

FORCES OF EVIL BEHIND ACTS OF TERROR

The past century was one of unprecedented evil: 20 million killed in Stalin's purges, Hitler's extermination of six million Jews, 1.7 million massacred in the killing fields by Pol Pot, and the millions of lives lost trying to defend or defeat these ruthless leaders. And the carnage escalated quickly into the 21st century as mankind witnessed the fiery deaths of over 4,000 from suicide missions perpetrated against the United States on 9/11 by Al-Qaeda extremists. But an even more sinister and illusive foe has been terrorizing the world with random, demonic acts of evil. ISIS has become more organized, more powerful and more evil than all other religious extremist groups.

Are the hideous acts of terror in Paris, San Bernardino and around the world by radical Islamic militants simply the function of an evil twist of character fueled by false religion, or are they provoked still further by a malicious, invisible force? Will the one true God bring an end to all this evil and terror?

SATAN NOT A PRINCIPLE OF EVIL BUT AN INTELLIGENT BEING

The Word of God leaves no doubt as to the existence of a personal devil and his legions of demons. It gives a comprehensive description of Satan, his emissaries and his aims. Satan is represented in Scripture as being the orchestrator and source of evil in the universe — the unrelenting enemy of God and man.

The Apostle Paul recognized the existence of a personal, invisible devil and gave him the title "*god of this world.*" (2 Corinthians 4:4) Paul also called Satan "*the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" (Ephesians 2:2) These words imply not only that there are evil principles at work, but that behind them there are invisible evil spirit beings opposing all that is good.



"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
Ephesians 6:12

SATAN'S ASSOCIATES IN EVIL — LEGIONS OF DEMONS

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6) This points out that Satan, known as "*the prince of the devils,*" had gained legions of angels who have actively supported his evil schemes. Because Satan's spiritual minions meddled in the affairs of mankind, they were cast

out of heaven and placed in "*chains of darkness*" — relegated to the earth's atmosphere — unable to re-enter into the heavenly, holy realm. Satan, has also been isolated from God and the *holy* angels. Together, Satan and the *fallen* angels have been cooperating as mischief workers amongst men, and they have never let up their unrelenting desire to create a society under their control. Matthew 9:34; Isaiah 14:12-15

What we see happening today is a result of continued malicious meddling by Satan and the demons as they prey upon the weakest of humanity. While fallen man is much to blame for these acts of violence, "*wicked spirits*" often enter sick or deluded minds, suggesting hideous acts of violence. The Scriptures describe in detail such incidents and the misery caused by evil spirit influence and possession. Matthew 8:16; Mark 5:15; Luke 4:41; Luke 22:3

Those who are inclined toward evil leave themselves open to suggestions from these wicked spirits. Muslim extremists wreaking worldwide panic through acts of terror have been brain-washed by *doctrines of demons* — believing that they have a *God-directed mission* to execute

their victims. (1 Timothy 4:1) But, unlike the god of Muslim extremists, the Judeo-Christian God, Jehovah, is a God of love, and He has told His children that there are seven things which are an *abomination* to Him — among these are *hands that shed innocent blood, hearts that devise wicked plans, feet that run swiftly to evil and those who spread strife.* (Proverbs 6:16-19) These activities describe well the acts of hateful extremists — no matter their religion.

While there are relatively few radicalized Muslims waging a war of terror, it is important to understand that the majority of Muslims are peace-loving. Christians must not succumb to the hysteria that creates fear of the entire Muslim community — most of whom are peaceable and reasonable. Remember Jesus' admonition: "*Love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Matthew 22:39

TODAY'S HEADLINES WRITTEN NEARLY 2,000 YEARS AGO

In His foreknowledge, God could look down to our time and see the hate and greed in the human heart that would escalate into the devastating worldwide violence of our day. In His wisdom, God has *permitted* this extreme level of evil under Satan's *temporary* reign that it might teach an everlasting lesson to all mankind. This limited experience living in a world with evil is teaching mankind to *hate* iniquity and to long for a better day under a righteous ruler — Messiah.

Therefore, to provide hope to His people, God placed in His Word prophetic indicators which would point to the time when Satan's kingdom of evil would begin to collapse. Four *signs* were given to the prophet Daniel which would mark the *time of the end* — the end of this *present evil world* under the dominion of Satan. Daniel 12:1, 4; Galatians 1:4

• "many shall run to and fro"

In the past 100 years, numerous modes of transportation have been invented, increasing the speed of travel from 20 mph to over 18,000 mph. This has been a blessing to most of humanity, but it has also brought with it a means for terrorists to spread their evil rapidly far and wide.

• "knowledge shall be increased"

More than ninety percent of all scientists who have ever lived are alive today, and more than fifty percent of the world's inventions have been created within the last three decades. Additionally, sophistication in communications allows man to see and hear global news instantly. This has created amazing tools to benefit mankind, but it has also provided terrorists the tools to spread their hate.

• Messiah will begin to "stand up" for Daniel's "people"

Israel's rebirth as a nation is a miracle of history. Never before has a nation been destroyed, its people dispersed to the ends of the earth and then—nearly 2,000 years later—regathered and reestablished as a nation. But, one of radical Islam's most hated enemies is Israel. This horrible reality of terror has been playing out almost every day since Israel's formation as a nation in 1948. And now, the other countries of the world are experiencing firsthand the fear of living their daily lives in expectation of yet another terrorist attack.

