Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

Php 3:9 …not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

www.sermonaudio.com/crc
www.unholycharade.com (blog)
www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)
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Doctrines of Demons (November 22, 2026)

Sermon Text: 1 Timothy 4:1-3

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24:1-28

1Ti 4:1-3 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, (2) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, (3) men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

Last Lord's Day we turned out attention to the doctrine of the Last Days – that is, the Church age in which we live. We saw that, for example, the book of Revelation describes the last days which is the period from the first coming of Christ (His incarnation) to His future Second Coming in judgment. Reformed eschatology is, in other words, *amillennialism.* That is to say, the present church age, these last days, is the millennium – not a literal 1,000 years, but the church age.

In our upcoming and thorough study of the doctrine of the last days, you will come to understand more clearly just how vital it is for every Christian to be wise about

this present age and how it will be brought to a close when Christ returns in glory to judge the living and the dead. I cannot overemphasize how important it is for us all to really give ourselves to this study. Why? First, because these things are the Christian's *hope* as we travel through this evil age. But second, and this is the doctrine we will be focusing on this morning, these last days *are characterized by increasing deception from Satan.* Anyone who does not love God's truth, and that includes so many if not most professing Christians who are lazy and careless in hearing God's Word, is going to be deceived and led away from Christ.

You may have seen that meme on social media lately that showed a quote often attributed to C.H. Spurgeon:

"Satan has deceived one-third of the angels; imagine what he is capable of doing with a generation that does not read the Bible."

<u>Scriptures Warning us of Deception in the Last Days</u>

2Th 2:9-10 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

2Ti 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

2Ti 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, (4) and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2Co 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also

disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Mat 24:4-5 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. (5) "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many….(11) "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

2Pe 2:1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2) Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; (3) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

1Jn 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; (3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Now, take careful note of these next two Scriptures from Revelation:

Rev 16:13-14 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; (14) **for they are spirits of demons, performing signs**, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Rev 9:1-6 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw **a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth;** and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. (2) He opened the bottomless pit,

and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. (3) **Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.** (4) They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, **but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.** (5) And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. (6) And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

The Deceptions of the Doctrines of Demons

In those last two Scriptures from Revelation, we can conclude that *demonic activity will increase greatly in the last days*. We see it already having occurred in the time the Lord Jesus was in this world. Think of all the accounts of demonic activity recorded in the 4 Gospels. Revelation makes this very clear. The Beast, the Antichrist, will send out demons who are even capable of performing signs and wonders to assist in their deceptions. We can be sure that the devil is doing that very thing now, though it will certainly increase as the Day of the Lord comes closer. By God's sovereign permission and decree (Satan can do nothing apart from it) Satan looses hordes of demons to oppress all people who do not belong to Christ.

I was going to append Herman Hoeksema's commentary on Revelation 9 (the locusts from the abyss) at the end for you to take home and read, but the more I read it myself I decided it was so clear and important that I will include it right here for you to hear. Remember, Revelation is describing these last days and showing us how evil – and in this specific case, *demonic activity of deception,* is going to exponentially increase as time grows nearer and nearer to the return of Christ. You cannot read

the news today and not realize that evil is increasing worldwide.

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, **paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,**

Listen then to Hoeksema explain the locusts of Revelation 9 -

"We know from the Word of God that Satan was not the only person who fell in the spiritual world, but that with him a veritable host of angels fell away from God into rebellion. We know not how many of the angels fell with their prince; nor is this important. But we certainly receive the impression that there were indeed thousands upon thousands who fell with Satan.

Now what became of these evil angels? Plain it is that they have not yet received their final judgment and punishment. Also the angel world is still to be judged; and it shall not be judged until the great day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we shall judge them with Him. Satan still goes about like a roaring lion. And also the evil spirits, direct subjects of his kingdom, are not confined to the place of their eternal torture. It may safely be said, therefore, of all these evil angels that although they have been cast out of heaven and no more enjoy the light of life in the presence of the Holy One,—which, of course, would be impossible,—yet they have not received their final sentence, and still must be made subject to their eternal punishment.

