



Raleigh February 2, 2012
Greensboro January 26, 2012
Hickory January 26, 2012

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

By Ron Kelley

Recently I was asked by a parent if I would give a sermon about why the wicked seem to prosper. She wanted some help explaining to her child about how Satan the Devil works in the lives of people. Why is it that evil seems good and good evil? Why is there so much suffering in the world – even among good people? How can some people appear to be so good, but they're not in the church? How can I be sure that I won't be deceived by Satan? That's a lot of good questions, and I was very pleased to know that some of our younger folks are thinking about such things.

Today, we're going to try to answer some of these and other questions about Satan and the demons, but we're going to try to gear it towards our younger age group so that they will have a more complete understanding of just who this enemy we often call "our Adversary" really is. Hopefully, all the rest of us will have a better understanding of this enemy and how to combat him as well.

As hard as it may be to believe, the devil was at one time a righteous angel! His name was Lucifer. Therefore, he, too, is a spirit being – not like God, but an angel, created by God. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of Satan before he rebelled. We are told he was an "anointed cherub [a powerful angel] who covers." This a reference to those angels honored to stand at God's throne. Lucifer was in a position of great power and majesty along with archangels Michael and Gabriel. We're going to look at Ezekiel, but first notice **EXODUS 25:20**. Here is a description of how the ancient Israelites were to construct the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant:

"And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat".

All of this described here is a type of heavenly things. So let's look into the Bible and see what happened to Lucifer.

Ezekiel 28:

- 11 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,**
- 12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, (our first indication this is not talking now about a human being) Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.**
- 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. (proof Lucifer and the angels were created beings)**

- 14** “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain (government) of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. (Perhaps like the shining precious gemstones describing the majesty of God’s Throne)
- 15** You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.
- 16** “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. (No longer permitted to be near God’s throne).
- 17** “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; (begins to explain the sin rooted in vanity) You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.

At some point this high-ranking angel became corrupt. He turned arrogant, violent and selfish. Pride is at the root of his rebellion against God. Lucifer sinned against his Creator. And in doing so, he became Satan, meaning “adversary”.

Isaiah 14:

- 12** “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!
- 13** For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;
- 14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’

Lucifer’s actual plan seemed to be that he would take God’s place as the “Most High”. He felt he was powerful enough to defeat him.

- 15** Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.”

“Lucifer” is translated from the Hebrew word that means “shining one”, or “light bringer”. That name certainly no longer applied. He became ultimate darkness.

Satan convinced one-third of the other angels to join his rebellion in an attempt to overthrow God. How long did that take? We have no idea and time is not relevant in the spirit world.

Revelation 12:

- 3** And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. **4** His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

Christ told His disciples that He had personally witnessed this momentous event

Luke 10:

- 18** And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

What happens next is described in

Revelation 12:

- 7** “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, **8** but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. **9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him”.

There was really no contest. Notice that it wasn't even God the Father and the Word that did the fighting. They left it to Michael and his angels. The greatest casualty of this war was the physical universe.

Genesis 1:

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep."

The Earth and likely the universe were created in perfect beauty as ISA 45:18 brings out. The earth and apparently the other planets and moons in our solar system – and perhaps even much of the universe - became a wasteland of chaos, confusion and destruction during the rebellion of Satan and the angels who followed him (now called demons). But before the angelic rebellion and subsequent destruction of the Earth, there is nothing in the Bible that excludes the possibility—or probability—of life on the earth during the time the angels occupied it. In fact, the fossil record of dinosaurs and other creatures and plants that we do not have in our world today indicates that they lived in a quite different world prior to Adam.

And that brings us to the time of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. We need to understand what happened here. It is not just a good Bible lesson for little children.

What was the purpose of the two trees? Why are they singled out and why were Adam and Eve given special instructions about their use? Those of us in the church for many years remember that Mr. Herbert W Armstrong used to talk about this all the time. It is foundational material to understanding why there is good and evil in this world.

Genesis 2:

16 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'".

