybe with one other believer target them with prayer. Ask Jesus to reign and rule and exercise His dominion. Take note of what you see.

Week 3- The Falling Daystar

Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us." Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so have I done to them." And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves." They said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Isaiah 14:12-17

This passage written as an invective against the King of Babylon has long been regarded as having a dual meaning—a judgment and description of Satan. This passage corresponds with other descriptions of Satan in Scripture and describes his attempt to overthrow the Lord as the king of the creation, as well as how he misleads humanity and causes distress and pain. It also correctly prophesies his downfall. Satan is real and should be taken seriously. But he is also defeated and destined for destruction, as is his kingdom of darkness.

1. Do you believe Satan is real? Why or why not? If you believe he is real, what do you see his influence being in this world? If you do not think he is real, how do you explain evil in this world? Is humanity's tendency to sin and the existence of Satan mutually exclusive?

2. What is the context of this passage that the Church has also taken as a description of Satan? (**Isaiah 14:1-4**) Does Scripture ever talk about two different events, or circumstances or people in the same passage, functioning on different levels? Can you name any occasion where it does? (**Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 9:2, Psalm 16:10**) Do you think this is why the New Testament quotes the Old Testament hundreds of times? Why or why not? What does the continuity in Scripture suggest about its trustworthiness? (**Psalm 119:160**)

3. What is the chief sin of the one called 'Daystar?' (**Isaiah 14:13**) How is this so very similar to how the serpent tempted Adam and Eve? (**Genesis 3:1-5**) How is trying to make ourselves God the most fundamental sin and at the root of all sin? What commandment does it break? (**Exodus 20:1-3**) In what ways do you see yourself sinning in this way?

4. What happens to Satan? (**Isaiah 14:15**) Where else does Scripture describe this? (**Revelation 20:7-10**) What does Satan's demise expose about him? (**Isaiah 14:16-17**) Is he someone to fear? Is this why Jesus calls him 'the Father of lies?' If someone constantly lies, what does it reveal about what they know to be true? (**John 8:44**) Is God ever dishonest with us? Why not? (**John 8:45-47**)

5. What did Satan do to Judas? (**John 13:27**) What does that mean? How did Judas allow Satan to do that? What lie do you think Satan told to Judas? What happened to Judas? (**Matthew 27:1-10**) How does this presage what happens to Satan? What happens to everyone who aligns with the kingdom of darkness?

NEXT STEPS

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you anywhere in your life where you have bought into a lie of Satan. Most likely it is something that either unfairly denigrates you or unrighteously elevates you. Ask Jesus to show the truth He already knows about you.

Week 4- Encountering Evil

And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Acts 19:11-20

As the Holy Spirit pushed back against the kingdom of darkness in the pagan center of Ephesus, amazing works occurred. Some Jewish priests who were not followers of Jesus encountered an evil spirit who utterly overwhelmed and humiliated them. But God used even this event for His glory. The work of the Holy Spirit in Ephesus produced tangible results, including the great event of "the word of the Lord continuing to increase and prevail mightily."

1. Have you ever witnessed a miracle, the Lord doing something that defied logic or explanation? What was it? How did it impact you and others? Have you ever come up against something that overwhelmed you? What did you do? Did Jesus deliver you? What did He do for you?
2. What does God's power at work through tangible objects suggest about the power of the Holy Spirit? (**Acts 19:11-12**) Where else do we see this kind of work of the Holy Spirit? (**Acts 5:12-16**) Why do you think God allows His power to be poured out in such a way? (**John 14:11-14**) Why

do you think most of the church in America struggles to see this kind of work today, or sees it practiced deceptively?

3. Why do you think the evil spirit did not listen to the Jewish high priests who tried to exorcise him? (**Acts 19:15**) What was their mistake? (**Matthew 7:21**) How is this evil spirit's reaction very different than the ones who encountered Jesus? (**Mark 1:21-26**) Is using the name of Jesus like using a magic word, or does its proper use emerge from an overflow of our heart? (**Luke 6:43-45**) What does the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life empower us to do in the face of evil?

4. Why do you think the residents of Ephesus came forward to confess and repent of their 'evil practices?' (**Acts 19:18**) What did they do and what happened? (**Acts 19:19-20**) What do you think it would look like for "the Word of the Lord to increase and prevail mightily" in your life or the life of your family? In our Church? In the community? In our nation and world? What can you do to be a vessel for that great work?

NEXT STEPS

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you a practice in your life of which you need to repent, particularly something where you are channeling something sinful. Ask the Lord to show you what He must do for the "Word of the Lord to increase and prevail mightily" in your life and community.

