

no more secrets

Revealing Jesus - Discussion Guide #2

Inquiry

1. Have you ever had a disturbing dream? What made the dream so unsettling to you?
2. Why does death cause such anguish?
3. How does society try to take the sting out of death?
4. What is lost when someone dies?

Inquest

Enmity. It's one of the strangest words in the Bible—and one of the most encouraging. Enmity means we are not powerless against this world's dark forces. Though we've been attacked by the bringer of death, God Himself has fought back for us--and won. Today, the Spirit offers us strength and power to resist the devil. Peter wrote, "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:11, 12).

1. What effect do "sinful desires" have upon our souls—our characters, our minds, and our strength and aspirations?
2. How can our righteous lives make a difference in the world around us?
3. Is righteousness defined more by what we oppose or what we stand up for?

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11. Peter encourages his readers to both trust in God and "humble" themselves, that God may strengthen them. He tells them to give God all their worries, yet warns them to be on their guard against the devil. Peter reminds them that they are part of a greater family of believers experiencing the same troubles, and assures them that God will restore and strengthen them.

1. What does it mean to humble ourselves before God? Before other people?
2. What does it take to fully trust God with every aspect of your life?
3. What does it mean to be "alert and sober" to spiritual realities?
4. How can we best "stand firm in the faith"? Is this faith more of knowledge or of action?

Paul outlines a strategy to "stand firm" in God's Spirit. "Put on the full armor of God," he writes, "so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6:11). Read Ephesians 6:10-20.

1. In what practical ways can you live out Paul's metaphorical advice?
2. How does faith protect us in when life brings us struggles and pain?

3. Paul tells us to pray "in the Spirit." What do you think he means?
4. Paul advises us to pray "with all kinds of prayers and requests." What might you pray about that you usually take for granted?

The Bible tells of the work of angels, supernatural servants of God, at critical points in history—the destruction of Sodom, the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, the resurrection of Christ. It also describes angels as present at every step of our lives, ever watchful and ready to assist. At the same time, evil spirits seek to deceive, distract, and destroy us.

1. How much of the work of angels do you think we are even aware of?
2. Why do the work of angels and demons seem to vary in different eras and cultures?
3. C.S. Lewis wrote, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." How might each of those viewpoints put us in danger?

Cross-Examination

"Christ implants in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue a servant ever ready to do Satan's bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict; the power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant. To abhor sin instead of loving it displays a principle wholly from above."

1. Romans 14:23 tells us that "everything that does not come from faith is sin." What difference can our attitude and motivation make in determining whether our actions are positive or negative?
2. What does grace mean to you?
3. Should a follower of God always try to avoid conflict?

"Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world, never the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will cause it to appear less repulsive. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, we may be sure God will protect us; but if we place ourselves under temptation we shall fall sooner or later."

1. What defines a 'worldly custom'? Is it determined by form or by substance?
2. How can we reach for Jesus people who may know nothing but what the world has to offer?
3. How can we assist and associate with people, like Jesus did, without compromising what we stand for?
4. What do you stand for?

"Old Testament history mentions their existence, but during the time when Christ was on earth evil spirits manifested their power in the most striking manner. Christ had come for man's redemption, and Satan determined to control the world. He had succeeded in establishing idolatry in every part of the earth except Palestine. To the only land not fully yielded to the tempter, Christ came, stretching out His arms of love, inviting all to find pardon and peace in Him. The hosts of darkness understood that if Christ's mission should be successful, their rule was soon to end."

1. How might the devil change his tactics knowing that God Himself is coming to rescue humanity?
2. Do people ever put too much blame on the devil? How might a focus on Satan obstruct us from following God?
3. Revelation 12:12 says, "But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." How can we keep our focus on God and His love in a world in turmoil?

Chapter 2— *Hope for Triumph Over Evil*

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. This enmity is not natural. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, in harmony with Satan. Fallen angels and wicked men united in desperate companionship. Had not God interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven, and the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God.

When Satan heard that enmity should exist between himself and the woman, and between his seed and her seed, he knew that by some means man was to be enabled to resist his power.

Grace from Christ

Christ implants in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue a servant ever ready to do Satan's bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict; the power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant. To abhor sin instead of loving it displays a principle wholly from above.

The antagonism between Christ and Satan was strikingly displayed in the world's reception of Jesus. The purity and holiness of Christ called forth against Him the hatred of the ungodly. His self-denial was a perpetual reproof to a proud, sensual people. Satan and evil angels joined with evil men against the Champion of truth. The same enmity is manifested toward Christ's followers. Whoever resists temptation will arouse the wrath of Satan. Christ and Satan cannot harmonize. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12.