Apparently this was the only forbidden tree, or what is commonly called the forbidden fruit. The life-giving tree, the tree of life, was free for the taking. I think we know the evil was not in the fruit itself, but in the choice to eat it, against God's clear command: "**You shall not eat.**" God had placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, knowing full well that Satan, the

"god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4),

would attempt to bring them under his influence and control. God wanted Adam and Eve to remain loyal and faithful to Him, so that He might give them every good thing, including eternal life if they accepted His rule over them. His intent was to bring them into His spiritual family—the God Family - in due time. God gave them a choice between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two trees represented a choice between obeying God's command and ignoring God's authority in order to pursue the false promises offered by the devil. In rejecting God's instruction and taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they surrendered their fate to Satan and took themselves out of God's guidance and protection. God was no longer providing everything for them. They were forced out of the Garden. In short, they chose Satan's way of life, which is the opposite of God's way. By rejecting God's instruction and God's way of life, they made the decision for themselves *and for their children* all the way down to us today. Mankind is still eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in that sense.

Genesis 3:

- 22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—**
- 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.**
- 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.**

So God cut off access to the tree of life from mankind. From that point on, mankind was going to have to decide for himself what was right and wrong – good and evil. He no longer had access to God’s mind – to God’s influence and guidance in His life through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Basically God tells mankind now – “OK, if you think you know what’s best and can figure things out on your own – go ahead. Let’s see what you can do”. The result would eventually end up in total destruction and death. This world after 6000 years is nearing self-annihilation. It actually might have come to this point much sooner if God had not slowed down things by two major events. First the flood at the time of Noah and shortly after that the introduction of multiple languages at the Tower of Babel. But here we are today. Humanity is suffering. This world has endured 6000 years of pain and suffering since the time of Adam and Eve. That’s not what God wants. God does not enjoy seeing people suffer. He does not like seeing pain, misery, death and destruction in the lives of people He has created. Sometimes people think God doesn’t care – that He has turned His back on the Earth and just doesn’t pay attention to us anymore. Some go as far as to claim God is dead – or that he never existed in the first place. How could a loving God allow so much suffering in the world? In reality, what we have seen happen starting with our first parents is that we told God to back off –we’ll handle things ourselves. That’s what happened when Adam and Eve refused to listen to God and took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So you see, it’s not God’s fault – it’s ours. We think we know what’s best –and really we don’t have a clue.

Jeremiah 10:

- 23 “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”**

Judges 21:

- 25 “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”**

Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”.

So mankind has been doing that from the beginning – and it’s one of the hardest things to give up doing. You see, once God calls us, we are to ask forgiveness of doing things OUR way, and then start listening to God and allowing Him to tell us the right way to live. We’ve been talking a lot about humility recently. It takes a humble attitude to admit that YOU don’t know the right way to go – the right things to do and that you NEED God to show you what to do. Then it takes humility to actually listen to Him and do it. So very few people are willing to do this. Hopefully each one of us is.

I want to make sure all of us – and especially today our young people understand that God has a very specific plan of salvation for ALL mankind. He knows exactly what He is doing. He has a timetable for completing that plan and it is right on schedule. God is not in some battle with Satan and sometimes Satan the Devil gets the best of God. That is NOT why there is evil and suffering in the world. God didn't lose a battle to Satan that caused some tragedy like 9/11, or the Sandy Hook school shooting – or the concentration camps of World War 2, or the genocide in Rwanda, or the 2004 Earthquake and Tsunami in the Pacific to happen. God is always in control. He is always in charge of the Universe and He remains all powerful – and all loving.

Remember that at the Garden of Eden, mankind chose to keep God out of the picture – at least as far as telling them what to do was concerned. Man was going to decide for himself what was good and evil – right and wrong. Certainly mankind has been able to do a lot of good things through the centuries. It is the tree of both evil AND good! But still, it was to be a world cut off from God's intervention – with mankind simply deciding for himself what was good and evil. Therefore, evil was going to be a major part of what the world was going to be like.

So what is going on when we see evil – horrible things happening around us? Is it fair to blame God?