In other words, in the literal sense of the word the devil and his angels are not yet in hell. Where then are they? It seems to us that Scripture makes a distinction. Also, the lot of these fallen angels is not the same for all, and according to their different state they accomplish a different purpose in the economy of the present dispensation.

In the first place, we read of evil spirits roaming about in desert places or being bound by the river Euphrates. In the second place, we learn from Scripture that there are

a number of these evil spirits in aerial places,—perhaps the main army of them, Satan included. Paul calls the devil the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). And he warns the Ephesians that they shall put on the whole armor of God: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (Ephesians 6:12). They seem to be at the disposal of Satan continually, and constantly to fight the battle with him against the realization of the kingdom of Christ.

But in distinction from these devils, or demons, in the air, there is another division of the army of Satan. They are in the abyss. They are shut up. They do not have the liberty to roam about, except on special occasions. At the time of Jesus' public ministry, for instance, we find mention of one legion of them. And when they are cast out, they beseech the Lord that He may not send them back into the abyss. Peter also speaks of angels that have sinned and that have been committed unto pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment (II Peter 2:4). And Jude, verse 6, makes mention of "angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," which "he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

And of these latter evil spirits our text also makes mention. It tells us of them that they are in the pit. And the smoke which issues out of the abyss as it is opened evidently speaks to us of the fact that their proper habitation, the sphere in which they exist, is darkness. It tells us that the pit of this abyss is locked, so that they cannot issue forth from it at will. And since even the prince of this abyss must receive the key, it also tells us that these evil spirits are ultimately at the disposal of Christ. They cannot leave their prison except at His bidding. They cannot perform their infernal purposes except when He deems it the proper time. Then He blows the trumpet and hands the key of the abyss to the prince, that he may let his armies go forth to battle.

What we have, therefore, in the words of the passage we are now discussing is nothing but the picture of the letting loose of one of the reserve forces of hell over the world of men. Satan has his regular troops. They are the powers of the air, the spiritual host of wickedness in high places. With them he always works. With them he always offers battle against the Christ and His people. And against them we must be armed with the whole armor of God. With these he always stands in close contact with his human servants on earth. Through them Satan influences the minds and hearts, the thoughts and the affections of men, so that he may be able to maintain his position as the prince of this world. And over against them Christ also has His angels, strengthening and protecting His people. Through this regular army of Satan, under the influence of them, develops what we call "the spirit of the age." If we say that the spirit of the present age is humanistic, we must not imagine that the development of the same has nothing to do with the regular hellish troops of the devil. On the contrary, also that spirit is come to the consciousness of the wicked world under the influence of the powers of the air. They are everywhere. They stand behind the throne of kings and emperors, as we learn, for instance, from the tenth chapter of the prophecy of Daniel. They control the minds of the leaders of the people. They influence the thoughts and the teachings of the infidel professors in our universities. And in a thousand ways they are influential in causing to develop the so-called "spirit of the age."

But of these our text does not speak. No, it speaks of special forces, of the reserve troops of hell, of the army of maneuver of the devil. Not of the powers of the air, but of the spirits of the abyss, who are commonly bound and imprisoned but who are let loose at the command of Christ over the wicked world, does the text speak.

The Work of the Locusts

And what is the teaching of the Word with regard to these wicked spirits? When are they to be let

loose? *Whenever the world is ripening for judgment.*

The sinner and the sinful world in general chooses to do the works of Satan and his kingdom. They choose to trample under foot the precepts of the Most High and to walk in ways of darkness. And therefore, entirely in harmony with their own choice the Lord surrenders them to the devil and his host. *And as they continue and reach the stage of sin and evil in which they have fully surrendered themselves to the powers of darkness, He sends them more devils and more demons, that they may actually increase their sin and become ripe for the great day of the Lord.*