• "a time of trouble such as never was"

Unprecedented trouble is the hallmark of our time and is

confirmed by these recent tragic events. True, the world has always had trouble, but, prior to 1940, the potential for the annihilation of humanity by the single flick of a switch was unheard of. In the first three quarters of the 20th Century at least 100 million lives had been lost to war (TIME Magazine, March 9, 1970). Thirty-four wars were being waged in 1988 alone. And today, "*the weak say I am strong.*" (Joel 3:10) A few, "*the weak,*" have brought the strong nations of the world into a state of extreme distress. Weakness, fueled by jealousy, hatred, misinformation and prejudice punctuates Daniel's vision of unprecedented trouble.



MAINTAINING FAITH IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

All four of these *signs* given to Daniel should give God's people hope that the end of Satan's evil regime is near. Yet, it is still hard to maintain faith in this unstable and frightening world. This makes it even more necessary that we, as Christians, take up the whole armour of God that we might be able to "*withstand in the evil day... having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God...*" Ephesians 6:10-17

Yes, in this unstable world it takes an extreme, *educated* faith to believe that God's plan will provide a constructive end to all the tears caused by evil — to believe that God is not indifferent to every sorrow. The Scriptures declare that He desires mankind to live in a world without fear, but He now *allows* Satan to rule for a *limited time* in order that each individual may learn valuable lessons — experiencing the results of evil and selfishness.

The world is quickly learning that it is helpless to win a war against evil. Thus we read, *"This sore travail has God given to man to be exercised therewith."* (Ecclesiastes 1:13) It is comforting to know that when God finally says through His Son, *It is enough — peace be still*, we can rest assured that there will be great changes in the earth, and all will begin to see that the permission of evil was both educational and preparatory to the ushering of mankind into the ages of blessing to come, wherein *"all the families of the earth will be blessed."* (Genesis 28:14) The promise is that once God, through His Son, puts an utter end to all evil, *"affliction shall not rise up the second time."* (Nahum 1:9; Job 34:29) In other words, the harsh lessons of evil will never be necessary again when all the families of the earth learn, by contrast, that love, peace, righteousness and unselfishness are far more preferable than living in this *present evil world*. The depth of God's wisdom is shown in His foresight to devise a plan that provides for man's free choice and experience with evil, but nevertheless brings redemption through Christ which will result in eternal happiness.

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME

Though God has *permitted* Satan's evil influence for a relatively short time, He will soon put a stop to all evil and usher in His everlasting righteous Kingdom. Then the Scriptures assure us that all of *"the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness"* when the *"knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep."* (Isaiah 26:9; 11:9) The time is coming when Satan and his demon host will be destroyed — *never* to hurt nor deceive the world again. (Revelation 20:1-3) The love of God will abundantly bestow blessings of life, peace and happiness upon all.

Yes, the influence of God's benevolent Kingdom will have an overwhelming transforming effect on the hearts of men. Of this mighty future work we read, *"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."* Ezekiel 11:19-20

There is great cause to rejoice, for it is the severity and hopelessness of the world's problems that mark us at the threshold of these promised Kingdom blessings. Just as the terror of today was prophesied, the resurrection of all who have ever lived is also assured in prophecy. Then, all those who perished in the terrors of this day will be reunited with their loved ones, and *"The desire of all nations shall come."* Haggai 2:7

WHAT ARE SOME OF THESE LEGITIMATE DESIRES?

Ask the homeless family living in times of unemployment, *"What is your desire?"* Their answer will be, *"If only we had a place to call home."* God promises: *"They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit. They shall not plant and another eat."* Isaiah 65:21-23

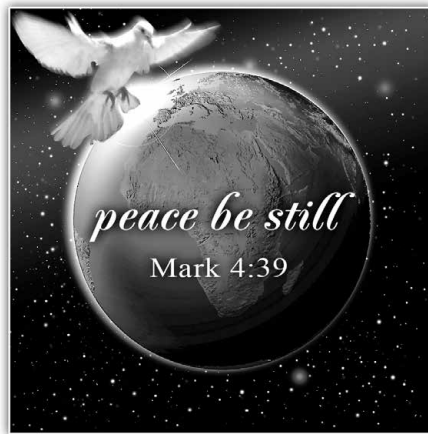
Ask the father of a child dying of cancer, *"What is your desire?"* His answer will be, *"If only there were no sickness and crippling diseases, no cancer, no blindness, no pain and suffering."* Thank God! These desires will be fulfilled in His Kingdom: *"And no inhabitant will say I am sick." "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy."* Isaiah 33:24; 35:5,6

And what will be the desire of the young man on the field of battle, *"If only there were no wars and man could learn to live in peace."* The Kingdom promise is: *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war anymore."* Micah 4:3

Ask the Mother of the young man killed at the hand of a terrorist, *"What is your desire?"* and she will say, *"If only I could hold him and see him happy again."* Yes, the most blessed promise of all, lost loved ones will be united once again in the resurrection. *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave..."* (Hosea 13:14; Isaiah 25:8) *"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."* Isaiah 35:10

These are but a few of the legitimate desires, which shall be satisfied. This is the promise of God's Kingdom to come, where His will shall be done on earth, as it is even now done in heaven. Matthew 6:10

Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin will mar the harmony and peace of a perfect society, not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word. Love welling up from every heart will meet a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence will mark every act. There sickness shall be no more — not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay — not even the fear of such things. Such will earth's society be, and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete. Revelation 21:4



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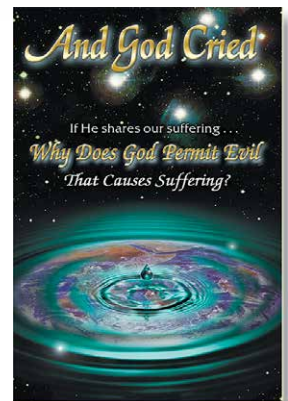
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