Isaiah 59:

- 1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.**
- 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**
- 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.**

Clearly, the fault does not rest with God! There is a great wall or barrier that symbolically separates mankind from God. That barrier is the way of sin that Adam and Eve chose for mankind. Remember after that choice, the angel was placed in the Garden to prevent access to the Tree of Life. In other words, mankind by their sin, has cut themselves off FROM God! I would suggest reading the entire chapter of ISA 59 (various translations).

So how is it that YOU can have access to God?

John 6:

- 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."**

It is impossible to have access to God – to understand the truth of God without God the Father having expressly granted that privilege to you. That is an awesome and rare calling. In God's plan of salvation as pictured by the Feast of Pentecost, God is only calling a very few right now to be the first of the fruit that God is producing. You and I are part of the ones God has called now to understand.

With that calling comes access to the Tree of Life. Upon repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands, we receive that "fruit" of the Tree of Life – God's Holy Spirit. Now we can understand the things of God!

1 Corinthians 2:

- 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.**
- 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**
- 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

So do we begin to understand why there is so much pain and suffering – so much evil in the world? Satan the Devil rebelled against God. He was cast down to the Earth to remain temporarily the “god of this world”. Adam and Eve listened to Satan instead of God and chose to decide right and wrong for themselves and their descendants. So God allowed mankind to follow his way for the next 6000 years until we bring ourselves to the brink of total annihilation. During that time, God is choosing a few people to know the truth so they can prepare to help teach God’s way to all people in the World Tomorrow after God the Father sends Jesus Christ back to the Earth to take over the governments of this Earth and “restore all things”. That is where all of us fit in. We are in training to help bring peace to the world. We need to learn it now!

Because we are in training to bring peace and happiness to the world later, we need to be sure that we are practicing the way that brings peace and happiness in our lives today. *Mankind cannot find that way today!* That is why their way leads to destruction and death. That is the path they are on and they don’t know it. They cannot come off of that path yet. You have been taken off that path and set on the path to eternal life.

So with all this in mind, are the wicked really prospering after all? This is really the original question we started with. Why does it seem to some that evil, wicked people are rich and prosperous and enjoying the finer things of life, yet at the same time, we see good people suffering? We see one heart-wrenching tragedy after another – sometimes involving little innocent children. Jeremiah was a young person when he was called to God’s service. He asked questions like that too.

Jeremiah 5:

- 28 (Speaking of the wicked he said): They have grown fat, they are sleek; Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the fatherless; Yet they prosper, And the right of the needy they do not defend.**

Jeremiah 12:

- 1 Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?**

So now do you know the answer to these questions? In this world under Satan's influence and direction, things do not always work as they should. Sometimes it seems the wicked prosper while the righteous face troubles. But God offers us the long term view or the big picture. From His perspective, the apparent success of evildoers is momentary. As God's people, we have to look at things from the big picture as well. What is the ultimate outcome of each way of life?

A man named Asaph asked these questions too. Some of you may wonder who that was. He is commonly believed to be King David's chief musician. He probably set to music many of the Psalms David wrote. He wrote 12 of the Psalms himself. One in particular is Psalm 73 where we read this:

Psalm 73:

- 1 (Common English Version) Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure of heart.**
- 2 But me? My feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped**
- 3 because I envied the arrogant; I observed how the wicked are well off:**
- 4 They suffer no pain; their bodies are fit and strong.**
- 5 They are never in trouble; they aren't weighed down like other people.**
- 6 That's why they wear arrogance like a necklace, why violence covers them like clothes.**
- 7 Their eyes bulge out from eating so well; their hearts overflow with delusions.**
- 8 They scoff and talk so cruel; from their privileged positions they plan oppression.**
- 9 Their mouths dare to speak against heaven! Their tongues roam the earth!**
- 10 That's why people keep going back to them, keep approving what they say.**
- 11 And what they say is this: "How could God possibly know! Does the Most High know anything at all!"**
- 12 Look at these wicked ones, always relaxed, piling up the wealth!**

Do you hear the frustration in his words? That same feeling of frustration is what so many of us feel when we work so hard to follow God – to do the right things; and we endure physical suffering while we see the wicked living it up. Then we cry out: "How can God let this happen! Doesn't God know anything at all?"

