

SATAN AND DEMONS: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Why study this topic?

It is *possible* to be a good Christian and know nothing of the enemy. One can carefully follow the Lord and be protected many times a day from unseen and powerful forces by our almighty and wise God. Yet, for a person to understand the nature of the spiritual battle does several things. We begin to see how wonderful a salvation has been provided for us -- not just a little frosting on the cake or a boost in our rating scales of happy living, but a miraculous rescue from the most awful evil.

This knowledge then also becomes a powerful motivator to the spiritual disciplines. We walk close to the Lord because we are in grave danger. Study of the Bible and meaningful prayer are not optional, but absolutely essential parts of our daily routine. We do not trust our own rationalizations when they conflict with God's commands because we understand the subtlety of the one who opposes us. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:11 "[We forgive] in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

INTRODUCTION

Although I had been taught about Satan and demons as part of the Biblical record, my first concern that they may have something to do with the world in which I lived began at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School with a series of talks by Dr. Kurt Koch of Germany. He was a Theologian and Psychologist who had found in his counseling practice a variety of strange, unresponsive psychological symptoms in people who had been involved in the occult.

Dr. Koch interspersed his case histories with prayer and scripture. He warned of the dangers of curiosity and said "Only get involved in this area if God calls you to it." Nominal believers attending sessions of praying for those afflicted by demons had been viciously attacked. He himself and his family had experienced many accidents and problems he attributed to the opposition of the powers of darkness. Our only safety is in the matchless power of the Blood of Jesus by which the Eternal Triune God has purchased us from the authority of the enemy.

It seemed so distant and out of place, like a throwback to the ancient world of Bible days, which I believed, but placed in a separate category from "real life". Maybe this could happen in Europe, but not close to home. Then a Free Church Pastor got up and told how as a high school student he had obtained the questions to the next day's tests from an Ouija board, until he was convicted of the danger of the practice and renounced it. My wife told of Nursing School classmates playing with a Ouija board and it spelling out "unbeliever" when she came into the room.

Shortly thereafter, a student came to me in my role as the school doctor. He complained of possible demon affliction. Dr. Koch had said that he personally did not have the gift of the discernment of spirits and would not make a firm diagnosis of demon oppression but would pray for the person before him. Psychologically disturbed people, even those not particularly religious would accept prayer. Demon-afflicted would often become greatly distressed by the idea. I prayed for the student and as I recall matters gradually were resolved.

Later as I began to have dealings with Mormon missionaries (one of my best friends from High school and college years had become a Mormon) my wife and I began to have strange experiences. We heard noises of cupboards opening and closing in the night that we could not physically explain. I awoke with the feeling of paralysis and a heavy weight on my chest that only slowly lifted when I commanded it to "go by the power of the Blood of Jesus". There is a medical syndrome of sleep paralysis so it would be possible to contest a supernatural cause, but it came at a time when many other things were happening. My wife awoke frightened of an alien presence and as we prayed together, it seemed that my face as I prayed changed into something evil. We took it as an attempt by the powers of

darkness to break her confidence in me and my prayer. We saw the Lord's allowing it to happen as a reminder that she did not need me as a mediator between her and the only source of safety. It convinced us that we were indeed involved in an important work if Satan took the trouble to interfere.

Still later as I was attempting to show the Mormons how the supposed direct verbal revelations from God to Joseph Smith had been altered in later editions to eliminate inaccuracies and add embellishments, I felt as if I were being strangled until I silently claimed the Power that the evil ones hate and fear. The display of demonic power was even greater several weeks later when those same Mormons came back having borrowed the old editions I had read from with a promise to find the answer to this apparent discrediting of their prophet. They simply said, "God can change his words if He wants to," and refused to acknowledge any incongruity to the All-wise All-powerful One editing His pronouncements. (Of course, they see God as an elevated man, so perhaps the Peter Principle applies to cosmic hierarchies as well.)

When we arrived in Hong Kong, where we served for seven years as missionaries with the Evangelical Free church, we saw much evidence of open involvement in the world of spirits with sacrifices to gods and ancestors as well as appeals for special knowledge (through fortune telling) and power (such as by the spiritual martial arts sect of "sun gung" whose adherents put themselves under the protection of spirits in order to repel darts, heal knife wounds and bend steel bars with their throat).

Still I wondered what relationship all this had to my everyday life with its temptations and trials. How much should I investigate and study the more bizarre manifestations of evil? How much, indeed, should I investigate at all of my spiritual enemy and his ways?

Perhaps you think that your world is still untouched by the strange, but chances are that your neighbor's is not. Some of the practices of Sun Gung have been performed by Chinese Acrobatic troupes. Courses are offered in many places, including my home town of Minneapolis, in "channeling superior beings" for self improvement. A magazine for the elderly entitled The Senior Times promotes this as an antidote to aging. People in America are inviting alien intelligences into their bodies, hardly understanding what it really means.

EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF SATAN AND DEMONS: WHY USE SCRIPTURE

EXISTENCE

The existence of Satan and demons (or at least some supernatural entity) can be deduced from experience. Existence of the supernatural in general is shown by phenomena that cannot be explained naturally, like levitation or repelling of darts with unseen forces. Still, a hard minded person may claim that the forces are actually yet-to-be-discovered natural phenomena.

But is that scientific? Not if you define science as study of the natural. But it is logical to consider supernatural when natural possibilities are exhausted, especially when they seem impossible.

NATURE

The interpretation of experience is variable. Why not call it the power within? It is difficult to say one way or the other from the experiential viewpoint. People involved often say and think it to be some power within themselves. Sometimes their entry level knowledge later gives way to deeper knowledge of what is happening.

A person brought up to believe that all reality is molecules in motion sees his first totally unexplainable phenomenon and cannot evaluate. Is it paranormal power? Mind over matter? The god within? Power to be tapped? The dead?

SCRIPTURE

Scripture gives data not available any other way.
But why accept it? Why not other "holy writings"?

Scripture comes with credentials:

- Historical reliability
- Archeological, scientific confirmation
- Careful preservation
- A claim to be God's Word
- Accurate description of the human condition
- Miracle and prophecy point to a connection with the One
who controls natural law and knows the future.
- Miracle is for that generation
- Prophecy is for the later generations
- When we act on the message, our life is changed
- We find the God of the Bible to be trustworthy

Therefore, when the Bible speaks of things we cannot confirm otherwise, we accept on the basis of all the things we can confirm. This is Biblical faith. Not blind acceptance with no basis but commitment to God based on evidence. We use the same sort of process in evaluating the reliability of a newspaper, a friend, even our own senses. Faith is part of our every day life. Without faith, we would not be able to eat food for fear it was poisoned. We would not accept the existence of people or places we had not seen and would not believe they continued to exist after we had left them. In short, life as we know it would be impossible. Yet faith is not random; it is based on reason.

God wants it to be that way. He does not want us to believe just anything and does not count as righteousness the faith of, for example, the 400 prophets of Baal. He wants us to believe the truth and follow Him. We need to be able to tell the difference. Moses conveys to the Israelites criteria regarding true and false prophets, how to tell the difference and whom to follow. Deuteronomy 18:22. "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him." Deuteronomy 13:1-3 "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Let us follow other gods'(gods you have not known) and let us worship them, you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul."