Satan's agents seek to deceive Christ's followers and allure them from their allegiance. They pervert Scripture to accomplish their object. The spirit which put Christ to death moves the wicked to destroy His followers. All this is foreshadowed in that first prophecy: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."

Why is it that Satan meets no greater resistance? Because the soldiers of Christ have so little real connection with Christ. Sin is not to them repulsive as it was to their Master. They do not meet it with determined resistance. They are blinded to the character of the prince of darkness. Multitudes do not know that their enemy is a mighty general warring against Christ. Even ministers of the gospel overlook the evidences of his activity. They seem to ignore his very existence.

A Vigilant Foe

This vigilant foe is intruding his presence in every household, in every street, in the churches, in national councils, in courts of justice, perplexing, deceiving, seducing, everywhere ruining the souls and bodies of men, women, and children. He breaks up families, sowing hatred, strife, sedition, and murder. And the world seems to regard these things as though God had appointed them and they must exist. All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. When Christians choose the society of the ungodly, they expose themselves to temptation. Satan conceals himself from view and draws his deceptive covering over their eyes.

Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world, never the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will cause it to appear less repulsive. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, we may be sure God will protect us; but if we place ourselves under temptation we shall fall sooner or later.

The tempter often works most successfully through those least suspected of being under his control. Talent and culture are gifts of God; but when these lead away from Him, they become a snare. Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners is a polished instrument in the hands of Satan.

Never forget the inspired warning sounding down the centuries to our time: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:11. Our great enemy is preparing for his last campaign. All who follow Jesus will be in conflict with this foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan.

Satan assailed Christ with fierce and subtle temptations; but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or force the soul to sin. He can cause distress, but not defilement. The fact that Christ conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight the battle against sin and Satan.

Angels Help

Angels of God and evil spirits are plainly revealed in Scripture and interwoven with human history. Holy angels that "minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14) are regarded by many as spirits of the dead. But the Scriptures present proof that these are not disembodied spirits of the dead.

Before the creation of man, angels were in existence, for when the foundations of the earth were laid, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. After the fall of man, angels were sent to guard the tree of life before a human being had died. Angels are superior to men, for man was made "a little lower than the angels." Psalm 8:5.

Says the prophet, "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne." In the presence of the King of kings they wait—"ministers of his, that do his pleasure," "hearkening unto the voice of his word," "an innumerable company." Revelation 5:11; Psalm 103:20, 21; Hebrews 12:22. As God's messengers they go forth, like "the appearance of a flash of lightning," so swift their flight. The angel that appeared at the Saviour's tomb, his countenance "like lightning," caused the keepers for fear of him to quake, and they "became as dead men." When Sennacherib blasphemed God and threatened Israel, "the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." Ezekiel 1:14; Matthew 28:3, 4; 2 Kings 19:35.

Angels are sent on missions of mercy to the children of God. To Abraham, with promises of blessing; to Sodom, to rescue Lot from doom; to Elijah, about to perish in the desert; to Elisha, with chariots and horses of fire when he was shut in by his foes; to Daniel, while abandoned to become the lion's prey; to Peter, doomed to death in Herod's dungeon; to the prisoners at Philippi; to Paul in the night of tempest on the sea; to open

the mind of Cornelius to receive the gospel; to dispatch Peter with the message of salvation to the Gentile stranger—thus holy angels have ministered to God's people.

Guardian Angels

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Said the Saviour, speaking of those that believe in Him: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." Psalm 34:7; Matthew 18:10. God's people, exposed to the unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of angels. Such assurance is given because there are mighty agencies of evil to be met—agencies numerous, determined, and untiring.

Evil Angels Oppose God's Plans

Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men. United with Satan in rebellion, they cooperate in warfare against divine authority.

Old Testament history mentions their existence, but during the time when Christ was on earth evil spirits manifested their power in the most striking manner. Christ had come for man's redemption, and Satan determined to control the world. He had succeeded in establishing idolatry in every part of the earth except Palestine. To the only land not fully yielded to the tempter, Christ came, stretching out His arms of love, inviting all to find pardon and peace in Him. The hosts of darkness understood that if Christ's mission should be successful, their rule was soon to end.