Here is the answer beginning in

Verse

- 16 But when I tried to understand these things, it just seemed like hard work**
- 17 until I entered God's sanctuary (that's where you are today) and understood what would happen to the wicked.**
- 18 You will definitely put them on a slippery path; you will make them fall into ruin!**
- 19 How quickly they are devastated, utterly destroyed by terrors!**
- 20 As quickly as a dream departs from someone waking up, my Lord, when you are stirred up, you make them disappear.**

So you see, God is clearly a God of justice after all, isn't He? The wicked are not getting away with anything! So what does God say about the righteous?

Psalm 112:

- 1 (God's Word Translation) "Blessed is the person who fears the Lord and is happy to obey his commands.**
- 2 His descendants will grow strong on the earth. The family of a decent person will be blessed.**
- 3 Wealth and riches will be in his home. His righteousness continues forever.**
- 4 Light will shine in the dark for a decent person. He is merciful, compassionate, and fair.**
- 5 All goes well for the person who is generous and lends willingly. He earns an honest living.**
- 6 He will never fail. A righteous person will always be remembered.**
- 7 He is not afraid of bad news. His heart remains secure, full of confidence in the Lord.**
- 8 His heart is steady, and he is not afraid. In the end he will look triumphantly at his enemies.**
- 9 He gives freely to poor people. His righteousness continues forever. His head is raised in honor.**

Look at all the blessings of a righteous person! These are promises from God! Go back and review the blessings and cursing's chapter in **DEUT 28!** God's way works! God's way is the way to all peace and happiness! It is the way to eternal life. Satan's way leads only to destruction and death. But Satan so cleverly disguises his way and makes it LOOK so good and so inviting.

He appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life as we read in **1 John 2:15.**

That is all going to perish! It is going to perish forever! Notice the end of

Psalm 112, in verse 10:

The wicked person sees this and becomes angry. He angrily grits his teeth and disappears. The hope that wicked people have will vanish."

That's talking about the lake of fire – eternal death that the wicked will face – there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth as they see their impending doom. The wicked will not be prospering then. The righteous will be members of the Family of God in eternal glory!

2 Peter 3:

- 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

Verse

- 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**
- 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.**

That is the ultimate fate of the wicked.

There has been pain and suffering since the time of Adam and Eve. Sadly we know that pain and suffering – and yes even death is going to continue for a while longer. The Great Tribulation is coming and it will be a horrible time and millions upon millions will die. Does that mean God is not in complete and total control? Of course not! He prophesied that all this would happen and today we are seeing why. God has not turned His back on humanity – humanity turned its back on God. We see that more and more in our world today. So few nations practice any resemblance of “Judeo-Christian” worship in the first place. Now, our own country is on a fast track of putting God out of the picture in everything we do. Every lifestyle perversion is accepted in the name of tolerance and diversity. God is kept out of our government and our schools, and we have the nerve to wonder how God can allow tragedies to happen? We rejected God.

I want us all to never forget how loving, merciful and kind God is. Those words are the very definition of God.

Joel 2:

12 “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him.”

So, since God is so gracious, merciful and kind, He must know exactly what He is doing when He seems to not intervene and protect people – especially innocent children – from pain, suffering and death. The answer is: He does. All of these people who have died will live again. All the dead will be resurrected. That is a direct promise from Almighty God!

John 5:

25 “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

Verse

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice.”

That includes everyone! All will live again!

1 Corinthians 15:

19 ‘If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

That's the 1st Resurrection, but God has a plan for those who have died never knowing the truth. A 2nd Resurrection!

