

## Satan, Demons, and Witchcraft

Satan was originally created by God as a leading angel (cherubim) and, as such, had authority over other angels [Ez.1:5; 28: 12-14]. Satan's original job was to uphold the divine holiness of God's alter through the sanctification of the believer (both positionally and practically).

When God created angels He didn't create them as evil beings, but created them with the *ability* to produce evil—just as He has done for us [Isa.45:7]. At sometime in the distant past (before man was created) Satan rebelled against God's authority—claiming that he would replace God as the ultimate authority and power in the universe [Isa.14:12-15; Ez.28:12-15]. In his attempted coup he enlisted the aid of some top angels and through that command structure assumed and took command of one third of all the angels God had created [Rev.12:4].

God (who knew of the plan all along) decided not to soundly defeat them at that time, but to relocate Satan and the angelic army he commanded to earth [Isa.14:12; Lu.10:17,18; Rev.12:4]. The high level coconspirators, however, were sent to Hell [2Pet.2:4; Jude 6] where they will remain until their judgment day.

### **DESCRIPTION**

Although Satan can appear as anything he desires, his true appearance [Job 41; Ez.1:5-24; 10:8-22] is described as:

1. Four faces—each facing a different direction. One was like a man. To the right side of the man's face is a lion's face. The face of an ox is on the left side. An eagle's face is in the rear.
2. Terrible teeth, gleaming eyes, and flaming breath.
3. Four wings—two stretched upward and touching at the tips. Two cover his body.
4. His body is covered tightly with sharp, pointed scales. When shed, the scales are dangerous to encounter.
5. Hoofed feet with the appearance of polished brass.
6. Four arms—one under each wing.
7. A body that glows with varying brightness—a brightness that travels up and down his body as it produces lightning. It is this scaled body that is impervious to men's weapons and boils water upon contact.
8. Movement does not require turning around -- all sides are front sides. Motion is very rapid (like lightning) and leaves a shiny substance behind.
9. Accompanying him is a tall, reflective, crystalline looking object that appears to revolve in a complex manner, both internally and externally. The rotating appearance appears to be the spinning of eyes within the device. The object is, or contains, Satan's spirit.
10. He is so terrible to behold that no creature on earth can stand in his presence [Job 41:9,10].

## **NAMES**

Satan has various names in scripture:

1. Abaddon (Hebrew for ‘Destroyer’) [Job 26:6; Rev.9:11]
2. Apollyon (Greek for ‘Destroyer’) [Job 26:6; Rev.9:11]
3. Lucifer (Daystar, Lightbearer) [Isa.14:12]
4. Leviathan (Le-VI-auth-un -- ‘reptile like’) [Job 41:1; Isa.27:1]
5. Beelzebub, the prince of devils [Ma.10: 25; 12:24,27; Mk.3: 22; Lu.11:15,18,19]
6. Belial [2Cor.6:14,15]
7. The dragon [Isa.27:1; Rev.12:7]
8. Old, piercing, or crooked serpent [Rev. 12:9; Isa.27:1].
9. Moslems refer to Satan as ‘Iblis’ [Sura 18.50/48] and demons as ‘jinn’ [27.39; 34.12-14/11-13; 72.8-9]

## **SATAN’S CURRENT PLAN**

Satan knows that he cannot take God on directly, so he tries to outsmart Him. This effort (the equivalent of a spiritual cold war) has one main thrust—to prevent people from becoming saved. Satan knows that this tactic delays God’s plan and gives him more time to come up with his own plan. The delaying is accomplished using two tactics. The first is to promote any theology that requires self-effort to reach God (RELIGION vs. Christianity). That strategy makes it difficult to discern the true from the false (a classic ‘can’t-see-the-forest-for-trees’ scenario). The second tactic is to hamper the efforts or credibility of Christians who attempt to witness [Ma.26: 31-35 w/ 69-75; 1Thess.2:18].

Since Satan can only be in one place at a time, he has a well organized infrastructure [Eph.6:12] with which he can influence events.

1. Satan uses some of the demons as his own evangelists, preachers, and apostles through demon possession. All of these appear to be very godly as they point to Satan as an ‘angel of light’ (or an ‘angel from heaven’) [2Cor.11:13-15; Gal.1:8; Jude].
2. The ‘gospel’ that these deceivers teach is a false gospel—one that requires ‘works’ (self-effort) for salvation. It may even closely resemble the true Gospel at times, but will always differ in the issue of combining grace with works to effect one’s salvation [2Cor.11:3-4; Gal.1:6-9; 5:6-10].
3. These deceivers build on the false gospel a systematic theology designed to support works for salvation (usually by redefining ‘grace’) while closely resembling true doctrine. This is necessary in order to seduce current Christians into sharing a gospel that plays right into Satan’s hand while the whole time believing that they are winning souls for Christ [Ma.23:27-28; 1Cor.10:19-21; 2Cor.4:3,4; 1Tim.4:1-3].
4. Satan and his demons have access to heaven’s throne room. This is allowed by God (for the time being) to help Satan argue his case fairly and to persuade God to allow him to sift certain individuals (saved and unsaved) [Job 1:6-12; 1Pet.5:8].