A prophet without supernatural credentials is not to be considered a spokesman for God. One who contradicts the message given through Moses -- with the powerful confirmation of the plagues on Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and the food and water in the desert -- is likewise not to be followed. Deuteronomy 4:34,35 "Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other."

ARE THERE EXTREMES TO BE AVOIDED IN THINKING ABOUT SATAN AND DEMONS?

DENIAL

Denying the existence of demons leaves one open to deception without even recognizing the possibility of deceivers being present.

A medical educator telling a group of Pediatric residents about clinical hypnosis said, "Get in touch with your subconscious, it will never lead you astray." How does he know that? Even a cursory perusal of human history

would make one suspicious of the accuracy of that statement, but if clever spiritual deceivers do exist, what a perfect opportunity to plant any idea they wished.

A person taught the non-existence of spiritual things, if he sees incontrovertible evidence of the supernatural may uncritically accept the total world view of whatever group got to him first.

A brilliant physician whom I know told a group of pediatric residents excitedly how he had spent Halloween with witches and warlocks on a hilltop and experienced their ability to alter the taste of wine. He had no idea that in the spiritual world he was a babe in the woods.

OVEREMPHASIS

The opposite error from denial is to see demons in every person who commits wrong. For example, one caught in this error might say that if I told a lie, I have the demon of lying. If I have jealousy, it is actually a demon which needs to be cast out. This is a simple-minded approach that is certain to disillusion the person who seeks exorcism after every sin. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Notice that the sins are ours and the remedy is confession.

To say "the devil made me do it" is an attempt to shift the blame (a time-honored technique that began in the garden of Eden) which also fails to recognize the subtlety of the real situation. For Satan and his demons do have an interest in inducing us to sin and accomplish this by a number of methods short of entering into a person in a way that requires "casting out". Usually, like the confidence man and his "get rich quick" scheme, when it is all over, they are gone with whatever we gave them, leaving us with the consequences of the decisions we made of our own free will.

We are told to avoid temptation in 2 Timothy 2:22 ("Flee the evil desires of youth") and to resist the devil in James 4:7 ("Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.") But we are also told that out of our own heart comes all sorts of wickedness. Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean."

The person who sees demons everywhere is more in touch with reality than the one who sees them nowhere, and yet if that knowledge leads only to a parody of proper behavior, the enemy has profited. This indicates something of the incredible subtlety of Satan and his demons.

FASCINATION

The popularity of horror movies and books is an interesting phenomenon for in them is often a mixture of truth and error. Many people seem to become desensitized to the reality of any spiritual evil because the caricature they have chosen to examine is so incredible. The world they live in appears to be so far removed from the world of the horror genre that there seems to be absolutely nothing to fear. Thus they can think they have faced their fears and go back to live in denial of spiritual realities.

Other people continually seek out the dark and strange things but without any recognition of the danger involved. This is usually accomplished by assuming a gnostic or occult mind set, the idea that with proper knowledge, words and rituals, they are in control. They may think of what is happening as releasing the potential within themselves, as tapping into some impersonal power source or as a beckoning of benevolent spirits, but the common thread is the belief that they personally are in control of the outcome. The truth is that they are being manipulated and brought under control by spiritual beings far more clever than they imagine.

The occult mind set is a caricature of the proper relationship with our Creator and Redeemer. In prayer, we praise Him for Who He is, thank Him for the relationship we have because of the Precious Blood of Jesus and then plead cases before Him, claiming His promises. We are not using magic words but making reference to cosmic realities. We are not pushing buttons to get benefits, but participating in the work of God because He wants us to. We ultimately submit to His will and depend on His power. If we think of prayer otherwise, we are slipping into the occult mind set.

Christians may become fascinated with the ways of the enemy by any number of routes, yet the warning of Dr. Kurt Koch is the voice of experience. Do not get involved unless God calls you to it. The subtlety of Satan makes it impossible to catalogue all the ways he can deceive and disarm, although they range from, on the one extreme, pulling a person into his orbit with the usual devious promises of knowledge, power and pleasure to, on the other extreme, a subtle overemphasis on one area of truth to the detriment of another.

FEAR

The final error, for the Christian, is to live in dread of the dark powers, with a sense of hopelessness. We are to have a great respect for the enemy of our souls. He is "like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8). Yet by submitting ourselves to God we may resist him and he will flee from us (James 4:7). We also can be assured that nothing, not even spiritual wickedness can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39).

Dread, however, is the proper response for the unbeliever. For indeed, lacking a living relationship with the Only One able to overcome Satan and his host, they are totally helpless. Yet, people do not like to live that way. What do you say to a small child frightened of ghosts? If you cannot say, "Jesus is stronger than any spirit," you will probably say, "We don't believe in ghosts." Or you overcome your fear by believing that the spirits are friendly or that you are able to control them. Even exorcisms are often viewed as occult manipulations rather than appeals to Him before whom every knee will bow.

Jesus, protect us by the Blood You shed on the Cross of Calvary from the one who hates us because we are loved by You.

OUTLINE OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES ON SATAN AND DEMONS

Scripture tells us what we need to know, it does not always satisfy our curiosity.

What scripture does tell us about Satan and demons ought to be a powerful motivator to staying close to the Lord Jesus Christ and carefully following His commands. That seems to be the reason for the information we are given.

I. ORIGIN OF SATAN AND DEMONS: not completely clear from scripture

Isaiah 14:12-15. A double-meaning prophecy about the king of Babylon that also seems to refer to Satan. "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."

Luke 10:18. Jesus seems to be recalling the Isaiah passage or an event both could be referring to when He says, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Ezekiel 28:12-19. Another double meaning prophecy referring to the King of Tyre but applicable to Satan. "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God.... You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.... So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth...."

Revelation 12:9. War is described in heaven, "The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." This seems to indicate that "his" angels fell with him, an unspecified number. Note also that he is described as the one who "LEADS THE WHOLE WORLD ASTRAY"

Because Satan is a deceiver, what we try to learn about him from experience is unreliable. In John 8:44, Jesus describes him as the father of lies. Yet in Matthew 8:29 demons call Jesus the son of God, so we see that Satan's followers are not obligate liars (they can speak some true statements). Because he is a master deceiver, people under his influence do not necessarily know what is happening. Satan thus works differently with different people and in different cultures. In some parts of the world and times in history and with some groups or individuals he openly promotes fear and awe. In late twentieth century mainstream American culture he effectively hides his existence so that there are always "other explanations" available for his activity. Some are logical such as psychological problems in a person who may also be influenced by demons. Some are illogical but firmly held by otherwise intelligent people who want to avoid the conclusions to which reason leads them.

For example, considering the ability of certain Eastern Martial Arts adherents to repel darts and bend steel bars placed against their throats to be due to "self hypnosis" defies logic. It is possible to explain lack of the sensing of pain in this way but there is no physical explanation for forces involved. Some westerners accept the Oriental force of "Chi" as the explanation. But by ordinary logic it ought to be considered supernatural. Firewalking may have a theoretical natural explanation but it does stretch credibility.

