

The Dilemma of Demons

1 Corinthians 10:18-22

I. Intro

● Anecdote

• Demons

- When it comes to the spooky subject of Demons - there should be no doubt that most people are - at the very least - intrigued by the topic.
- Case in point - let's consider the growing list of movies - that present us with Hollywood's depiction of demons.
 - This includes classic films - like the Exorcist - and the Amityville Horror.
 - The popularity of those classics paved the way for movies - like The Possession - and The Exorcism of Emily Rose.
 - Then there's the Conjuring Universe - which currently includes TEN movies...
 - ...which are supposed to be based on the real-life adventures of paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren.
 - And seeing how this franchise has grossed \$2.7 BILLION dollars - we can be certain that many people are interested in this topic.

• Truth

- Now - as we consider the growing list of movies - that present dramatized depictions of Demonic possession...
- ...we should take a moment to ask - are these Hollywood blockbusters presenting us with an accurate rendering of these evil entities?

- Or - are those who watch these movies about evil spirits - being deceived by doctrines of demons?
- Are the testimonies of those who claim to've been possessed by demons true?
- Or - should we reject the statements made by those who insist that - they've been possessed?
- And what about the deliverance ministries that claim to cast demons out of believers?
- Can Christians be demon possessed - and if not - then why should we spend our time - considering the dilemma of demons?

II. Outline

● Points

- Dilemma
- With all of these questions in mind - we're going to spend our time considering what the Bible says about demons.
 - And as we study these scriptures before us this morning - we'll begin to see that...
 1. ...Demons are Deceptive Spirits
 2. ...Demons are Destructive Spirits
 3. ...Demons are Divisive Spirits
 - With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 10...
 - ...where we find Paul - warning the Christians in Corinth - about the dilemma of demons.

III. Deceptive

- Set up

- Context

- As we make our way to the tenth chapter of 1st Corinthians - I wanna take some time to put our text - back into it's context.
- It'll first help you to remember that - Paul was addressing the questions previously presented by the Christians in Corinth.
- This included their questions - and concerns about eating meat that had been offered to idols.
- And while it's true that a Christian can eat meats offered to idols - without becoming demon possessed...
- ...it's also true that those who spend time at the altar of an idol - could easily be deceived by doctrines of demons.
- In order to grasp the Dilemma of Demons - let's consider the warning that Paul presented - here in 1st Corinthians 10.
 - Look with me - beginning there at verse 18 - where Paul declared...

- Text

1Co 10:18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

1Co 10:19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

1Co 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

1Co 10:22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

- Altar

- Here in our text today - we find Paul sharing his concerns - about the Christians - who were still eating at the table of demons.
- And in order to explain his concerns - Paul began by connecting the dots - between the altar in Jerusalem - and the sacrifices offered to God.
- Notice with me again - there in verse 18 - where Paul appealed to the sacrificial system at the temple there in Jerusalem - by asking...
 - "...Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"
 - Now - that word - altar - in this context - was used of the Brazen Altar - which was located in the outer court of the Temple.
 - And it was there where the priests of Israel presented burnt offerings to the God of Abraham - Isaac and Jacob.
- Peace
- And while burnt offerings were fully consumed on the altar - the Israelites were provided portions of their peace offerings.
- Let's consider how Moses explained it in Leviticus chapter 7 - it's beginning at verse 15 - where he declared...

Lev 7:15 'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning.

Lev 7:16 'But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten;

Lev 7:17 'the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire.

- Here in these verses - we find Moses - describing the way that the children of Israel would become partakers of the peace offering.
- And in this way - the Israelites entered into communion with the Lord...

- ...as they consumed the sacrifices that were offered on the altar of God.
- In similar fashion - those who offer their sacrifices at the altars of idols...
 - ...enter into communion with the deceptive demons - who love to masquerade as pagan gods.
- Demons
 - In order to prove my point - we should consider the way that Luke described demons as unclean spirits.
 - Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to the Gospel of Luke.
 - Let's turn to Luke chapter 8 - and as we make our way to the 8th chapter of Luke's gospel account...
 - ...we should take some time to consider the origins of these evil entities known as Demons.
 - There have been many different ideas throughout the ages - about the origins of these unclean spirits...
 - ...which includes theories that date back to ancient Mesopotamia.
 - And knowing that we can't exhaust this topic today - I wanna focus on four main theories.
 - Theory 1
 - Some insist that - demons are actually the disembodied spirits - of a pre-Adamic race of people...
 - ...that allegedly existed during a "gap period" that they believe took place - between the first two verses in Genesis chapter 1.