## **THE BELIEVER'S RESOURCE**

1. The believer is to trust in God's ability to protect him/her [Ps.23; 91]. He/she is to put on the armor God provides [Eph.6:13- 18].
2. Test those who claim to be speaking God's Word [1Jn.4:1-4; 5:5].
  - a. Is their 'Gospel' *truly* one of grace, or have they mixed in a measure of works (see SALVATION)?
  - b. Is the Word of God their *final* authority, or is it reduced to a document that is 99% accurate—their own opinion then becoming the final authority (*careful*—many may say that scripture is 100% accurate, but mean only the original autographs, not today's Bible. Thus, avoiding the real issue and deceiving you).
3. Resist Satanic/demonic influence through trusting prayer [James 4:7]. You will be unable to withstand in your own power.

## **SATAN'S FUTURE**

Following the rapture (see DISPENSATIONS), all godly influence in the world will be temporarily removed. This will result in a field day for Satan. However, half way through the tribulation (3½ yrs.) Satan will be denied access to heaven [Ez.28:16; Rev.12:9]. This will infuriate him, due both to the frustration of his plans and the realization that his time is getting short. After the tribulation period Satan is chained in the abyss for 1000 yrs. [Rev.20:1-3]. Following the Millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed for a short time. He tries, unsuccessfully, to begin another revolt [Rev. 20:7-9] and is finally removed from the scene for eternity [Rev.20: 10].

## **DEMONS**

Demons are spirits [Ma.12:43,45] who were rank and file angels under Satan's command while Satan was in heaven (recall that his command structure was sent to Hell). This constitutes one third of all the created angels [Rev.12:4]. Since there are over 100 million angels left [Rev.5:11] and that number equals the two thirds that didn't fall, then one third of the total number of past angels would equal half of the above present number, or, over 50 million demons. Since there are about 7,000,000,000 people on the earth, then that would mean there are about 140 people for every demon.

This does not mean that roughly one out of every 140 people is demon possessed. In areas where Satan does not feel threatened, there will be less activity and in areas where there is a threat to Satan (that is, where God's work is advancing) there will be a higher concentration. But, it is equally reasonable to assume that you have seen demon possessed individuals before (whether you knew it or not).

## **DEMON POSSESSION**

There are four aspects to man (see Discipleship). He has a soul, spirit, body and a void space. When one trusts Christ as his savior this empty spot is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and the person is 'sealed' off from any internal demonic activity. For the unsaved, this part of all humans is open to possession by a demon. The demon enters the person and resides in this empty area. From this point, he exhibits a very strong influence on the soul of the subject [Eph.2:2]. The person's soul is

overwhelmed, but their spirit can frequently control the body long enough to ask for help [Mk5:6; Lu.9:39].

Likewise, animals are also open to demon possession. They don't have a spirit (only a body and soul), but a demon can also enter them and influence their soul [Mk.5:13]. Because they have no spirit, they will not be able to resist or recognize their need for help.

Plants have no soul (or spirit) and, therefore, can't be possessed. The same goes for inanimate objects. Although these may be used by demonic forces, they aren't controlling them through possession.

Scripture provides some insight into the characteristics of demon possession [Lev.17:7; Deut.32:17; 2Chr.11:15; Ps.136:7; Mk.5; etc.]. The demon is powerless while outside a body [Ma.12:43,44; Mk. 5:10-12] (which places doubt on claims of incubus and succubus activity etc.). A list of possible scriptural symptoms is included here:

1. Convulsions [Ma.17:15; Mk.1:26; 9:20].
2. Extreme violence [Ma.8:28].
3. Abnormal strength [Mk.5:4; Lu.8:29].
4. Uncharacteristic speech [Mk.1:24].
5. Raving [Mk.5:5].
6. Self-mutilation [Mk.5:5].
7. Frothing at the mouth [Mk.9:20; Lu.9:39].
8. Uncommon examples of nakedness [Lu.8:27].
9. Housing that suggests extreme anti-social behavior [Mk.5:3].
10. Grinding of teeth [Mk.9:18].
11. Inability to speak [Mk.9:17; Lu.11:14].
12. Deafness [Mk.9:17; Lu.11].
13. Blindness [Ma.12:22].
14. Mental illness [Mk.5:15].
15. Starvation [Mk.9:18].
16. Teaching false doctrines [see previous pages].
17. Acts as part of a Satanic plan [Lu.22:3-6; Jn.13:27].