Yet illogical explanations also abound in explanations of the origin of the Universe, life and we ourselves. Although uniform experience indicates that order does not spontaneously arise from chaos, unknown mechanisms are called upon or known mechanisms are twisted. For example, it is said that order can arise in one area at the expense of general disorder. Yet this can only happen with the aid of intelligent planning or a machine made by intelligent planning.

Note on the origin of Satan: Satan is a created being, not a philosophical necessity. Dualism says that if there is good, there must be evil, either a good god balanced by a bad god or a good side and bad side of one god. The Bible indicates that God is self sufficient and wholly good but chose to create beings with free will who have the opportunity of choosing to oppose Him.

Angels which are described in the scripture seem to have individual personalities just as created human beings do, so it seems reasonable that demons are also individually different.

II. END OF SATAN AND DEMONS: abundantly clear in scripture

Hebrews 2:14,15 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

I JOHN 3:8b "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Revelation 12:11 "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

Satan has been defeated by what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross. Yet he does not stop opposing the work of God, but fights to the very end, when the sentence that has passed on him will be finally executed.

Revelation 20:1-3a,7-10 "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a

thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time."

"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

If Satan has been defeated by the blood of Jesus Christ and the empty tomb and has been already sentenced to the lake of fire, why is he still around to continue his evil work? The answer must be that it is in the sovereign will of God Almighty. But why can this be? As with so many unanswerable questions, our curiosity is not completely satisfied by the Scripture. Yet there are some clues. Wilbur Pickering, in a book he has written in Portuguese and is rewriting in English under the probable title of Spiritual Warfare, feels that at least in part, it is because God wants to turn over the power to exercise that victory to us, His people. He suggests that the passage in Matthew 18:18, "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," refers to this. Thus, Jesus Christ, after winning the victory and triumphing forever over the enemy, gave the authority to those who have created in His image and born again into His family.

In a similar vein, Judges 3:1 and 2 states concerning the enemies that were allowed to continue in Canaan, "These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience.)"

As James 4:7 clearly teaches, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Satan has no reason to flee us except that God has given power over to us.

Interestingly, even after the Millennium when the earth will have enjoyed the rule of Christ for a thousand years, Revelation 20:7 indicates that Satan will be loosed once more and will again succeed in leading many to oppose the rule of God. It appears that the presence of a spiritual battle amplifies the effects of human decisions. If we choose to disobey our Creator and Redeemer, great evil results. If we humbly acknowledge our sinfulness and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf, then also learn his commands in order to obey them, immense power is available to accomplish God's purpose through us.

III. ACTIVITY OF SATAN AND DEMONS

A. Satan and his angels have a general power and authority in the world and an influence over governments.

John 14:30a Jesus calls Satan, "the prince of this world."

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

John 1:4,5 God and His work is described as "light." Satan, when he is associated with darkness, is exposed as being totally opposed to God. This is one of many object lessons from nature that God has created to teach us. (Others are planting and harvest, parent and child, metamorphosis, etc.) Darkness is the absence of light; it does not have an independent existence. Satan is real but his program is totally negative. Whatever God is for, Satan is against. Whatever God loves, Satan hates. Because God is true, he deceives. Satan's creation, the lie, is nothing but the absence of full truth, just as shadow is the absence of full light. Some lies are precise opposites of truth, some are only lacking a small part.

Revelation 12:9a "The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

Revelation 16:14 "They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty." Even the actions of nations can be affected by demons.

B. Satan and demons have the ability to influence people's thoughts and perceptions.

Matthew 13:19a "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."

John 13:2 "The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus."

II Corinthians 4:4 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

II Corinthians 11:14 "And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."

I Timothy 4:1 "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."

Matthew 13:24b-30 "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

While men sleep, Satan sows bad seed where the good seed had been sown. God never sleeps. (Psalms 121:3-4 "Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.") The bad seeds are false disciples, as Jesus later explains to His disciples. Matthew 13:37-39 "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels."

The attitude we are to have is patience. Do you suspect someone is a weed? You may be wrong. Love them and desire the best for them. Do not try to uproot them yourself but wait for the appointed day when God will separate the wheat from the tares.

II Corinthians 10:3-5 "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

The arguments mentioned are not attributed to Satan unequivocally, but the implication of spiritual warfare is clear especially since the thoughts need to be taken captive.

C. Satan may be permitted by God to oppress certain individuals by causing problems, accidents and illnesses.

Job 1:9-12,2:4-6 "'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Satan replied. 'Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.' The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.' Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."

"'Skin for skin!' Satan replied. 'A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.' The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.'"

Job eventually lost his great wealth, his children's lives, his health and the support of his wife and friends. In the end, however, he received back double what he lost.

Luke 22:31-32 "'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Peter subsequently ricocheted from overconfidence ("Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death,") through unappreciated zeal (cutting off the ear of the High Priest's servant and being told by Jesus to put away the sword) to denial that he even knew Jesus. Yet he was later restored and became a leader of the church.

I Thessalonians 2:18 "For we wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--but Satan stopped us.

Why does God allow this sort of thing to happen? Satan seems to need permission and he is given limits. Yet God can use these situations for good in the maturation process of those He loves. As Joseph said to his brothers' regarding their selling him into slavery after which he had been elevated to the office of prime minister of Egypt, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20) If that is the case, why does Satan play into God's hands? He thinks he can win, and, frankly, sometimes he does.

D. Satan and demons can tempt people to sin, both subtle intellectual temptations as well as emotional or sensuous ones, playing on our human nature and personal weaknesses to lead us away from God and towards his own control.

Genesis 3:1-7 Satan cleverly tempted Eve to disobey God.

Verse 1 "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"'?" He made the command seem unreasonable.

Verse 2,3 "The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."' Eve quoted the commandment (1:16,17) but added, "neither shall you touch it." Was this her own addition or was this from Adam? Eve did not get the command from God but second hand from Adam because it was given before she arrived on the scene.

Verse 4,5 "'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" Satan perfected the lie and attacked God's motivation in one stroke. He told Eve that God was wrong about their dying if they ate it and that on the contrary, He was trying to keep from them the very best. ("You will be like God" is actually Satan's own big area of temptation.)

Verse 6 "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." The thoughts had been planted. Eve then elevated her own reasoning above the clear command of God and acted. By this time, Satan was gone.

Verse 7,23 "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." "So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work

the ground from which he had been taken." We see that Satan had told a little truth with his lie. They did gain knowledge. But the end result was disaster.

Matthew 4:1-11 (compare Luke 4:1-13) "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."' Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."' Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."' Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

Satan used a variety of means, sometimes quite subtle to tempt Jesus to sin. Putting yourself in Jesus place, why would it have been wrong to make bread out of stones? He is the Creator. Yet it would have been a selfish miracle that did not follow the pattern of alleviating the suffering of others and/or confirming the authenticity of God's message. It would have also been a first step in following the suggestions of the tempter. Told to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, not to do it might seem like lack of trust in God and to do it may have been "good press". Despite being a reasonable idea, it was not God's will. The temptation to bow down before Satan and receive the kingdoms of the world is the most outrageous to us yet we miss its power. Satan had somehow usurped the authority to give what Jesus had come to gain. Satan proposed a shortcut that bypassed the suffering and eliminated the separation from the Father that exists as a "hole in eternity".