- That's right - this theory about the origins of demons - is based on the belief that...
 - ...there was a race of humans who lived on the Earth - prior to the creation of Adam.
 - The main problem with this theory about the origins of demons - is based on the fact that - it's an argument from silence.
 - Not only that - but there are many Biblical reasons to reject this theory on its face.
- Theory 2
 - Another theory about the origins of demons - - is based on the idea that...
 - ...demons are actually the disembodied spirits of deceased unbelievers.
 - Or in other words - these people believe that - demons are basically the ghosts of those - who were too evil - to go to heaven.
 - And while there are many who believe that - demons are the disembodied spirits of the evil dead...
 - ...the Bible actually dismisses this belief - by assuring us that - the soul of the deceased - end up in Hades - until the final judgment.
 - Therefore - there's no reason for us to think that demons are the disembodied spirits of deceased people.
- Theory 3
 - Then there are those who believe that demons - are the disembodied spirits of the pre-flood beings known as Nephilim.
 - Just to be clear - the Nephilim - were apparently the genetically altered beings - that were created during the days of Noah...

- ...when a group of fallen angels - engaged in some sort of unnatural act of procreation - with the daughters of men.
- it's believed that these beings - known as the Nephilim - ended up dying - during the flood of Noah.
- And according to the extra-biblical book of Enoch - the spirits of those Nephilim - somehow survived the flood - and became the demons.
- Unfortunately - there's no solid Biblical support which would lead us to believe these interesting theories - about the origins of demons.
- Theory 4
- Finally - there are those who believe that the Demons are the spirits of fallen angels...
 - ...who followed Lucifer at the time of his rebellion against God.
 - And while there's a hierarchy of angelic beings that include principalities - powers - and the rulers of the darkness of this age...
 - ...there are also spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places - which I believe fit the description of Demons.
 - And in order to prove my point - let's consider the way that Luke referred to demons - as unclean spirits...
 - ...which seems to correspond with the spiritual hosts of wickedness that Paul mentioned in his hierarchy of fallen angels.
- Spirit
- With this in mind - let's consider the story that Luke presented here in Luke chapter 4.
- Look with me - beginning there at verse 31 - where we learn about the day - when the Lord Jesus...

Luk 4:31 ...went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.

Luk 4:32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

Luk 4:33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,

Luk 4:34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

Luk 4:35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.

Luk 4:36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

- Here in these verses - we find the people at the synagogue in Capernaum referring to Demons - as unclean spirits.
- And as we consider the hierarchy of fallen angels found in Ephesians chapter 5...
 - ...it seems to me that these unclean spiritual known as demons - most closely correspond with the evil entities...
 - ...that Paul referred to as the spiritual hosts of wickedness that dwell in heavenly places.
 - And as we consider the immaterial plane of their existence - it makes sense that they're looking for physical beings to possess.
 - It's also important for us to understand that - these unclean spirits are the evil entities - that deceive those who worship idols.
- Idol
- Let's consider how Paul put it here in our text today - and so - let's turn back to 1st Corinthians chapter 10.

- I wanna focus your attention again - beginning there at verse 18 - where Paul declared...

1Co 10:18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

1Co 10:19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - making a comparison - between the Israelites - who ate from the altar of God....
 - ...and the Gentiles who would eat the meat - offered to idols - at the altars found in their pagan temples.
 - You might not know this - but - there have been several archaeological excavations that have uncovered many altars in Ancient Corinth.
 - This includes ancient altars that were found in the temples and shrines dedicated to Apollo - Aphrodite - and Asclepius.
 - And it was there where demons deceived the people into thinking that their gods were real.
- Deceptive
 - Let's consider how Moses explained it - in Deuteronomy chapter 32 - it's beginning at verse 16 - where he referred to the way that the people...