Obviously, not all examples of these symptoms signal demon possession. Not everyone, for example, that grinds his or her teeth are demon possessed. However, demon possession is still a reality today. Satan's goals are to deceive [Jn.8:44; 2Thess.2:11; 1Tim.5:19; Rev. 12:9], afflict [Ma.12; Mk.5; Jn.8:44; 2Cor.12:7], cause illness [Lu. 13:11], sap strength [Lu.22:31,32], etc. In all cases, there is a reason for the possession. It may not always be apparent, but you can rest assured that its ultimate purpose is to prevent the unsaved from coming to a saving faith in Christ.

## **EXAMPLES**

The Associated Press in Elizabeth City, NC reported the following case in 1989 concerning a man who was arrested for suspicion in the murder of his daughter. She had been shot 27 times. The father was diagnosed as being insane—exhibiting multiple personalities, but while being questioned on videotape he made the following statements:

(weeping) "Most nights she'll [the daughter] come in here [jail] to see me after everyone else goes to sleep, and we'll talk."

(snarling) "You're just a mortal. You don't know nothing. . . I know everything. I am strong. I can do what I want to, when I want to. I control Tom. He's dumb...a wimp...a goody-goody, talking that Jesus garbage all the time."

(screaming excitedly) "He's gonna shoot her!"

The author's experience with demon possessed individuals has ranged from one who was very confident of his ability to remain in control of the person (and did) to one who avoided contact with me, from the strong silent type to one who raves that he is Christ, from the religious to the irreverent. There is a wide variety of influence, but in all cases, the demon is *very* smart (or, at least very experienced).

It is also interesting to note that demons also have names. The names *seem* to fit a pattern of describing the demon's methods. Examples of this pattern are: Judge, Noble, Guard of Ancestors, Spirit of Travel, Feeder of the Dead, Rescuer from Sorcery, Voice of the Dead, Spreader of Illness, Healer, Destroyer in water, etc.

## **DISCERNING DEMON POSSESSION**

The following Biblical test will help to determine if a 'professing' believer is actually possessed. When they are exhibiting the suspected behavior, test them against the following items:

1. Do they willingly admit that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, lived a perfect life, willingly sacrificed His life on the cross to save mankind from their sins [1Jn 4:1,14-15]?
2. Are they submissive to the doctrines of the Bible [1Jn.4:5- 6]? Be careful that this isn't simply a difference of opinion.
3. Do they exhibit a sacrificial attitude, or is their service a self-centered one (are they helping or using) [1Jn.4:7-8,11-12,16]?
4. Do they exhibit a valid spiritual gift (see SPIRITUAL GIFTS) [1Jn.4:13]?

## **EXORCISM**

One common thread running through the examples of demon possession given above is that the demons know the power that God has over them. They don't like it and they frequently balk [Mk.5:8-13], but they do obey God [Ma.8:31,32; Mk.1:24; Acts 19:15; James 2:19].

Because of this authority believers who are 'in fellowship' with God (under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit) may, through the leading of the Spirit, command the demon(s) to leave a body by invoking the name of Christ [Acts 16:18]. Failure to exorcise from a position of fellowship will be unsuccessful [Lu.9:37]. For a non-believer to attempt to exorcise a demon is to invite disas-

ter [Acts 19:11-17]. Not all demons will respond to this method. Some can be exorcised only through prayer and fasting [Ma.17:21; Mk.9:29].

## **WITCHCRAFT**

Witchcraft is an indirect form of Satan worship. Witchcraft (and its more direct form of worship—Satanism) have been with us as long as the worship of God. Thousands of clay figures found at buried sanctuary sites in the Near East, dating back to 8000 BC, depict naked women—many pointing to or fondling their breasts or genitalia. This is characteristic of the polytheistic cults of those periods who practiced prostitution. None of these figures have been found in sites classified as Jewish sanctuaries [ref. 2Ki.18:3-6; 23:1-15].

Of course, everyone has heard of the (sometimes over enthusiastic) efforts by the Jesuits and Dominicans to eradicate witchcraft (and Satanism) during the dark ages. They were truly ‘dark’ ages for Christianity. The organized church had become a worldly church and the black arts thrived—up to 7,760 witches in one region alone in France in 1587. It is hard to say how much of the claimed activity was actually done by witches and how much of it was hysteria by non-believing religionists of the era. The last person executed legally within the Paris, France jurisdiction for witchcraft was in 1625.

Modern witchcraft began a resurgence in England in the 1940’s and 1950’s primarily through the influence of a man named Gerald Gardner (1884-1964). It spread to the states in the 1960’s. Those involved in witchcraft may argue that there are good witches (white witchcraft) and evil witches (black witchcraft), but God’s position on witchcraft is very clear. Believers are not to seek the assistance of witches (or wizards) and those who practice witchcraft (white or black) are committing a sin [Ex.22.18; Lev.19:31].

