

THE END TIMES

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FORCES OF EVIL IN THE END TIMES

“For at the coming of the Lord there will be great activity on the part of Satan in the form of all kinds of deceptive miracles, signs, and marvels!” — 2 Thessalonians 2:9 (20th Century N.T.)

Many Christians are concerned about the increase of *spiritism* and *occultism* in the earth today, seeing it as a sign of the *end times*. In fact, Christians need to be especially on guard to shield themselves from this insidious foe, because they are the special targets of Satan and the *fallen angels*—demons. *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith...”* (1 Peter 5:8, 9 NAS) Indeed, these *end times* have witnessed the accumulative effect of the *forces of evil*—rotting away the fabric of society.

The power to be strong and to resist these evil influences is in the word of God. *“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* (1 John 5:4) *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10:17) It is our responsibility, then, to learn just how and why demons got so involved with mankind; what can be identified as *spiritism* today; and how we can protect ourselves and our loved ones against the *forces of evil*. The Apostle Paul stated: *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Galatians 5:19-21) Therefore, it is essential for the Christian to be circumspect and not careless on this subject.

THE BIRTH OF REBELLION AND DISOBEDIENCE

To trace the *forces of evil*, it is critical to look at the originator of rebellion and disobedience. Jesus called Satan *“a murderer from the beginning ...and the father of lies.”* (John 8:44 NAS) Originally, Satan was perfect and one of the most powerful and blessed of God’s heavenly creation. *“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 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 blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.”* (Ezekiel 28:12-15 NIV) What was this wickedness? Satan slowly developed pride and ambition. He said in his heart, *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High.”* (Isaiah 14:13, 14) Yes, Satan desired to be worshiped,

and so he devised a scheme to drive a wedge between God and Adam. This is the point at which Satan fell from his exalted position in glory. By abusing his God-ordained privilege and responsibility, he lost his position of authority in the garden and from that time forward, he fell from the heavenly courts—confined to earth’s atmosphere.

All of the misery and death upon humanity goes back to this point at which our first parents believed and acted upon Satan’s first lie: *“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ... lest ye die? And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die...”* (Genesis 3:1-4) At this point Satan became a murderer, for his deception caused Adam and his entire race to be condemned to death.

THE INFECTIOUS SPREAD OF REBELLION

After Adam and Eve had sinned and were expelled from Eden, some of the angels became infected with Satan’s rebellion and were enticed with fleshly desire. Full of lust and ambition, they mated with the daughters of men and created a dominant race. *“The Nephilim [giants—a hybrid race—the human offspring of these angels with women] were on the earth in those days..., when the sons of God [angels] went to the daughters of men and had children by them.... The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time... So the Lord said, I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth...”* Gen. 6:1, 8, 11 NIV

The physical superiority of the fallen angels in fleshly bodies with their mutant offspring—the *Nephilim*—magnified and intensified the degraded condition of the fallen human race. God intervened by causing a flood upon the earth. The *Nephilim* were destroyed, and the fallen angels dematerialized from human form, thus ending their attempt to subject the world to their rule. (Hebrews 2:5) After this experience God placed a restraint upon these rebellious angels. They could no longer take on a visible form of their own and were prohibited from leaving the earth’s atmosphere, which thereby prevented their further contaminating influence throughout the universe. Jude 6 and 7 speaks of these fallen angels: *“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own*



habitation [the angelic realm], he hath reserved in everlasting chains [restrictions] under darkness [unable to openly manifest themselves as they did before the flood] unto the judgment of the great day..." See also II Peter 2:4, 5

As man began to populate the earth again after the flood, the fallen angels, even though imprisoned in *chains of darkness*, continued their rebellion, operating through humans to exercise their evil deeds. Through their prompting upon the minds of sinful men, pagan religions developed and permeated all but a few of the faithful patriarchs of old and their families. Ancient mythologies developed such as was found in Egypt, Greece and Rome. The people worshiped their mythical gods and demigods such as Osiris, Hercules, Neptune, and Zeus—all patterned after the fallen angels and their superhuman offspring. In addition, the tale of Atlantis, an advanced society sinking beneath the waves, was a mythological distortion of Noah's flood. "...the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished..." 2 Peter 3:6

GOD'S CHILDREN WARNED OF DEMON CONTAMINATION

Many of Israel's troubles can be traced to a departure from the true God and complicity in pagan practices guided by the demons. God had given them this solemn warning: "*There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord...*" (Deuteronomy 18:9-12) If God so warned His chosen people, natural Israel, how much more clear should this warning be to spiritual Israel—Christians.