The different order of the temptations in the two accounts probably reflects the fact that the temptations were repeated many times, as temptations usually are.

Ephesians 4:24-32 "And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Prolonged anger gives an opportunity to Satan. By implication, so do all the other things listed including unforgiveness. How does this give Satan an opportunity? Probably by giving him a handle on us and driving a wedge between Christians.

E. Satan tries to produce discord by accusations and insinuations. Because God is love, Satan must oppose love, of God for man, man for God and man for man.

Genesis 3:4,5 Satan impugns the motives of God. "'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" "

Job 1:9,11 Satan accused Job before God, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ...But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

Revelation 12:10b "For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

Ephesians 4:26,27 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."

F. Satan seeks actual control of individuals by leading them into behavior that will become gradually more difficult to break out of.

John 14:30b Jesus said, "I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me..." Why? Because Jesus had no sin.

Ephesians 2:1,2 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

Satan causes those who do not serve God to live according to their lusts. People, thinking it is freedom to disobey God, find that they are precisely obeying Satan whose will is to do anything but God's will. Obedience to Satan seems to give Satan power and authority over a person.

Acts 26:17b,18a Paul states that Christ told him, "I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God...."

Because those who have not turned to Christ are under the power of Satan, in a sense every conversion is an exorcism. It is always a spiritual struggle to turn to God.

G. Demonization of individuals by Satan and demons is described in the Scripture as a real phenomenon, not just another word for mental illness. Demonization may appear to be mental or physical illness but requires spiritual treatment. It represents a special relationship between a human personality and a demonic personality, who exercises control by manipulation.

"Demonization is a transliteration a Greek word. Daimonizomenos does not mean owned by a demon, but simply 'demonized.' This basically describes the condition of a person who is inhabited by a demon or demons and is in various degrees under control with various effects. The idea of ownership is foreign to the New Testament word and its usage. Satan and demons own nothing. God owns them. They are creatures of God. He is in control of them and determines their limitations and their destiny. They are judged by the cross of Christ, defeated and bankrupt." (Dickason, Demon Possession and the Christian, Moody, 1987, p. 130).

Matthew 12:43-45a "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

This is a picture of exorcism without submission to Christ. There is no presence of the Holy Spirit and therefore no protection.

Mark 8:23-25 "He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, 'Do you see anything?' He looked up and said, 'I see people; they look like trees walking around.' Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly."

Ordinary blindness (due to physical causes) is found and cured by Jesus without reference to demons.

Matthew 12:22-29 "Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.' Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and

every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house."

Jesus cured a man who was blind and dumb due to the presence of a demon. The Pharisees argued that he cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, which Jesus declares to be illogical. In these two passages, the same "disease" (blindness) may have either a demonic or a physical cause.

Jesus also used the term "bind" in reference to Satan. Looking at the context it seems to mean to disable or bring under control, at least temporarily.

Matthew 4:24 "News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them." Epileptics are here differentiated from demoniacs.

Mark 9:17-29 "A man in the crowd answered, 'Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.' 'O unbelieving generation,' Jesus replied, 'how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.' So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, 'How long has he been like this?' 'From childhood,' he answered. 'It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.' 'If you can?'" said Jesus. 'Everything is possible for him who believes.' Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!' When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. 'You deaf and mute spirit,' he said, 'I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.' The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, 'He's dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?' He replied, 'This kind can come out only by prayer (or prayer and fasting).'"

A child had an affliction that sounds like classical grand mal seizures but is said to be due to a demon, a "deaf and mute spirit." Notice that the demon took "one last shot" at the boy, even though the Creator Himself commanded him to come out. Also, why is prayer or prayer and fasting necessary? Basically this is not a human venture. Spiritual preparation is necessary and obedience to the Lord is essential. We cannot always understand the Lord's requirements, but must simply follow them.

Mark 7:32-35 "There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, 'Ephphatha!' (which means, 'Be opened!'). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly." Jesus dealt with deafness and dumbness as an illness to be cured without mention of demons.

Mark 5:2-17 "When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!' For Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you evil spirit!' Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.' And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.' He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed

down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man--and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region."

Some things about this man could be said to suggest mental illness. His strength sounds superhuman, but there are cases where people with (presumed) mental illness exhibit great strength. There was apparent desire to worship Jesus combined with a simultaneous desire to beg Him to leave, an inner struggle. The special knowledge of Jesus' nature seems supernatural. The transfer of the affliction to a herd of pigs defies natural explanation unless you want to propose that they are susceptible to the power of suggestion. The fact that the man was instantly and completely normal is astonishing by the standards of psychiatry.

The sad human sidelight is that the people of the area wanted to get Jesus away, probably because of the economic loss and perhaps fear of the unknown. There was no show of gratitude by the local people for the restoration of the demoniac nor desire to bring others who were afflicted to Jesus for healing.

Luke 13:11-16 "And a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.' The Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?'"

This woman had what appeared to be a physical or possibly hysterical illness. She is described as having been "crippled by a spirit" and as one "whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years," although Jesus does not address a demon in delivering her. The power of Satan, I believe, is shown even more by the incredible response of the ruler of the synagogue. He certainly ought to have recognized that the power of God demonstrated before his eyes was far more important than any interpretation of what "work" was allowed on the day of rest.

Acts 16:16-22 "Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.' She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, 'These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.' The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten."

A girl with the power to tell fortunes was delivered of a demon by Paul. She simultaneously lost her supernatural powers. Why was she speaking the truth and "advertising" for Paul and his group? Perhaps it was to put Paul in the same category as herself and all the other occult practitioners. Paul's response indicates that he wanted no such endorsement, but also that he was compassionate on the girl in her bondage. He did not just strike her dumb or even dead, he delivered her. And in the process surely got the attention of her "owners" who did a curiously modern thing and went to court.

Acts 19:11-20 "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, 'In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.' Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a

beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

Seven exorcists commanded a demon in the name of Jesus. But because they themselves had no real relationship with the Triune God, they were viciously attacked by the demon. The people of the locality then burned their books on the occult. Why did they do this? It is not explicitly stated but implies the connection between the occult and demon possession. People also saw that dealing with the spiritual world was not just a matter of knowing the right words and ceremonies.

Genesis 6:4 "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown."

This is a cryptic reference and is not unequivocally referring to spiritual beings. The "sons of God" may just be the righteous people. But this may also be a type of demon possession of the women and/or their children, perhaps Satan's parody of the virgin birth.

H. Signs of demonization

Dr. Kurt Koch, in his writings identifies certain signs that are suggestive of demonization. (Occult Bondage and Deliverance p.57-67, Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications 1971)

Four Signs quoted from the Catholic Rituale Romanum Tit.X

- a. Knowledge of a language not previously known
- b. Knowledge of secret and remote things
- c. Manifestation of unnatural powers or strength
- d. Aversion towards the things of God and the Church

(Of course, the first three can be given also by God.)

Dr. Koch's advice for one trying to recognize demonization: "Before all else make sure you have surrendered your own life to Christ. Next ask God for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Then if possible undergo some form of medical training."

Distinctions can be subtle and difficult. For instance, can demonization be ruled out if a person is helped by other modalities? Notice that Saul was comforted by music when he was tormented by a spirit in I Samuel 16:14-23. In fact, that was the treatment he sought.