The following description is generic. There will likely be some variation between groups.

- Witches and wizards practice their form of worship in what are called ‘covens.’ Each coven generally has 13 members—one priest (or priestess), six men and six women. Smaller groups are called ‘groves.’
- They meet once a month on the night of the full moon. This meeting is called an ‘esbat.’ Sex and sexual overtones play a very large role in these worship services (dancing nude, group bathing, sexual rituals, etc).
- In addition to the *esbat* there are ‘sabbats.’ These meetings take place on Jan. 31<sup>th</sup>, April 30<sup>th</sup>, July 31<sup>st</sup> and Oct. 31<sup>th</sup>.
- Their ‘Bible’ is called The Book of Shadows and describes their charms, dances, rites, animal sacrifices, spells, etc.
- The witch (or wizard) is one of three ‘degrees’ (ranks). Initiation into the coven (and first degree) is by ceremony. New members are frequently attracted to the covens by curiosity and the sexual overtones. The initiate is led blindfolded, tied, and naked in the ring of members. A statement of belief is read by the priest or priestess (of the opposite sex), the initiate whipped, then given the ‘five-fold kiss’ (feet, knees, genitalia, breasts, mouth). Finally, an oath is taken. Initiation into the second and third degrees involve sexual intercourse with other members and, by some accounts, incubus and succubus demons (although these activities are not supported by scripture).

## **MAJOR WITCHCRAFT CULTS**

- Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (O.G.D.)
- Builders of the Adytum ('Adytum' = inner sanctuary)
- Fraternity of the Inner Light (Satan is the 'Angel of Light')
- Servants of the Light
- Ordo Templi Orientis (Order of Temple Raisers)
- Ordo Adeptorum Invisablum (Order of Masters of the Invisible)

## **SATAN WORSHIP**

These groups and others like them are usually very low key. They will not openly announce their presence in a community. They do not advertise in the Sunday paper, they are not listed in the yellow pages and they are not likely to be registered as a nonprofit organization. The more dangerous they are the less likely it is that you will know about their existence. As a direct form of Satan worship, these people are rightfully feared not only by the general population, but by those who practice witchcraft as well.

By 1987 a form of Satanic worship known as 'Santaria' was already well entrenched in the Miami area. Dade county police routinely pull the carcasses of sacrificed animals from the waterways in Dade. Santaria was imported from Africa to the Caribbean (most notably Cuba and Haiti) where it was mixed with local elements of Satan worship. It finally migrated to Florida with the influx of Caribbean immigrants. It spread quickly to those cities with a Spanish-speaking population and more slowly to other areas including the South Carolina low country.

While there is some variety in the degree of violence required by different Santaria groups (or similar groups like 'Macumba' derived from South America) it is difficult to know from public records what a particular group requires. The 'La Iglesia Lukumi Babalu Aye' of Hialeah, Florida are said to require only animal sacrifices. At the other extreme is a group that was uncovered operating in Rancho Santo Elena, Matamoros, Mexico and Brownsville, Texas in 1989. They lured both victims and members alike with sexual favors. Humans are sacrificed to appease Satan and to seek his protection from harm. Found at the worship sites were cauldrons full of blood, human body parts, herbs, rooster feet, goat heads, and turtles. Nearby were gravesites with human corpses. Some of the bodies' brains had been removed (symbolizes the sacrifice of the victims soul to Satan), legs cut off at mid calf, heads decapitated and spines severed and twisted. Some vertebrae had been removed to make necklaces for the members.

## **IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS**

It is said by many that those who practice witchcraft and Satanism can be identified by certain characteristics (black fingernail polish, speaking backwards, no jewelry, dark clothes, hand signs using the fist with the pinky and index fingers extended, stealing religious articles, etc.). This generally appeals to those who would voluntarily dabble in the black arts and may be connected to crimes of malicious mischief. Some authorities believe that the disappearance of indiscreet 'dabblers' may be due to incurring the wrath of serious adherents.

The second type of person who practices witchcraft or Satanism is the ignorant novice. This person has unwittingly become involved through the influence of another practitioner whom they have come to admire. Their symptoms may not include the ones listed above, but they will begin to exhibit interests and behaviors that would have been considered totally foreign previously (e.g., females with a new found fascination of crawling insects, unusual genital area haircuts, etc.).

The serious adherents will not be so easily identified. They will be much more discrete, because they have much more to hide. Perhaps the best symptom of the serious adherent is the type of influence they wield with others.

The most successful way (in my judgment) to find the forces of Satan is to start spreading the Gospel and helping new converts to grow. Do your part to fulfill the great commission. You will have no difficulty at all finding those forces. You will not even have to look. As you are successful in fulfilling the great commission, they will most certainly find you.