Deu 32:16 ...provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods;
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

Deu 32:17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God,
To gods they did not know,
To new gods, new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.

Deu 32:18 Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful,
And have forgotten the God who fathered you.

- According to Moses - those who present their sacrifices to the idols of foreign gods...

- ...are actually serving the demons - who are masquerading as those false gods.
- And while it's true that an idol is nothing - in-and-of itself - which is to say that the idol of every false god is lifeless statues...
- ...it's also true that the unclean spirits of demons are manipulating those who sacrifice to those idols...
 - ...in order to lead them astray - with doctrines of demons.

● Application

- Doctrines
- I Like the way that Paul put it - in 1st Timothy chapter 4 - it's verse 1 - where he declared...

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons

- Christian - listen - there are deceiving spirits - who are attempting to lead us astray - with doctrines of demons.
- And while we can rejoice in knowing that Christians can NOT be demon possessed...
- ...we must also realize that it is possible for those who trust in Jesus - to be led astray...
 - ...by the spiritual hosts of wickedness who are here to deceive us with doctrines of demons.
 - And it's for this reason - that we must make sure that our beliefs actually line up with the word of God.

● Transition

- Points
 - Now - this brings us to our second point - because listen...
 1. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are not only Deceptive Spirits...
 2. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are also Destructive Spirits.
 - With this as our focus - let's continue to consider the point that Paul was making - here in 1st Corinthians 10.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 19 - where Paul asked...

IV. Destructive

- Text

1Co 10:19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

1Co 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

- Demons
 - Here in these verses - we find Paul - helping his audience to understand that...
 - ...those who present their offerings at the altar of an idol - are actually sacrificing to demons and NOT to God.
 - Now - I realize that there are some scholars who would have us to believe that...
 - ...the true and living God - assigned lesser gods to rule over the Gentile nations...

- ...Paul assured us that the so-called gods of the pagan nations - were nothing more than deceptive demons.
- And listen - those deceptive demons are evil spirits - who want to destroy our lives.
- Goal
- Case in point - let's consider the demons - who possessed a man in the country of the Gadarenes.
- Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to the gospel of Luke.
- I'd like you to turn in our Bibles - to Luke chapter 8 - and as we make our way to the 8th chapter of Luke's gospel account...
- ...I should take a moment to point out that - the unclean spirits that we call demons...
- ...are hellbent on destroying the lives of those who worship at the altar of idols.
- And the proof of my point can be found here in the situation that Luke recorded - here in Luke chapter 8.
- Possession
- Look with me - beginning there at verse 26 - where we learn that the Lord Jesus - and His apostles...

Luk 8:26 ...sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.

Luk 8:27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

Luk 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!"

Luk 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

Luk 8:30 Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him.

Luk 8:31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

Luk 8:32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

Luk 8:33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

- As we consider the details of this demonic possession - I wanna take a moment to assure you that...
 - ...born-again believers canNOT be demon possessed - and the reason why is because - we've been sealed with the Holy Spirit.
 - With that being said - it's important for us to realize that - the devil - and his demons want to destroy everything they can.
 - This includes the people that they possess - like the guy in the country of the Gadarenes...
 - ...and this includes the swine that the Jews in that region of Galilee were raising - unlawfully.
- Destroy
 - I like the way that the Lord Jesus explained it - in John chapter 10 - it's verse 10 - where He declared...

Jhn 10:10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

- Christian - listen - the Devil - and His demons are doing everything they can...
 - ...to steal our blessings - kill our joy - and ultimately - destroy our lives.
 - And while it's true that they no longer have a claim on the soul of those who are saved...
 - ...it's also true that they want to destroy our lives - by leading us astray.
 - And one way they do this - is by convincing us to sacrifice our time - our talent - and our treasure - at the altar of idols.
 - Sacrifice
 - In order to explain my point - let's take another look - there at the beginning of verse 20 - where he declared...
- 1Co 10:20a ...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God....
- Now - that word - sacrifice - was translated from a Greek word - which was used of those who slay an animal.
 - It was also used of those who offer a sacrifice - by burning the offering.
 - And whether we're talking about an agricultural sacrifice - or some sort of sacrificial animal...
 - ...those who were presenting their sacrifices on the altars of idols...
 - ...were destroying their own lives - as they pursued the blessings of the demons they were worshipping.
 - Snare
 - Let's consider how the Psalmist explained it - in the 106th Psalm - it's beginning at verse 35 - where we learn that Israel...