This we read time and again in Scripture. When the leaders of the Jews blaspheme the work of Jesus and prove that they love darkness rather than light, we find that Jesus begins to teach in parables for the very purpose that the things of the kingdom of heaven may remain hid to them. After Paul has given a description of the idolatry and foolishness of the heathen world, he continues to say: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts." And again: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections." Hence we find this relation in Scripture. *Man has surrendered himself to the service of the devil.* In this service he stands in the power and under the influence of Satan and his host generally, and the powers of the air have dominion over him. *The more he serves sin and Satan, the more this power of the evil hosts in high places is emphasized, until, when gradually the world becomes ripe for the judgments of God, this power is made stronger by the letting loose of the reserve forces of Satan, the evil spirits out of the abyss.*

And it is that emphasis of the power of Satan over the wicked world that is pictured in the words of our passage. Again, therefore, in harmony with the character of the trumpets, there is just a little emphasis of the general conditions. If the general influence of the powers of the air may be compared to one-fourth, the influence is now

increased to one-third by the liberation of these locusts, of this infernal army of the reserve forces of the devil.

But what is the special work of these infernal spirits? The text emphasizes that it is their task to torment men. With emphasis this is stated. Their power is as the power of scorpions. This power is in their tails. Their torment is as the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. They are not allowed to kill, but only to torment such as have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And the effect of this torment is such that in those days men seek death, but shall not be able to find it. They desire to die, but death flees from them.

And they may torment these men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads for five months. From the outset we may say that these five months have no other symbolical significance than this, that these infernal spirits may serve their full time. The five months are evidently in harmony with the picture that is given of the locusts. We are told that the time during which locusts may be expected is generally five months of the summer. Not as if any swarm of locusts would continually remain in a country for that length of time: for their work is generally finished much more quickly. But five months is the period of time during which they may be expected. *And the meaning, therefore, is that these spirits may serve their full time and do as much harm as they possibly can.*

But the question is: what is meant by this torment, and what is its nature? The answer to this question we must seek, first of all, in the description of the locusts themselves. There is evidently a marked contrast between their front and their tails. Their appearance in front makes us think of war and victory, of power and glory, of intelligence and invention, of charm and fascination. For they look like horses prepared for battle. They wear crowns as of gold. They have teeth as the teeth of lions. They wear breastplates as it were breastplates of iron. They have faces as the faces of men. And they

have hair like the hair of women. *In a word, these spirits represent all that attracts the wicked world, all that which the world of sin considers the source of bliss and salvation. They are the spirits who play on the passions of men.*

Already the world has sought its happiness in power and dominion, in war and victory. These spirits emphasize these passions. Already the wicked world has sought help in vain philosophy, in following the lie, in science and invention,—all without God. *These spirits simply must emphasize this passion, so that they seek their bliss still more exclusively in these things.* Already the world has sought salvation in the satisfaction of its lion-like greed. These spirits must emphasize this sinful passion and cause it to glow still more. Already the sinful world has thrown itself in the arms of a sinful art, yea, in the charming pleasures of vile sin. *These spirits must incite men to do still more, and to give themselves up to all the pleasures of sin.* Such is their appearance: they appeal to the sinful passions of an already wicked world.

But this is not their final, and therefore, not their real task. It is not their essential characteristic. On the contrary, these evil spirits, whether they like it or not, *have power to hurt men, such men as have not the seal of God on their forehead.* Their tail-end is their real nature. These same spirits who have incited the wicked world to plunge still more deeply in sin and vile transgression *fill the hearts of men with the darkness of despair*. They are the spirits of pessimism. *And after men have followed their inspiration, they find that their end is more bitter than death itself.* Just as the children of God have sometimes a foretaste of the pleasures of heavenly glory because they walk in the way of God's covenant and of His precepts, *so the children of the world, under the influence of these infernal locusts, are given a foretaste of the despair of hell.* They follow their sinful ambition for power and victory to its very end. But despair follows in its wake. They give themselves to the satisfaction of their lion-like greed; but also this is immediately followed by a gloomy pessimism.