Is it possible for untrained people to recognize a case of demonization?

Dr. Koch gives this advice: "There is first of all a very simple rule one can adopt. If one meets a person who claims to be demon possessed, then he is not. Anyone who is really possessed will neither realize nor broadcast the fact of his possession. Next one must remember that as a result of ill-informed or extremist forms of counseling some people are almost talked into believing that they are possessed."

"Never in my life have I (Dr. Koch) ever said to a person, 'You are demon possessed' even on the occasions when I have actually felt this to be the case. We have no right whatsoever to confront a person with so grave a diagnosis as this."

"We can pray for a person without having to say what we think is wrong with him."

"Having made this very necessary appeal, we can now turn our attention back to the characteristic signs of genuine cases of demon possession. These are four in number."

A. "The phenomenon of resistance. What do we mean by this? If one prays with a person who is merely suffering from a mental illness, he will quieten down when one prays. On the other hand, if one prays in the presence of a possessed person, he will begin to build up a resistance and become angry, and violent, and start to blaspheme and threaten to hit out at the counselor if he does not stop praying. He may even start to spit, or tear a Bible up and throw it across the room. Yet when the counselor finishes his prayer, the person will often apologize and exclaim, 'I didn't want to do that. Something made me do that.'"

B. "A possessed person can easily fall into a state of trance during a time of prayer. The devil refuses to allow his victims to listen to either the Word of God or to prayer and he therefore simply cuts him off from the source of spiritual help by making him fall into unconsciousness."

C. "Possessed people often exhibit clairvoyant abilities. This can be quite embarrassing for the counselors, since it is not unknown for the possessed person to be able to reveal the secret sins of the one counseling him."

D. "Possessed people sometimes speak in a language or languages in a state of trance which they had no previous knowledge of."

DEMON POSSESSION IS A PARODY OF THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MANIFESTATIONS OF IT ARE PARODIES OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

I. What are the steps to being freed from demonization according to Dr. Koch?

Dr. Koch notes several steps in his book Christian Counseling and Occultism (Berghausen: Ev. Verlag, 1972) pp. 306-333. His approach is essentially to bring a person through the steps of understanding and accepting the Gospel, stopping to enlist prayer support when difficulties are encountered.

A. Diagnosis: attempting to determine what is psychological, what is physical and what is spiritual or in some cases what may be a mixture of causes. A history of the individual or the individual's ancestors being involved in the occult is significant.

B. Confession: the laying bare all sins to release both from the psychological burdens well as the real spiritual power the enemy holds because of secrecy of the sins. This represents a work of the Holy Spirit in allowing the afflicted to present himself to the grace of God. It will be resisted by the forces of darkness and cannot be forced by the counselor.

C. Renunciation of the devil: voluntary repudiation of the evil one and all his dark works and simultaneous commitment to the Triune God to Whom allegiance is promised. This act releases the burden of secrecy, exposes Satan for his awful reality and marks before witnesses a radical change.

D. Absolution: the assurance by the counselor of the forgiveness that God provides in Christ, to the one who confesses. This can be pronounced when the individual shows signs of understanding and believing the concept of forgiveness in the Blood of Christ. Isaiah 53:5 "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed." The faith to believe this indicates both the completeness of confession and the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit, but may be difficult for the person who has been under occult subjection.

E. The Spiritual struggle: the help provided by a committed group of believers that is often necessary to help one who experiences resistance to the first steps of confession, renunciation and receiving forgiveness. The deliverance, however, comes from God. Dr. Koch describes the steps:

1. prayer and fasting by a concerned group of Christians who consider themselves responsible for the one afflicted and unite behind the one doing the primary counseling,

2. in some cases the laying on of hands in prayer in accordance with Mark16:18b ("And they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.") which he feels can also include persons with demonic subjection,

3. and finally, in certain cases, exorcism. Exorcism has a long and checkered history as is apparent even from Scripture in the passage concerning the sons of Sceva. Sensationalism produces little help and much harm. Dr. Koch sees this step as rarely necessary in that people afflicted by occult subjection usually experience liberation by the previous steps. Yet exorcism is basically "the Spirit-wrought word of power, before which the devil flees and the demons withdraw, and by which in the world of possession the peace of God enters with the liberation wrought by Christ." (p.324) Again, "In exorcism the pastor (or counselor) engages in close combat with the powers of darkness. A ministry of deliverance is only possible where there is authoritative, charismatic power. This authority is no human quality, but a decisive break-through of the Holy Spirit in the active faith of the pastor, who is at one mind with Christ (I Corinthians 6:17). The sovereign subject of this liberating ministry is never the pastor, but Christ, whose presence becomes a reality through the Holy Spirit." (p.325)

E. The Resistance of the Liberated: the process by which the one liberated develops the close fellowship with Jesus Christ that will provide the only protection from counterattack by the forces of darkness. This involves Bible reading and memorization, especially of those passages regarding the Blood of Christ that is not only the sign of our redemption but an unwelcome reminder to Satan of his utter defeat. The Blood of Jesus is not a magic word but rather a cosmic fact. The person has the right to counter any attack by Satan with a command such as, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I command you, evil powers, to leave." Becoming part of a fellowship of committed believers, especially a small group of those who uphold each other, is crucial. Frequent participation in the Lord's supper is recommended. There must be regular confession of sin allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and empower.

J. What are the steps to being freed from demonization according to Rev. Tom White?

Rev. Tom White takes a similar approach but in some cases confronts evil spirits more directly when they are strongly suspected ("Discerning of Spirits: A Clinical Testing Technique for Detecting Spiritual Oppression," Mantle of Praise Ministries, 1952 N.W. Lance Pl., Corvallis Oregon 97330). Still he cautions, "There are often very fuzzy lines of difference between genuine demonic manifestations and bizarre states of human emotional/psychological behavior. An unskilled, overzealous counselor may presumptively and incorrectly connect evil spirits with certain behaviors. Also, suggest[ible], impressionable or histrionic personalities may create apparent demonic manifestations at the mere suggestion of such. This occurs especially in a high-pitched, presumptive atmosphere of "calling out" or "commanding" demons to manifest. I have seen too many situations where a suffering soul is led to believe he is demonized (when in reality he is not), there is no relief or change through deliverance prayer, and despair and confusion set in. The point is this: only those clearly called to and gifted in discernment should customarily practice a deliverance ministry. God may and often does use an available vessel to set another free from bondage. But if in the face of a difficult case there is confusion or heightened anxiety/depression observed in the client, back off and pursue referral to another more skilled in discerning of spirits."(p.2) In addition, he stresses that the counselor must be a born again believer. It is God Who delivers and all believers have some endowment to detect evil and false teaching but some are especially gifted in these areas. He also emphasizes that deliverance must be done in the context of a team and that there is a fine line between failing to detect spirits and imagining spirits that are not present.

He suggests in this context that one pursuing the possibility of demons have a balanced view, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and be a sharp observer. Precise probing questions should be asked regarding potential reasons for oppression. If there is suspicion of oppression, the counselee should be instructed on the nature of oppression. Then it may be explained that a test can be performed. The counselee should be reassured that any problems encountered often will have other explanations and the primary focus regardless must be on obedience to God's truth. If proceeding with the test, ask the client to report any feelings or impressions.