Even though there are clear Scripture references to the *forces of evil*, some Christians still doubt the veracity of these dangerous beings. When the Apostle Paul stated that "*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but... against the rulers of the darkness*" he was not just speaking metaphorically of good and evil. (Ephesians 6:12) Jesus gave strong testimony that demons are real and can even possess the minds of their victims. One of several instances is found in Mark 5:1-13(NIV). It speaks of a man possessed of evil spirits who lived among the tombs. "...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... 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... 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.*" Note that this man was possessed by perhaps 2,000 demons resulting in super human strength and violent, compulsive behavior. This lesson proves that God and His Son do not lack the power to deal with these rebel angels, but God is permitting them for a *limited time* to manifest the fruitage of rebellion as a lesson for all angels and men.

Although this example illustrates the power of the demons to possess, it is not possible for them to do so without the victim having first submitted his will to wickedness. Possession by demons is a worst case scenario, but the forces of darkness care not if one is fully possessed or just partially influenced into infidelity. Why? Because they are seeking to delay their final judgment to eternal destruction by destroying God's *seed* before it destroys them. The demons *think* they will be successful in this scheme if they cause Christ and his church (the *seed* described in Galatians 3:16-29) to be either 1. *physically killed* or 2. *deceived so as to fall from grace*. The fallen angels know

full well of the prophecy of the *seed*: "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head [a permanent, fatal injury], and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" (Genesis 3:15; see also Galatians 3:16, 29) Soon, when the church is complete and in heaven with her Lord, this promised *seed* will deal a fatal blow to the head of the serpent, Satan, and his legions.

Throughout the Christian era, Christ and his faithful followers have been tortured and slain at the hands of many evilly disposed governments and religious systems influenced by Satan and the demons. Every imaginable torture has been devised to destroy God's true children, but they have persevered and maintained their faith in His plan of salvation. Like their master, the true believers have suffered and even died at times for truth and righteousness sake. However, the evil forces have failed in their attempts to crush out Christ and his church, for their attacks have only served to crystallize noble characters and secure for these faithful a crown of everlasting life. Revelation 2:9-10

WICKED SPIRITS: AN END TIME MENACE

The numerous enticements of the fallen spirits are more visible today than ever before, because they know their end is very near. Recall that Jude foretold they would be in "*chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day,*"—our day. Of our day Jesus said: "*And as it was in the days of Noe so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man [at the time of his return].*" (Luke 17:26, 27, 30) As we learned previously, during the days of Noah, the earth was "*filled with violence through them [the fallen angels]...*" (Genesis 6:13) The demons have never let up their unrelenting desire to recreate the society that existed before the flood. What we see happening today, as a result of their malicious meddling, is rampant immorality of every conceivable kind.

Sadly enough, the entertainment industry, driven by profits, has played into the hands of demonic influence. They capitalize on people's curiosities and fascinations. In every sector, evil parades itself as entertainment, with blatant acts of rebellion, immorality and the occult. Hollywood has produced scores of extremely evil movies: *The Exorcist, Dementia, End of Days, Poltergeist, The Omen*, etc. Every evil imaginable can be portrayed realistically through computer animation. As a result, people sit spell-bound in front of movie, TV and video game screens unaware of the real dangers and power behind the images. Indeed, those watching have become desensitized to the wickedness, receiving an imprint of evil to linger in their memories.

But, spiritism is not always immediately apparent as something evil. Satan and the fallen angels often disguise their evil schemes as something beneficial for the purpose of gaining someone's trust and loyalty, especially the Christian. Satan and his servants will do seemingly good works or promote seemingly good teachings to further their agenda of confusing people regarding God's true plan of salvation and God's true standards of righteousness. "*And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not*



surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...” (2 Corinthians 11:14 NAS) For example, *spirit mediums* or *channelers* have often become unintentional accomplices of the fallen angels. By claiming to communicate with the dead, they make evil appear comforting to those who mourn. America’s most familiar *medium* is John Edwards. His popular TV show “*Crossing Over*” enters more than 533,000 American households every night. The Scriptures state that the dead cannot communicate—they are unconscious in death (Ecclesiastes 9:10)—therefore, Mr. Edwards must

be communicating with demons disguised as departed loved ones. Satan has once again perpetuated his original lie—“*Ye shall not surely die.*”

Quite often *spiritism* is seen as a desire to gain control of one’s destiny—a seemingly noble goal. For example, astrologers offer the hope to gain insights into the future of an individual by a complex formula of dates and celestial alignments. You might remember how Nancy Reagan, while in the White House, planned part of her and her husband’s schedule based upon astrological predictions. According to *Newsweek*, Hillary Clinton, also while in the White House, used a *medium* to try and communicate with the late Eleanor Roosevelt. These people of influence in society lend a great deal of credibility to such dangerous practices. What appears as innocence can end up in dire consequences, for these supposed *spiritual guides* are really communicating with demons.