Psa 106:35 ...mingled with the Gentiles

And learned their works;

Psa 106:36 They served their idols,

Which became a snare to them.

Psa 106:37 They even sacrificed their sons

And their daughters to demons,

Psa 106:38 And shed innocent blood,

The blood of their sons and daughters,

Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;

And the land was polluted with blood.

Psa 106:39 Thus they were defiled by their own works,

And played the harlot by their own deeds.

Psa 106:40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, So that He abhorred His own inheritance.

- Here in these verses - we learn about the days - when the children of Israel - learned the works of the Gentiles.
- And it was at that point in time - when they tried to appease the false gods of the pagan nations...
 - ...by sacrificing their sons and daughters - on the altars of the Canaanite idols.
 - In this way - the Israelites who were deceived by the demons that were masquerading as the gods of Canaan...
 - ...ended up destroying their families - while simultaneously defiling the land with innocent blood.
- Time/Talent/Treasure
 - Much like the Israelites - who served demons - by casting their sons and daughters into the fires of Moloch...
 - ...there are Christians - who are sacrificing their sons and daughters - on the altar of abortion.

- Not only that - but - there are Christians who are serving demons - as they sacrifice their time - at the altar of pornography.
- Others are serving demons - as they sacrifice their talents - on the altar of Ungodly endeavors.
- And still yet others - are serving demons - as they sacrifice their treasure on the altar of personal pleasures.
- And in all of these ways - people are allowing demons to lead them down the broad road that leads to destruction.

- Fellowship

- With that being the case - we should take some time to consider the instruction that Paul presented - here in our text today.
- Let's turn back to 1st Corinthians chapter 10 - and let's take another look at verse 20 - where Paul declared..

1Co 10:20 ...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

- Now - when Paul declared - I do not want you to have fellowship with demons...
- ...it's important to remember that - he was writing this to Christians - who were sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- And while it's true that Christians canNOT be demon possessed...
- ...it's also true that born-again believers can be oppressed by the enemy - by entering into fellowship with demons.
- And you better believe that those who have fellowship with demons will destroy their fellowship with God.

- Application

- Agreement?
- Proof of my point is found in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 - it's beginning at verse 14 - where Paul declared...

2Co 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2Co 6:15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them

And walk among them.

I will be their God,

And they shall be My people.”

2Co 6:17 Therefore

“Come out from among them

And be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean,

And I will receive you.”

2Co 6:18 “I will be a Father to you,

And you shall be My sons and daughters,

Says the LORD Almighty.”

- Christian - listen - the believer who is unequally yoked together with unbelievers - will strain their relationship with God.
- And the reason why is because - those who have fellowship with lawlessness - will fail to walk in righteousness.
- The believer who is unequally yoked with an unbeliever - is effectively bringing idols - into the temple of God.
- The Christian who has communion with darkness - will fail to maintain their communion with the light.

- And it's sad to say that there many Christians who are allowing demons - to destroy their communion with Christ.

● Transition

• Points

- Now - this brings us to our third and final point - because listen...
 1. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are not only Deceptive Spirits...
 2. ...and the Demons who masquerade as false gods are not only Destructive Spirits.
 3. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are also Divisive Spirits.
 - With this as our focus - let's continue to consider the point that Paul was making - here in 1st Corinthians 10.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 21 - where Paul asked...

V. Divisive

● Text

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

1Co 10:22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

• Cup

- Here in these verses - we find Paul comparing and contrasting the sacrament of communion - which he mentioned back in verses 16 and 17...
- ...and the sacramental services that the unbelieving Gentiles were engaging in - at the temples of their idols.

