

# God and Demons

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**T**here are a number of instances in Scripture where we read that God directed evil spirits and it raises the whole question of the relationship of God and Satan in the unseen world (eg. 1Kings 22:20-23 and 1Sam.16:14). There is no doubt communication between God and Satan exists for Jesus commanded unclean spirits to depart from many who were possessed and they obeyed His voice. Some demons addressed the Lord (Luke 8:28). Also God spoke to Satan regarding His servant Job.

The demoniac in the country of the Gadarenes is a notable case and when Jesus cast the legion of demons out they obeyed His voice departing into a herd of swine (Mark 5:8-13). The woman who was bent low was loosed from Satan's power and walked upright: she had been afflicted for 18 years (Luke 13:16).

In the New Testament we find Satan tempting Christ in the wilderness, after His baptism, but when he was unsuccessful he "*departed from him for a season*" (Luke 4:13). Satan came again and influenced Peter in an attempt to divert the Lord from going to the cross after Jesus announced that He was going to Jerusalem to die. Jesus quickly identified Satan as the one behind Peter's remark and "*turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan*" (Matt.16:23).

Satan pursued the Lord and sought to find a place from which to launch an attack from within the ranks of the disciples. Jesus warned Peter saying,

*"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"* (Luke 22:31-32).

Satan was successful with Judas at the last supper for we read:

*"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve"* (Luke 22:3).

Satan infiltrated the early Church and filled the heart of Ananias who lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) but was exposed. Another attempt was made when Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria and Simon the sorcerer professed conversion and tried to buy Apostolic power. He too, was exposed as a fraud (Acts 8:18).

Just before Jesus went to the cross Satan came to find some fault in the perfect Lamb of God and Jesus said:

*“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for **the prince of this world** cometh, and hath nothing in me”* (John14:30).

At the cross there was a conflict between the powers of darkness and the Son of God and Satan was defeated. There the *“seed of the woman”* bruised the serpent’s head and through death, Christ destroyed *“him that had the power of death, that is the devil”* (Heb.2:14).

Satan, however, did not give up, even though he was a defeated foe, and he has continued to this day to attack the people of God and the work of God. When the Gospel is preached he plucks away the good seed of the Word of God and sows tares among the wheat. Peter warns that he is the *“adversary”* of the believer and goes about like a roaring lion *“seeking whom he may devour”* (1Peter 5:8).

Satan uses every device in his assault on the believer and we are to watch for the *“wiles of the devil”*; *“we wrestle with principalities”*, and we are to withstand the *“fiery darts of the evil one”* with the shield of faith (Eph.6:11-16). The Christian life is a conflict with Satanic powers, but praise God, we are victors through Christ and have been assured of Divine protection for *“he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not”* (lit. *“does not attach himself”*) (1John 5:18). **A believer can never be possessed by a demon** or need to have an evil spirit cast out, for Satan cannot *“attach himself”* to the born-again child of God who is already indwelt by the Spirit of God.

**Satan’s attacks are external to the child of God** and the Christian, who is walking with the Lord, is *“not ignorant of his*

*devices*" (2 Cor.2:11): We can discern his purposes and ways; his lies, deception, proud thoughts and accusations; all are designed to discourage and divert the believer from the path of whole-hearted obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our adversary sometimes **uses other men** in his attempt to oppose and derail us just as he sent the false prophet Hananiah to oppose Jeremiah and take the yoke off his neck and break it; contradicting the message of Jeremiah that Israel was to submit to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.28:10-13). Jeremiah was not diverted and rebuked the false prophet telling him he would die within a year. Hananiah died in the seventh month.

Paul wanted to visit the Thessalonian Church but could not because, he said, "*Satan hindered us*" (1Thess.2:18). We are not told **how** Satan hindered Paul but we know that the Jews in Thessalonica were particularly bitter and persecuted the Christians; Paul had to flee to Berea from Thessalonica when he was there. Most likely Satan used the vicious Jews to prevent his visits.