THE PROBING SPIRITUAL INTERVIEW

Rev. White then would pray, receiving in faith the promises of God for wisdom and grace, commanding the submission of the powers of darkness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, releasing the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit and all the time watching the reaction from the counselee. This is all very similar to the approach of Dr. Koch.

If, however, on further reflection there is a disturbance that is not explainable on the basis of spiritual problems (other than oppression), psychological or emotional difficulties, physiological problems affecting the brain, or other explainable causes, more probing can continue. For example, direct authoritative prayer using the name and blood of Jesus Christ or reading of the Scripture or conversation regarding submission and commitment to the Lordship of Christ may provoke hate or hostility towards the counselor. Questions about how the person is feeling as this proceeds may intensify the reactions if demons are fighting exposure. Conversation can be turned to the matter of submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the desire to be a vessel of righteousness. This will often agitate evil spirits. Probing can take place for specific hindrances to spiritual growth such as headaches when reading the scripture.

The counselor should take note of any hostility that may not seem to come directly from the client. This may be done by asking, "How are you feeling or reacting toward me right now. This information may come out with great reluctance.

Tracing of possible contact points with evil spirits may be identified. Rev. White lists occult practice, sexual sin, hatred, bitterness, violence, loss of control through indulgence in drugs or alcohol, contact with persons or places charged with demonic power such as curses, spells and satanic covenants. These may have to be identified and broken through the blood of Christ. A family history of these practices or involvements is also significant in opening the bloodline to demonic influence.

Weaknesses and vulnerabilities can be identified as places Satan may attack. Exposing these in prayer can weaken his influence. Special note should be taken of any moral compromise that the counselee seems unwilling to repent of and renounce. Special opportunity needs to be given to deal with these. The whole process needs to be permeated with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Next is a prayer of faith and authority after explaining that it is intended to break and remove any basis upon which evil spirits presume to remain attached. The counselor verbalizes the prayer phrase by phrase and the counselee repeats it. It is done face to face with occasional eye contact to look for unusual manifestations. There may be all sorts of resistance such as hostility, skepticism, nausea or even hallucinations. The prayer will only be effective if pride is forsaken, sin has been cleansed and there is an unconditional commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as taught in James 4:6 - 11.

The prayer, while not a formula, may be similar to the following, the counselee repeating after the counselor. "Father, I call to you in the name of Jesus Christ, my High Priest. I submit to your will. Holy Spirit, I ask you to search me and convict me of any sin. (This should be followed by specific confession.) I put on the breastplate of righteousness, I ask you to expose all schemes of Satan ever brought against me, through any source, at any time. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to force into the light, powers of darkness that oppress me. By faith I forsake all sin in my blood line that has opened doors as they relate to me and my children (naming the children). I forsake all personal sin that has given ground to the enemy. I reclaim that ground now. Lord Jesus, I apply the power of your name and blood to remove from me and from my children (by name) all consequences of evil. In your authority, I break all evil curses (specify if known), spells, charms hexes, vexes, psychic powers, witchcraft, anything of evil ever put upon me or my family from any source at any time. Lord Jesus deliver me from evil."

With this sort of authoritative prayer, it is difficult for any demons to hide. Some of the manifestations encountered by Rev. White are: extreme dizziness, "spacing out", trembling, nausea, hallucinations, difficulty breathing, headache, extreme confusion, moving pain, sudden constriction or numbing of the limbs, extreme drowsiness, inability to speak, counterfeit tongues, extreme talkativeness, cursing or obscenities (verbal or in the mind), uncontrolled laughter, violent hatred, self destructive behavior, hearing of voices, internal impressions of faces or dark ugly images, choking or constriction of the throat, yawning or burping, extreme fear, threats aimed at the counselor, anger or even sexual advances. Others Rev. White associates with witchcraft are: eyes rolling back, unconsciousness, internal images (of hooded figures, serpents, hideous faces, dripping blood or satanic rituals),

hissing or spitting, biting, violent cursing, gnarling of the hands, choking, self destructive behaviors (such as scratching, head banging, tearing of skin, grabbing for sharp objects) all of which represent a devilish desire to shed human blood.

These manifestations should be distinguished from stress symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing with resultant dizziness, flushing of the skin. The symptoms must be "read" with an ability given by the Holy Spirit that can be sharpened with experience.

The response will be one of the following: 1) no response, indicating no evil spirits and allowing the discussion to move to other areas; 2) uncertainty, caused by a lack of clarity which can be dealt with by admitting lack of experience and referring to someone else or assuming that this means no oppression and moving on to other areas of discussion trusting the Lord to intervene if necessary; 3) perception of something significant accomplished, meaning that there is the tangible sense of the presence of God and feeling that something wonderful has happened, a clearing or lifting of oppression or a release and freedom, which can be tested over the longer haul by observing a changed life and spiritual growth; 4. dramatic unmistakable manifestation of evil, with a conviction by both the counselor and counselee that something evil and supernatural is being encountered, which may be pursued with the next step or by using the "shut down" procedure if the counselor does not feel led to continue.

Directly testing the spirits is done only with the leading of the Lord and preferably with the spiritual support of a team. The goals are to expose, engage and expel demons. A sample prayer might be, " In the authority of Jesus Christ, I confront and command to attention any spirit present who manifests by name or function as (use the information gathered on areas of possible entry such as "hate"). I break your resistance, I bind all deceit and force you into the light. I command you to give a clear accurate impression through (name of counselee)'s mind." This prayer may be followed by a positive response or the impression that there is another name to be dealt with such as witchcraft.

If, for instance, "hate" seems to be exposed, The Holy Spirit may lead the counselor to pray something like, "Enemy of Jesus Christ named hate, I remove from you every right to remain in this life. Do you acknowledge that you are exposed, weakened and must leave?" If this is followed by a firm "No" or if you do not feel clearly led to proceed, it may be best to "shut down" by praying something like this, "In the authority of the name that is above every other name, I proclaim you exposed, weakened enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I sever you from the order and control of Satan and force you into captivity. I forbid you to call in reinforcements or to strengthen yourselves. You will not harm (name of the person) or any other person through (name). You are bound under the sovereign will of God until such time as He commands you to leave. I speak your judgment, 'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.' (I John 3:8b). Your works are exposed and will be destroyed according to the timing and purposes of the Almighty."

After this, prayer should be made to God on behalf of the oppressed person something like this, "Father, this is your child, redeemed for your glory by the blood of your Son. I claim, by faith, his/her freedom. I ask you to shield him/her with the presence of your Spirit, protect by the power of your name (John 17:12). Send your angels to guard and protect (name) from evil. Lord we receive the promise of your word, "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." (II Thessalonians 3:3). Rev. White stresses that the key is confidence in the power of Almighty God, remembering that all the lying spirits are under His ultimate control even if a final solution is not reached at that time. If proceeding, one may pray, "In the authority of Christ, I bind you together with all others who work with you or under you and command you to go to one place in this body. I forbid you to engage in deceit, to hide, or to remain. You must go. I command you to go now directly where Jesus Christ has ordained you to go, and where the voice of His Spirit now directs you to go. Leave in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." This may be followed by anything from a subtle sense of lifting or clearing to a dramatic internal visualization of dark figures departing. If a struggle develops or it is not clear how to proceed, it may be necessary to use the previously mentioned "shut down procedure".