- And just to be clear - I should take a moment to remind you that...
 - ...the sacrament of communion would include a cup - that contained the fruit of the vine - which was a symbol of our Savior's blood.
 - At the same time - the feasts that would take place at pagan temples would also include a cup of libations...
 - ...which would be consumed in honor of the idols - that were nothing more than demons.
 - And according to Paul - those who consume the cup of the Lord - should abstain from the cup of demons.
- Table
 - Not only that - but - Paul also challenged the Christians in Corinth - by helping them to understand that...
 - ...those who partake of the Lord's table - should abstain from the table of demons.
 - As we consider the context of this statement - there should be no doubt that the term - table - as it pertains to Christ...
 - ...was being used in reference to the unleavened bread - which is symbolic of His body.
 - And in the context of the demons - the term - table - was being used in reference to the gluttonous feasts at the pagan temples...
 - ...which turned into drunken - sexual orgies - in honor of their demonic idols.
- Division
 - With that being the case - it's no wonder that Paul took the time to help the original recipients of this epistle to realize that...

- ...the Christian who has entered into communion with Christ Jesus - should abstain from communion with demons.
- One reason why is because - no one can serve two masters - - and what this means is that...
- ...those who want to experience true communion with Christ Jesus - must remember that...
- ...there can be no communion between the light of the Lord - and the darkness of demons who want to lead us astray.
- At the same time - it's also important for us to realize that - the demons who animate the idols in pagan temples...
 - ...will also do everything they can - to divide us from our Christian community.
- Screw-tape
- I like the way that C.S. Lewis put it in the Screwtape letters - which presents the satirical instructions of a demon named Screwtape.
- It's in chapter 12 - where Screwtape instructs his protege - Wormwood - by writing...

You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing.

- In other words - the demon that is able to convince a Christian to engage in small compromises every day...
 - ...will effectively lead them away from the light of the Lord - and back to the broad-road that leads to destruction.

- And while those daily compromises might seem insignificant - the cumulative effect over time...
 - ...results in a backslidden believer - who has been separated from their fellowship of faith.
 - With this as their goal - there should be no doubt that - demons want to divide us from our church - by any means necessary.
- Provoke
 - And listen - those who continue to commune with demons in this way - are provoking the Lord to jealousy.
 - Let's consider how Paul put it - here in our text today - look with me again - beginning there at verse 22 - where he asked...

1Co 10:22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

- As we consider these questions - it's important to understand that the Christian who continues to commune with unclean spirits...
 - ...is not only allowing demons to divide them from the leaders who are called to disciple them...
 - ...but - they are also provoking the Lord to jealousy - which will result in the loving correction of the Lord.
 - And just to be clear - it's important to understand that - the jealousy of the Lord isn't some sort of insecure envy.
 - No - instead - the jealousy of the Lord is based on His desire to protect us from the corruption of demonic idolatry.

- Punishment

- I like the way that He explained it - in Exodus chapter 20 - when He presented the people with the first two commandments - by declaring...

Exo 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

Exo 20:4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Exo 20:5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Exo 20:6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- Here in the first two commandments - we find the Lord - helping us to understand that...
 - ...it's a sin to bow down before the false gods of the pagan nations.
 - And one reason why is because - - those who do are actually worshipping demons.
 - Not only that - but - demons have come to deceive - and destroy us - by leading us away from the love of the Lord.
 - And knowing that this will result in punishment - the Lord is jealous for us - because - He wants the best for us.
- Asaph
 - In order to further grasp His jealous love for us - let's consider the way that Asaph put it - in the 78th Psalm.
 - It's beginning at verse 55 - where we Asaph described the day when the Lord...

Psa 78:55 ...drove out the nations before them,
Allotted them an inheritance by survey,
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

Psa 78:56 Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God,

And did not keep His testimonies,
Psa 78:57 But turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers;
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
Psa 78:58 For they provoked Him to anger with their high places,
And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images.
Psa 78:59 When God heard this, He was furious,
And greatly abhorred Israel,
Psa 78:60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,
Psa 78:61 And delivered His strength into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand.