Revelation 20:

- 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.**
- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.**

During this time, pictured by the Last Great Day, God raises all mankind who has ever lived and never had their chance to understand God's truth and He offers them His Holy Spirit, which is the same as offering them their 1st chance for salvation and eternal life. God is completely fair and merciful, so these are people who did not have a chance for salvation in their previous lives in this world will have their chance in that NEW world! But it won't be a world filled with sin and evil like the world they were a part of before they died. How incredibly better this new world will be for them! They'll have a new lifetime to live in what the Bible describes as like the Garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:

- 35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'**
- 36 Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it."**

This process of beautification starts during the 1000 year reign of Christ, but imagine how awesome the world will be after 1000 years of His reign! All these people will live again with their loved ones. Remember, they'll have absolutely NO CONCEPT of the passage of time that has taken place. For them, it will be the next instant – like the blink of an eye – no awareness that any time passed – and then suddenly they'll be surrounded by people telling them that they are OK. Everything is going to be fine now. They will see and recognize parents, brothers and sisters – all their relatives. You know what's really amazing to think about? A child will not only see his parents, but his grandparents, great grandparents, and be introduced to his great x whatever grandparents. Talk about a family reunion! They'll all rise again at the same time and live in that beautiful world – all being taught God's law and the way to peace and happiness. They will soon understand that they too will soon join the Family of God for all eternity. God is able to make all this happen. So do you begin to understand why even though God allows pain and suffering now, that will all be forgotten about at the time of their resurrection? When you keep it in that perspective, you see that despite what we see happening around us now, God has eternity in mind. He has the interest of EVERY person at heart. He wants the best for everyone. He wants them to come to the knowledge of the truth. He wants them to be in His Kingdom with Him as Spirit Beings forever!

1 Timothy 2:

- 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,**
- 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

This is going to happen. The vast majority of all mankind who has ever lived or whoever will yet live will eventually be in the Family of God for all eternity. There will be joy and happiness beyond our imagination.

Understand that God does not enjoy punishing people. He does not want to see any suffering in the world.

Ezekiel 33:

11 Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’

God is so merciful and compassionate! But right now, He is keeping hands off allowing Satan to rule this world and therefore prove to the world that Satan’s way will lead only to death. That time is about over.

Satan has successfully spread his vision and his agenda throughout the earth. He deceives the whole world. Therefore we have war, greed, lying, selfishness and an anti-God vision all over the world. It could even look like his side is winning at this point. *It is not.*

Yet some may still ask, why would God allow this corrupt vision of Satan if He is in control? He’s God! He can do anything! Yes, but God will not FORCE man to choose the right way! We’re not robots! We are told to choose, and mankind CHOSE to reject God!

There are three things that are for sure that you must understand:

- God is in control. He always has been.
- God allows us to choose. He always has.
- And God will change the vision and path of the whole world when He is ready.

God is allowing Satan and mankind to follow their way through to its ultimate conclusion; and when worldwide destruction is imminent, He will step in. He is showing the whole world that the way of Satan the Devil that is opposite of His does not and will not work. We build character by going against Satan’s way and CHOOSING God’s way.

So then, what is going to happen to Satan and the demons at the end of all this? The apostle Peter spoke of a time when

“Christ “preached to the spirits in prison” when Noah was building the ark (1 Peter 3:19-20).

The Scriptures do not tell us what Jesus said to them. Perhaps it was a warning and reminder of their fate. Peter also mentions these demons as being those who sinned and were cast down to “hell” along with their leader, Satan.

2 Peter 2:

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.

The word hell in this passage is translated from the Greek word tartaroo, and it indicates a place of restraint for spirit beings. The NKJV Study Bible adds: *“Tartaroo involves severe limitation of action, symbolized by chains, and almost total lack of understanding, symbolized by darkness.”*

The current place of restraint apparently is the earth, although with limited access to God's throne. Revelation 12 as we read earlier implies that Satan and the angels that followed him fought the righteous angels, as well as God Himself, before the creation of Adam. The same reference implies a follow-up rebellion at the end of the age, just before Christ returns. The results will be the same whenever that battle happens. God will win. There is no contest.

I hope this sermon has helped each of you understand why there is good and evil in this world. I also hope we understand why God seems to allow sorrow, pain and suffering to occur all around us – to people who seem so innocent. I hope we understand the role of Satan the Devil and his ultimate fate. More importantly, do we understand OUR role, and OUR ultimate destiny?

For each of us now, the choices are clear: the way of life or the way of death. For each of us, the blinders are off and God has called us to make our decision. God urges us to choose life! What will you choose?