Week 5- Prevailing Over the Powers

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Paul wraps up his otherwise very practical and conventional instructions to the Church at Ephesus with some teaching that is less common, at least to most contemporary, Western Christians. After commanding the Ephesians to honor their parents, obey their masters, and treat their servants well Paul moves to a different arena of instruction—the spiritual struggle against the dark powers of the universe. Paul describes what is best called preparing for battle and in the first half of the passage we are studying, Paul defines who our battle is against and the overall mindset that should guide us.

1. How prepared do you feel to stand against the kingdom of darkness in this world? Do you spend any time preparing your heart for this struggle? What do you or what have you done? Has it worked? Do you take the powers and principalities seriously?

2. What does it mean to ‘be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might?’ (**Ephesians 6:10**) Whose strength do you tend to depend upon, yours or the Lord? Where else does the Scripture command us to trust in the Lord’s power? (**Psalms 20:6-8**) Why do you think our tendency is to trust in our own strength rather than rely upon the Lord? Can we overcome the kingdom of darkness on our own strength? Why or why not? (**Acts 19:15-16**)

3. Who is our struggle against? (**Ephesians 6:12**) What does Paul mean by our struggle is not one of ‘flesh and blood’ but ‘spiritual forces of evil

in the heavenly places?’ Can you give an example of this kind of struggle in Scripture? (**Matthew 17:14-21**) Can you name some spiritual forces of evil that you see in the world or in your own life or maybe the lives of those you love? How do you align these with a list of ‘the works of the flesh?’ (**Galatians 5:19-20**)

4. Who does Paul say all non-believers used to follow? (**Ephesians 2:1-4**) How were we delivered from that life? (**Ephesians 2:5-9**). Why is it important that is not our work? How are we supposed to live once we have been delivered from that realm into the kingdom of light? (**Ephesians 2:10**) Why is it so important that we walk in Christ?

5. What do you think it means to take on ‘the whole armor of God?’ (**Ephesians 6:13**) Where does Paul tell us exactly what this looks like? (**Ephesians 6:14-18**) What would you think of a soldier who went into battle unarmored and unarmed? Would you expect them to prevail? Why do we not have the same expectations for ourselves?

NEXT STEPS

Ask a friend to specifically pray for them. Ask them to name an area in their life where they could use God’s strength to be at work rather than relying on themselves and then pray for God to be at work there. Follow up with them on their request and take note of how the Holy Spirit impacts you.

Week 6- Preparing for Battle

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:14-20

Paul's goes into detailed instruction to the Church about the act of 'taking up the armor of God' (Ephesians 6:13). He details several practices which should permeate the Christian life daily and how these practices counter the work of the kingdom of darkness in our life. Paul discusses several things that run counter to the prevailing practice of the world today (and perhaps any time), truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, the Word of God, and prayer to name a few. These daily practices change the conditions of our struggle and help us live as citizens of the Kingdom of Light.

1. Reading through these practices, are there any that come more natural to you, or which are more difficult? Are there any practices that you would like to seek God's help to improve? Have you seen God work through any of these practices in particular?
2. What do you consider to be 'the belt of truth' (**Ephesians 6:14**) Why is dealing in truth so important? (**Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 12:17-19, 22**) Who do we know that deals exclusively in falsehoods? (**John 8:44**) Why is it important that truth goes around your mid-section? Why would righteousness guard our chest? How was the breastplate such an important piece of armor?
3. Why is the 'Gospel of Peace' our shoes? What did the prophet Isaiah say about this? (**Isaiah 52:7**) What commonality does the Gospel share with the function of our feet? How does it impact our entire life when our feet don't work properly? How is faith like a shield? What does a shield

“Therefore Satan is clearly under God’s power, and is so ruled by his bidding as to be compelled to render him service. Indeed, when we say that Satan resists God, and that Satan’s works disagree with God’s works, we at the same time assert that this resistance and this opposition are dependent upon God’s sufferance.”

-- *John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion 1, Chapter XIV*

“Listen. You have been set free. There are many under bondage to Satan—not free as you are—fighting against him, but still his willing slaves. Oh, come, my brother, God has set you free, so go after them! Go after the fallen woman and the drunken man. Go seek, and find the most debauched, the most depraved. Especially look after any of your own household who have played the prodigal.

Oh, come, let us go and find them!

In the paths of death they roam:

At the close of the day

‘Twill be sweet to say,

“I have brought some lost one home.”

And it will be right to say it, if the Lord has delt so well with you.”

-- *Power of Satan, by Charles Spurgeon*