- Here in these verses - we learn about the days - when the Children of Israel provoked the Lord to anger with all of their high places...
- ...and they moved Him to jealousy - as they bowed down before the carved images of pagan idols.
- And listen - it was the jealous love of the Lord - that led Him to pour out a perfect punishment...
- ...so that the Israelites might realize that - the demons they were serving...
- ...we're actually leading them away from the true and living God - Who loved them with a perfect love.
- Love
- Christian - listen - the Lord is the Benevolent - Gracious God - Who loves us with a selfless - sacrificial love.
- And He is the infinitely wise - Omniscient One - Who knows that those who spend time serving demons...
- ...will eventually reap the rotten fruit - that's produced in the lives of those who bow before their idols.

- It's for this reason that the Lord commanded the children of Israel - to abstain from every form of idolatry.
- And listen - this includes the sin of seeking spiritual insights - and advice...
 - ...from those who are connecting with the unclean spirits - who masquerade as deceased loved ones.

● Application

- Abomination
- Let's consider how Moses explained it - in Deuteronomy chapter 18 - it's beginning at verse 9 - where he declared...

Deu 18:9 “When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.

Deu 18:10 “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

Deu 18:11 “or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

Deu 18:12 “For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.

Deu 18:13 “You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

- Christian - listen - those who seek spiritual guidance from those who practice witchcraft - are communing with demons.
- Those who seek soothsayers - in order to know the future - are being duped by demons.
- And those who receive counsel from the interpreter of omens - are also allowing unclean spirits to deceive them.
- Whether we're talking about a medium - or a spiritist - or one who calls up the dead...

- ...all of these people who practice such things - are an abomination to the Lord.
- And listen - the Christians who want to commune with Christ - should avoid all of these demonic disciplines.
- Creator
- Instead - we should make sure that we are living in submission - to the true and living God.
- I like the way that the Psalmist put it - in the 96th Psalm - it's beginning at verse 1 - where he declared...

Psa 96:1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!

Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Psa 96:2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;

Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

Psa 96:3 Declare His glory among the nations,

His wonders among all peoples.

Psa 96:4 For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised;

He is to be feared above all gods.

Psa 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

But the LORD made the heavens.

- Here in this song of praise - we find the psalmist - reminding us that there is only One True and Living God.
- All other so-called gods - are nothing more than idols - and according to Paul - an idol is nothing.
- This was precisely the point that Paul was making back in 1st Corinthians chapter 8 - where he declared...
 - "...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one."

- Whether we're talking about the Ancient Greek and Roman gods - or we're talking about Allah - or - the Flying Spaghetti Monster...
- ...all of these false gods are nothing more than idols - that are empowered by demons.

- Authority

- With that being the case - I'm happy to inform you that - Christians have been given authority - over the demons.
- As a matter of fact - it's in Ephesians chapter 6 - where Paul encouraged the Christians in Ephesus - by declaring...

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:13 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.

Eph 6:14a Stand therefore...

- While it's true that every Christian is wrestling against the fallen angels who want to deceive - destroy and divide...
- ...it's also true that the Lord has given us the whole armor of God - so that we are able to withstand in the evil day.
- And listen - those who stand in the almighty power of His might - by faith in Jesus Christ...
- ...will receive the power we need - to defeat the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- And with that being the case - believers no longer need to live in fear of an enemy - that has no power to possess us.

VI. Conclusion

● Wrap up

• Points

- As we wrap up this study - I encourage you to remember that...
 1. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are Deceptive Spirits...
 - ...and it's sad to say that there are Christians - who are allowing unclean spirits to deceive them - with doctrines of demons.
 2. ...the Demons who masquerade as false gods are also Destructive Spirits.
 - ...And you better believe that - the lives of many believers have been destroyed...
 - ...after allowing demons to lead them away from the Lord.
 3. ...And finally - the Demons who masquerade as false gods are also Divisive Spirits...
 - ...who have come to separate us from the spiritual accountability that we have - here in our fellowship of faith.
 - And knowing that these unclean spirits are trying to convince us to make little compromises every day...
 - ...I encourage every Christian to take up the whole armor of God - so that we can take a stand in the power of God's might.
 - And as we stand in the almighty power of God - - the Holy Spirit will help us to gain the victory over the enemy...
 - ...by enabling us to deal with the dilemma of demons.