Prayer may be offered by parents on behalf of their children, with some involvement of the older child in confession and prayer. By adolescence, essentially the same approach is used as with adults because of moral accountability and understanding.

Rev. White closes his paper with the reminder that the tools needed for deliverance are basically faith in the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus name (Mark 11:22-24, Matthew 18:18-20), confidence in the power of His atoning blood (Revelation 12:11), courage to claim and use our authority in resisting evil (Luke 10:19) and total trust in the immanent power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). Some strongholds may require persistent faith and fasting prayer over time (Mark 9:29). We need not be discouraged. God will move in accordance with His perfect purpose. He will overrule our mistakes and human weaknesses. The issues being dealt with touch on the interplay of God and Satan, good and evil, sovereignty and free will and often the Lord wants to teach the counselor as much as to free the oppressed.

As Jesus said in Luke 10:18-20, "He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'" We need to put this all in perspective. Spiritual power encounters can be fascinating and intriguing, but the real miracle for which we praise God forever is forgiveness of our sin and eternity with God.

IV. HOW IS A PERSON INFLUENCED BY DEMONS?

A. There is a spectrum of influence that Satan and demons may have on a person from occasional influence to constant demonization. Even demonization does not have to be an obviously strange phenomenon.

Matthew 16:15-23 "'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!' Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.'"

Peter was not demon possessed. In fact he had just been commended for speaking a word of revelation from God. But when Jesus spoke of His coming death and Peter opposed it, Jesus responded, "Get behind me, Satan." This seems to imply that the thought came from Satan -- and it was certainly not from God -- but the word "Satan" could have been used generically by Jesus, meaning "adversary". Regardless, Jesus did not discard Peter for this opposition to God's will, rather He loved him and continued to prepare him for later service. We should do no less for brothers and sisters we feel are being influenced by the enemy.

Acts 5:1-5 "Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.' When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened."

Ananias tried to deceive the church. Peter said that Satan filled his heart to lie to God the Holy Spirit. Ananias undoubtedly did not recognize the influence of Satan in his decisions.

Acts 13:6-12 "They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the

right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.' Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord."

Elymas was a high political advisor. Paul calls him a son of the Devil which in Hebrew idiom meant that he at least had the characteristics of the Devil. His also being a magician makes it seem probable that Paul implied an even closer relationship. The average man would probably not have thought of Elymas as unusual and he had certainly attained an elevated station in life.

B. Involvement in the occult is forbidden by the scripture. It can lead to increasing demonic influence and even demonization. The person involved in the occult usually believes that he is in control of the forces when the precise opposite is actually true.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12a "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD..."

These commands are given without any explanation, except that God detests them.

Acts 16:16-19 The possessed girl with power to tell fortunes shows a connection between the occult and demon possession.

In our own day, the strange behavior and even bizarre killings by those involved in occult activities and Satan worship periodically penetrate the media and gain temporary attention.

Many people have passing contact with the fringes of occultism by keeping Ouija in their homes or flirting with Astrology. Perhaps in the vast majority of cases nothing ever comes of this, yet it may also provide an entrance for demonic powers.

Many "business seminars" may be exercises in occult manipulation because of the magical appeals to positive visualization or possibly supernatural results, such as fire-walking.

C. UFO'S

Dr. Clifford and John Weldon in their book Close Encounters: A Better Explanation propose that UFO's are a demonic manifestation in our day. Each had set out to write a book about UFO's, expecting to debunk everything. But although they found that the vast majority of reports were explainable as man-made objects, natural phenomena, illusions or downright hoaxes, there was a minority that could not be explained away. These had to be considered real but not physical objects (pp.38-44).

The UFO's themselves do not obey physical laws. They appear and disappear both from visual contact as well as radar and photographic film. They accelerate from zero to high speed in impossible times. There are no sonic booms. They show no signs of heating due to friction. They also change shape, size and color, occasionally splitting or merging. They also act strangely, playing games, buzzing cars for example. There have never been any actual crashes recovered although some have been seen. Although it is commonly felt by those that accept these phenomena as real that they are visitors from outer space, there is no evidence of them anywhere but on planet earth.

The next bit of evidence they report is that those persons who report "close encounters" with the UFO's have experiences that closely parallel those of persons involved in the occult (pp167-190). Some of these are nauseating odors and unusual high pitched sounds, a dream- like quality to the encounter, voices heard in the mind, strange sensations and paralyzes experienced by the human contactees, aversion to strong light by UFO occupants as well as seance apparitions, levitation and teleportations, instantaneous appearing, disappearing, enlargement and reduction of size and characterization of apparitions as transparent and vaporous.

To see a UFO and be convinced of its real existence is not necessarily a life-changing experience. Some may then go about their lives, aware only that there is something strange going on in the world. Others, especially if they have seen the "occupants" of the UFO's and even more if they have "communicated" with them, are altered by the experience. Studies of the persons claiming close encounters indicate that very little of the information they receive comes from the initial contact. Often people do not even remember the event until later undergoing hypnosis because of psychological disturbances. Then there are further communications by occult methods such as clairvoyance, clairsaudience, dictation (hearing voices in the mind), automatic writing, mental telepathy, mediumship and projections of consciousness. The thoughts are believed to come from superintelligent aliens who have chosen the contactee as a channel for their messages of hope and help.

The messages that come are akin to those that come by occult means. "These emphasize that man may draw strength from a higher intelligence, that man has all the spiritual abilities necessary for this within his own being; that man is one with all things; that man is approaching a New Age, a period of transition; that other-dimensional entities are present to assist man in leaving the old and adjusting to the new." (Brad Steiger, UFO Missionaries Extraordinary p.63 as quoted in Wilson and Weldon).

One communication from the "UFO occupants" through a contactee, reported by Dr. Wilson during his lectures in Minneapolis in 1985 is extraordinary. A UFO contactee received the message that there is a group who so irrevocably oppose the benevolent assistance of the intelligent aliens that at the proper time they will be all removed from the scene. This, of course, provides, in advance, a cover story for the rapture, when Jesus Christ returns and calls all who belong to Him to meet Him in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:16,17 "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.") This otherwise would be a powerful sign to the unbelievers left behind of the truth of the scripture.

The degree of hope placed in the search for higher civilizations in outer space who will "assist us in our evolutionary process" almost borders on worship. How perfect for the humanistic mind set to receive help from a superior intelligence who essentially represents where we will be in a few million years and to whom we are not responsible like we would be to a Creator. There is hope for solutions to the many insoluble problems that threaten our planet and our race but also preservation of the pride that sees us as complete in ourselves and on the way up, so that in a million years or so we will be the ones giving advice to struggling planets.

The stage is set for a possible scenario fulfilling the prophecies of a world leader of the end times, having power to perform supernatural signs and inspiring unprecedented allegiance. II Thessalonians 2:9-11, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie...."