Answers to our prayers may sometimes be delayed because of conflict in the unseen world. Daniel prayed for three weeks and the archangel Gabriel was dispatched with God's message on the first day he began to pray but one of the demons called "*the prince of Persia*", hindered him, until Michael, the chief angel came to his aid (Dan.10:12-14): There was a three-week delay.

Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest standing "*before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him*" (Zech.3:1). This was at a time when the Temple was being rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity and Satan was seeking to frustrate the work of God. The Samaritans appealed to two Persian kings who, contrary to the decree of Cyrus, ordered that work cease on the Temple. Completion of the Temple was delayed by eight years from the death of Cyrus (530BC) to the 2nd year of Darius (522BC). Satan hindered the work.

When David had conquered his enemies and God had established the kingdom under him, his heart was lifted up with pride and Satan influenced his proud heart to number the people which brought the judgment of God upon the nation and 70,000 died in a plague (2Sam.24:1-25). David repented and purchased the land for the Temple to be built on Mount Zion.

In this case we read in 1Chron.21:1 that *“Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel”* yet 2 Sam.24:1 states that *“the anger of the LORD was kindles against Israel, and He (God) moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah”*. Both are true. Israel had sinned and was to be punished and **God permitted Satan to provoke David** to do evil in order to accomplish the purpose of God. God could not tempt David for James tells us:

*“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man”*  
(James 1:13).

It is Satan’s nature to seek to destroy and he would delight to see David punished by God and 70,000 in Israel perish. If Satan had his way he would have destroyed ALL of Israel but God acted in mercy to restrain the destroying angel when David cast himself on the mercy of God.

There are some puzzling aspects of God’s dealing with Satan and his demons and one case is described in 1Sam.16:14 where we read that *“the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.”*

King Saul had been disobedient and had lost the right to rule Israel: God rejected him and gave the kingdom to David, *“a man after His own heart”* (1Sam.13:14). At this time God sent an evil spirit to trouble Saul. Again, this was God’s permissive will allowing the evil spirit to do what it always wanted to do but had been **previously restrained by God**. It is a sobering thought that men only have protection from Satan’s power because God prevents it. If God withdrew His gracious protection entirely, the

entire human race would instantly perish for Satan “*has the power of death*” (Heb.2:14) and would use it to thwart God’s purpose to make His eternal dwelling place “*with men*” (Rev.21:3).

*“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness”* (Lam.3:22-23).

Another instance is when the prophet Micaiah stood before King Ahab. The false prophets had prophesied that God would give Israel the victory in the battle with the Syrians. God had determined that Ahab should perish in the conflict and asked the demon hosts, “*Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead?*” (1Kings 22:20). Micaiah told Ahab:

*“There came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and **I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.** And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, **the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets,** and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee”* (1Kings 22:21-23).

In this instance we should note that the evil spirit had **access to God’s throne** and God showed Micaiah the scene in heaven: he saw “*all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left*” (1Kings 22:19). Presumably God’s angels were on His right and Satan and his hordes were on God’s left. A demon responded to a question asked by the Most High God, “*Who will persuade Ahab?*”. God **permitted** the evil spirit to convince Ahab that he would win the battle. No holy angel would lie to Ahab but an evil lying spirit would delight to lie and see Ahab destroyed.

The New Testament tells us that Satan has access to the presence of God at this present time and accuses believers “*before our God day and night*” (Rev.12:10). He accused Job before God and God permitted him to bring great hardship on faithful Job but Job was blessed in the end. Satan obviously WANTED to destroy Job and his actions were permitted within Divinely prescribed limits.

Because Job was godly Satan could only test him but could not destroy him. In this way God used Satan to purify Job. In a similar way God allowed Paul to be afflicted with a *“thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure”* (2Cor.12:7).

During the Tribulation Satan will be reinforced by the demons now bound in the Bottomless pit (Rev.9:1-12) and will declare war on heaven but Michael will cast him and his fallen angels out of heaven down to the earth (Rev.12:9): At this present time Satan has access to heaven.