The path of philosophy they tread to the end, only to look into the mocking eyes of the devil of despair and dissatisfaction. Art and pleasure and vile lust are worshipped as the saviors, until the dissatisfaction of them is proved and a gloomy pessimism is the result.

Thus the purpose of these demons is to emphasize sin and all its pleasures and all its evil passions so that men follow them to the full, only to be tortured by them in the end by these same demons on the rack of pessimism and despair. That this is actually the case is also evident from verse 6. The nature of their torment is, of course, purely spiritual; and it consists in a being tired of life, in a seeking of death: "And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Literally the state of these men, therefore, is one of the most gloomy pessimism.

Time and again such waves of pessimism have swept in limited proportions over the world. It swept over the world of Grecian civilization when all the efforts of sinful men to find the way to happiness along the road of sin and idolatry and vain philosophy and lusts failed absolutely. It swept the Roman world when it had cast itself into the arms of conquest and power, into the arms of luxury and dissipation. Gloomy pessimism was the result. It also has swept the modern world more than once whenever it has had to confess failure to find the road to happiness. What else is the spirit that prevails in the spheres of Spiritualism and Christian Science and Theosophy, yea, even of Buddhism and heathen religions, than the black smoke that is rising from the abyss? But all these things are only a limited fulfillment of what is still to come upon the world. As the time draws near for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the world once more exhausts itself to work out its own salvation without Christ and without God, as it exerts itself to find this way in paths of war and conquest, in ways of philosophy and vain lies, in ways of lusts and vile pleasures, it will also become prepared more and more for the

influence of these infernal locusts. And literally also this part of Revelation is still to be fulfilled, so that the state of utter despair will come upon the world of sin, and men will continue to follow the paths of sin and transgression and of blasphemy against the name of Jesus Christ. Then again men will seek death, but will not be able to find it. Not as if this state of universal pessimism will be the final state. On the contrary, the power of the locusts is limited to five months. It is only a preparation for still greater efforts and for the final public worship of the beast that comes out of the abyss.

But surely, it will come; and the children of the world will then have a foretaste of the torments of hell. Blessed is the comfort that is implied in these words. For those who have the seal of God on their forehead in those days, who do not follow the ways of the world and sin and lust and the lie, are protected by Christ Himself. From Him these locusts receive their power and authority. And that power is limited to the world of sin only. These sealed ones have put on the whole armor of God, and they are not generally under the influence of the powers of the air. Christ and all His holy angels protect them, so that they are not hurt. And though they more and more may have to fear the gloomy despair of the sinful world, it will remain literally true that the gates of hell shall never prevail against them.

Hoeksema, Herman. Behold, He Cometh: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation (pp. 428-436). Reformed Free Publishing Association. Kindle Edition.

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Now, let's conclude by returning one more time to Paul's words to Timothy:

1Ti 4:1-3 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, (2) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, (3) men who forbid

marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

We are in these "later times." These things of which Paul speaks are happening, and all the more so. The "deceitful spirits" are very much at work deluding people with "doctrines of demons." What are these doctrines? Paul gives us two examples (both very characteristic of Rome). But it is the first example I call your attention to: *forbidding marriage.*

Satan and his demons energetically work to pervert God's order for male and female, husband and wife, children and family. Under this heading of "forbidding marriage," we can include all sorts of these kinds of evil perversions, and here I want to drive home to every one of us how *dangerous it is to be careless in regard to hearing, studying, reading, believing and obeying God's Word.*

Numbers of us right here in this small church are encountering such perversions of God's order – these *doctrines of demons* which people we know and love, people who even have claimed to be Christians, are deceived by and ensnared to. Lesbianism, homosexuality, gender denial and transition, fornication, rejection of marriage, murder of babies….Where is this all coming from? We have the answer. From Satan, from these demonic hordes unleashing their deceptive lies on those who do not love God's truth.

Do you see it? Does this shake you to an awakening to the danger of that roaring lion prowling, seeking the careless to devour? That these very real demonic, evil angels are at work right now in this world bringing their lies to us? What is the only remedy? The armor of the Word of God put on by people who are born again.

2Pe 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,