That men have been possessed with demons is clearly stated in the New Testament. Persons thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes; Christ recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits. The demoniacs at Gadara, wretched maniacs, writhing, foaming, raging, were doing violence to themselves and endangering all who should approach them. Their bleeding, disfigured bodies and distracted minds presented a spectacle well pleasing to the prince of darkness. One of the demons controlling the sufferers declared, "My name is Legion: for we are many." Mark 5:9. In the Roman army a legion consisted of from three to five thousand men. At the command of Jesus the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them subdued, intelligent, and gentle. But the demons swept a herd of swine into the sea, and to the dwellers of Gadara the loss outweighed the blessing Christ had bestowed; the divine Healer was intreated to depart. See Matthew 8:23-34. By casting the blame of their loss upon Jesus, Satan aroused the selfish fears of the people and prevented them from listening to His words.

Christ allowed the evil spirits to destroy the swine as a rebuke to Jews who were raising unclean beasts for gain. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners into the sea.

Furthermore, this event was permitted that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast, that they might not be deceived by his devices. It was also Christ's will that the people should behold His power to break the bondage of Satan and release his captives. Though Jesus Himself departed, the men so marvelously delivered remained to declare the mercy of their Benefactor.

Other instances are recorded: The daughter of the Syrophenician woman, grievously vexed with a devil whom Jesus cast out by His word (Mark 7:25-30); a youth who had a spirit that oftentimes "cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him" (Mark 9:17-27); the maniac, tormented by a spirit of an unclean devil who disturbed the Sabbath quiet at Capernaum (Luke 4:33-36)—all were healed by the Saviour. In nearly every instance, Christ addressed the demon as an intelligent entity, commanding him to torment his victim no more. The worshipers at Capernaum "were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." Luke 4:36.

For the sake of obtaining supernatural power, some welcomed the satanic influence. These of course had no conflict with the demons. Of this class were those who possessed the spirit of divination—Simon Magus, Elymas the sorcerer, and the damsel who followed Paul and Silas at Philippi. See Acts 8:9, 18; 13:8; 16:16-18.

Danger

None are in greater danger than those who deny the existence of the devil and his angels. Many heed their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following their own wisdom. As we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.

The great deceiver fears that we shall become acquainted with his devices. To disguise his real character he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite ridicule or contempt. He is pleased to be painted as ludicrous, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery. Because he has masked himself with consummate skill, the question is widely asked: "Does such a being really exist?" It is because Satan can readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence that the Word of God unveils before us his secret forces, thus placing us on guard.

Safety With Jesus

We may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and lives from evil men, but seldom think of the evil angels against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. But those who follow Christ are safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.

Sources

In the list below, under each chapter in the current work are listed the source chapters in *The Great Controversy* that correspond to it:

Chapter 1, “Why Is There Suffering?”

The Great Controversy, chapter 29

Chapter 2, “Hope for Triumph Over Evil”

The Great Controversy, chapters 30, 31

Chapter 3, “Dangerous Seductions”

The Great Controversy, chapter 32

Chapter 4, “Everlasting Life”

The Great Controversy, chapter 33

Chapter 5, “False Hope”

The Great Controversy, chapter 34

Chapter 6, “True Peace”

The Great Controversy, chapters 7, 27

Chapter 7, “Our Only Safeguard”

The Great Controversy, chapter 37

Chapter 8, “In Defense of the Truth”

The Great Controversy, chapters 3, 25, 26

Chapter 9, “Real Hope”

The Great Controversy, chapters 1, 17, 36, 38, 39

Chapter 10, “The Great Rescue”

The Great Controversy, chapter 40

Chapter 11, “Victory of Love”

The Great Controversy, chapter 42

A revealing
look at the
battle between
good and
evil — and
who wins.

The

Great

Hope





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How it all began

YG began just after the turn of the century as a high-energy, contemporary worship service highlighting multimedia, upbeat music, and timely, creative messages – all focused on reaching young adults. Today, YG transcends age and program boundaries, making authentic efforts to foster the great commandment and great commission in new generations. www.vimeo.com/channels/ygchurch



Intimacy

We are wholeheartedly pursuing a 24/7 experience of the living GOD. Our worship is for His fame. Each week Younger Generation Church offers a powerful worship experience, Saturday mornings, 10:15 am [Central], where we authentically gather to focus our attention and adoration on Christ Jesus. www.YGchurch.com



Community

We express best who GOD is by doing life together well. Our relationships express His love. Younger Generation Church enjoys LIFEgroups affording our members an opportunity to build inspiring community and foster healthy relationships. We love having fun and taking time to enjoy each other's company. www.facebook.com/ygchurch



Grace

We are compelled to share the hope we have with others. Our compassionate witness reveals His Good News as real. Younger Generation Church generously shares the grace of Jesus Christ with whomever we might serve. Feeding the hungry, encouraging the orphan, consoling the widow—being grace dispensers to the least of these bring us joy. @YGChurch