At the end of the Tribulation Satan will be bound in the Bottomless Pit for 1,000 years and will be released after the 1,000 years are expired. The purpose of God in releasing Satan is so that he can test the nations with deception. The saved in the millennium are saved under the New Covenant and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Ezek.36:27); will not be deceived but those who do not have the Holy Spirit will be deceived.

Satan’s domain is the earth and he has been given the kingdoms of this world as he indicated during the Temptation in the wilderness: He shewed Jesus *“all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it”* (Luke 4:5-6).

Satan places his demons over the nations now and is working toward the day when he will place the Antichrist on the throne at Jerusalem to rule the world (Rev.13:8) . Then men will worship both Satan (the Dragon) and the Antichrist (Rev.13:4).

As this Church age draws to a close we are warned that *“the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy”* (1Tim.4:1-2).

We see this demonic activity in the contemporary, tongues-talking charismatic churches, and the spiritistic, new-age thinking that

has become acceptable in what previously were “evangelical” churches. Apostate Christendom in the Tribulation will be judged for it will become “*the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird (demon)*” (Rev.18:2). Only one thing is restraining the full development of Antichrist’s kingdom and it is the presence of the Bride of Christ, the true Church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When the true Church is raptured, Antichrist will be revealed (2Thess.2:1-12) and Satan will gather all nations to fight against Christ at his second advent. “*Even so, come Lord Jesus!*” (Rev.22:20).

### *Can We Cast Out Demons?*

How then should Christians deal with cases where there is Satanic activity or demon possession?

During the Lord’s ministry on earth the disciples were given authority to cast out demons (Matt.10:1) and even in the early Church the Apostles were given the power to cast out demons along with other “sign gifts” (Mark 16:17-18). However, these sign gifts and gifts of prophecy which did not continue beyond the Apostolic period and ceased once the canon of Scripture was complete. There is no need for new revelations today and God warns against adding to the “*words of the prophesy of this book*” (Rev.22:18). Jesus warned that

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful (miraculous) works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt.7:21-23).

When we counsel demonically influenced people we must **present the Gospel** which is “*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes*” (Rom.1:16). **That is the ONLY way that God can deliver anyone from Satanic delusion or possession.** Don’t go past the Gospel until the person is soundly saved through faith in Christ. We are no match for the Devil and even “*Michael the*

archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee*" (Jude 1:9).

Those who arrogantly address the Devil and command him to obey them are no better than the seven sons of *"Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"* (Acts 19:14-15).

We can pray for afflicted people and show them the Gospel message in Scripture but **they must respond** of their own free will or there is no hope.

It is comforting to know that the Christian is constantly protected. We have a guardian angel (Heb.1:14) and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who dwells within us: we have the promise that *"the evil one"* cannot *"touch"* (*"attach"*) himself to us (1John 5:18). God has *"delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col.1:13).

The only answer for those involved in the dark things of Satan, whether it be New Age, Spiritism, Mormanism, Charismatic tongues, or the Theosophical Society, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ who *"through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Heb.2:14).

Those who refuse to yield to the Holy Spirit's conviction and the Word of God have Divine protection withdrawn and so we read that those who

*"did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind"*** (Rom.1:28).

Or those like the grossly immoral and unrepentant man at Corinth who was to be *"**delivered unto Satan** for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"* (1Cor.5:5).

While this man was unrebuked for his sin he had no conscience about his wickedness. By handing him over to Satan there was a possibility he might repent and be saved.



We wonder why men believe the lie of evolution, global warming, spiritism etc etc? These are intelligent men with years of academic training yet they accept theories that any normal man can see are nonsense. It is Satanic delusion.

Why do some become homosexuals and adopt other habitually deviant behaviours. If they have refused the light *“that lightens every man that comes into the world”* John 1:9 then God removes His protection and **allows Satan to work** his desires in deceiving them.

We do well to understand what the enemy of souls is doing but we must **never be obsessed** with him. Our focus must be on the Lord Jesus Christ and his Word and we won't have to worry about Satan. The secret of a fruitful life is set out in Psalm 1:

*“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper”* (Psalm 1:1-3).

AMEN!