D. Continuing in sin can cause us to be increasingly influenced and controlled by Satan

We all sin, and provision is made for confession and forgiveness. But there is an attitude of unwillingness to admit to our sin or to turn from it, that leaves us under Satan's authority. To disobey God is to obey Satan and we are under the authority of the one we obey.

Galatians 5:19-21 "The acts of the sinful nature" are listed: "sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

These may be classified as sexual immorality (the first three), false gods (the next two), hostility (the next four), divisiveness (the next four) and intoxication (the last two).

Ephesians 2:1-3 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who

are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

E. Can a Christian be demonized?

John 10:27,28 Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

Romans 8:38,39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These references seem to indicate that a person cannot be eternally wrenched out of God's hand but does not rule out the temporary affliction by a demon. Were Ananias and Sapphira demonized or merely influenced? If demonized, were they true or false believers.

I Samuel 16:14 "Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him."

I Corinthians 5:5 "Hand this man (who was living in an incestuous relationship with his step-mother) over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord."

Dr. Koch observed that most of those dogmatically stating that Christians cannot be demonized have no real experience with demonization. He gave an example of a missionary who appeared to be possessed for 18 months. He stated several reasons it could appear to happen (Occult Bondage and Deliverance p.67 - 71), for example:

1. The person may not be a real believer.
2. We may confuse "possession" with "obsession" in which a person is not indwelt by demons but surrounded and influenced by them. These may be degrees of demonization indistinguishable in their manifestations.
3. God may allow a Christian to be temporarily demonized as a chastisement. I Timothy 1:19b,20 "Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

The real work of Satan and his demons is to sidetrack us from whatever God wants for us. This can be done with incredible subtlety, as so ably portrayed by C.S. Lewis in Screwtape Letters. For us to argue about the fine points of demonization or even focus predominantly on this his more dramatic work probably plays into the plan. However we may want to classify the difficulties of those who disobey the Lord's clear commands, we had best avoid those difficulties by maintaining a close and living relationship with Jesus Christ.

F. Appeal of what Satan has to offer

The occult and sin both have an appeal to us. Satan offers us knowledge, power and pleasure. People do not give themselves to Satan for nothing, rather they think they are getting something for nothing. They rarely consciously "sell their soul to the Devil" but usually think they have stumbled onto a buried treasure. Yet, in fact, a transaction is taking place and what Satan delivers is always far short of what is expected. In fact it is a trap. In the extreme case, you pay everything and get nothing. Satan was the first confidence man -- and is still the best.

Genesis 3:1-7 Satan promised special knowledge and position to Eve. It proved to be a trap. She and Adam did gain knowledge, but lost Eden and forever changed all of creation.

Hebrews 3:12,13 "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Does bad theology lead to bad behavior? Perhaps so but more often it is the other way around. We search for a world-view that allows or even glorifies our preferred behavior. So people are perfectly prepared to accept the deceptions of Satan.

G. How can children be demonized? Are there other ways that demons can gain access to a person?

Dr. Koch found in his counseling the if the ancestors of a person had been involved in the occult, there was a susceptibility to possession. Perhaps this is part of what is meant in Deuteronomy 5:9, "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me...."

Others suggest that mind-altering drugs may open one to demonic influence. Certainly there has been a connection between the use of drugs and certain eastern religious ideas which look for "the god within".

A controversial area is that of hypnosis. Dr. Koch is ambivalent on the subject. He feels that there may be legitimate medical uses made of hypnosis, especially in the area of diagnosis, but that it also is used by magicians and charmers. For example, the fire walkers of Bali perform under the hypnosis of the priests. See The Devil's Alphabet, p.54,70, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids). Dr. John Stoll, a psychologist in St. Paul Minnesota feels that hypnosis may open one to spiritual forces beyond human control. Thus hypnosis, depending on the individual performing it, may be a factor in demonic influence.

Subliminal suggestion is a technique for placing ideas and motivations in the mind, discovered in the 1950's when stroboscopic messages to buy popcorn and drinks were flashed on the screen at a theater rapidly enough so that the patrons did not realize they had seen them but were nonetheless influenced. It is a technique used by a tape course advertised on TV, called "Mind Power", that claims to release "the power within" to allow personal and financial success and even ability to walk on fire. It is claimed in the TV advertisement that simply listening to the musical tape with the embedded subliminal messages will release hidden potential and result in all the effects of the course automatically. There is the real possibility that the subliminal suggestion may include appeals to demonic powers if the results truly include such supernatural phenomena. If a person can be influenced without his conscious knowledge, then children may also be influenced by environmental factors without making conscious decisions.

Today some Rock music has taken a real turn toward the occult and Satanic. Perhaps these groups started the trend as a publicity stunt, but many have gotten deeply into occult symbols and probably practice. Their music appeals to youth and their beliefs and lifestyle are imitated. The message of the songs and the lives, even of many groups with no occult connections and perhaps even a "clean cut" image is often obedience to the will of Satan. For this includes selfishness and sexual immorality as well as violence, suicide or toying with dark powers.

V. How can we resist and combat the forces of Satan?

A. Satan is far more intelligent and powerful than any human being, yet by the blood of Christ, victory has been made available to us.

Revelation 12:11 "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

Colossians 2:13-15 "When you were dead in your sins... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

B. God allows us to be tempted and oppressed in order to strengthen us and develop our faith, yet He gives us real choices with real consequences. If we lose faith in oppression or yield to temptation, we are not built up, rather we are harmed and subject to Satan's influence.

I Peter 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

I Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

Romans 16:19b,20a "But I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

C. We must recognize that we are involved in a spiritual struggle of tremendous proportions. Thus we need to carefully maintain our relationship with God and our fellow believers, realizing that we are not just playing games. We must avoid those situations that we know may lead to temptation.

Psalms 119:11 "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Psalms 66:18 "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened...."

I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

I Corinthians 7:3-5 "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

II Corinthians 2:10b,11 And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

D. We must appropriate the provision God makes for us: wisdom, strength and the whole armor of God.

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

II Corinthians 12:7-9a "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

Ephesians 6:10-18 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

Truthfulness and righteousness limit Satan's hold on us. Having the "equipment of the gospel" makes us ready to be used. Faith is necessary because there will be times when it appears that God has abandoned us or His commands seem senseless but we must continue do what we know is right. Salvation protects our most important part and the Word of God is our only offensive weapon for wounding the enemy. Yet we must also keep alert, for a fully armed soldier is easily killed if asleep.

SUMMARY

We need to recognize not only the existence, but the incredible power and intelligence of our spiritual enemies.

We should be aware of their strategies of blatantly offering knowledge, power and pleasure as well as subtly deceiving us about what is true, distracting us from what is important and discouraging us from doing good.

We must be alert to deceptions of all kinds: from failing to see a truth because we emotionally reject the facts, to improper emphasis on some proper truth or activity.

We ought to humbly recognize our own fallibility as well as that of others and seek to help our brothers and sisters but without rejecting them.

We are to remember that we are in a spiritual struggle in which we would always be in danger if it were not for the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Therefore we study God's word, we bathe our life and work in prayer, we avoid deliberate sin and stay current in our confession; we avoid the occult in all its disguises.

Claiming the victory in the Blood of the Cross of Jesus Christ, we submit ourselves to Christ, resist the devil and know that he must flee from us.

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