YOUTH THE SPECIAL TARGETS OF DEMONS

Young people are being exposed to demonism today at a rampant rate. The young are curious and eager to explore. As many have fallen victim to drugs by experimentation, so now they yearn to experience something from another world, exposing themselves to wicked forces—unaware of the peril.

Witchcraft can be found in almost any high school or college campus. The Witches Coven Association has been completely surprised by the huge amount of questions and publicity they have been receiving as a result of popular books for children such as *Goosebumps* and the *Harry Potter* phenomena, along with TV programs such as *Charmed*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. The stars of these programs are all very charismatic and educated—some are funny and likeable—making witchcraft appear acceptable and entertaining.

As a result of this wildly popular interest, the Witches Coven Association has started youth ministries. In addition, *Wicca* is the fastest growing religion in the U.S. thanks to the attractive spin placed upon it by these popular TV programs and books. Their worship includes casting spells, incantations and making potions—all supposed to open one’s mind to the *spirits* to gain desired goals and dreams. Halloween is a special day for them, and in America today sales of Halloween related items are second only to that of Christmas. It is easily observable that Halloween is increasingly more demonic in depictions of horror and gore; hallowing wicked

spirits and generating more and more curiosity in the occult, yet passing itself off as seasonal décor and wholesome fun.

The *Harry Potter* phenomena started in 1997. Educators and parents generally love it, because since these books have been published, reading skills have risen on average several grades. There is nothing to compare to the record sales set by the *Harry Potter* series. Great peer pressure is placed upon children to join with others in this *Harry Potter* phenomenon—and even some teachers have joined in the pressure by making it required reading. Passing itself off as entertaining, fun and educational, books and movies such as these desensitize young people to the real dangers of witchcraft. The author of the *Harry Potter* series, J.K. Rowling researched witchcraft to make her books more authentic. Unfortunately, however, this also exposes children to authentic witchcraft. This is not to say that children who read these books are engaged in witchcraft, but the *Harry Potter* series does foster a desire in some children to investigate deeper into the area of witches and warlocks.

Many parents claim that all of this is harmless entertainment, and that their children can separate fantasy from reality. This is a clear form of denial. In the late 1970’s a game became popular entitled *Dungeons and Dragons*. This complex game included aspects of witchcraft and human sacrifice which pushed some youth beyond the limits of reality to the point where friends were killing friends. Another so-called game is the *Ouija Board*—a blatant form of occultism, trying to communicate with the spirit realm. There is much testimony as to the power this supposed *game* can demonstrate. Again, seemingly innocent fun, but it only titillates the young mind to crave more power and interest in the occult.

Another source of spiritism and its influence upon young minds is found in the pounding and repetitive negative messages of *Goth Rock* or *Death Metal*. One of the number one causes of death for teenagers today is suicide—a direct correlation to suggestions woven throughout popular music from lyrics encouraging a sense of absolute hopelessness and even worse, inflicting harm or death upon oneself or others. Death is presented as just another shock event of life and another form of rebellion against parents. The events of the Columbine High School shootings illustrate clearly the real dangers this culture has had on children.

How can we guard our young people from these demonic influences? It is important to understand that the single most powerful influence upon a young person is their peer group association. Children need to be directed toward healthy peer influences. Often, the associations children make on TV programs and inside Internet chat rooms are their primary peer influence, therefore monitor carefully their media choices.

We must start when our children are very young, teaching them to replace poor choices with positive choices. We must educate and communicate with intelligent answers—illustrating the dire consequences of poor choices. Thus, as guides, we must be prepared to inform our young people of the dangers of the dark spirit world.

Beware, however, in your attempts to educate yourself. It is not necessary to explore the subject too far to understand the dangers of spiritism and the influence of the demons. To illustrate, those who desire to help a drug addict from their addiction do not need to try a drug to know that it is harmful. One of the most powerful forces of the human mind is curiosity, and the fallen angels can lure the curious slowly into one of their many snares if the person goes too far in their search for understanding. “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*” 2 Timothy 2:24



How can one keep from being enslaved to demons—surrendering ones will either fully or partially? The influence of demons can be compared to that of drug addiction or alcoholism. The safest way to avoid becoming an alcoholic is to never take a first drink. The same is true of being influenced or possessed by demons. Avoid anything even remotely connected to Satanism, witchcraft, or the para-normal. The source of many trials and temptations can come from simply flirting with the spirit world. Remember that careless living is what caused the nation of Israel to go “*whoring after other [false] gods.*” Leviticus 17:7

Yes, Satan and the fallen angels use *human curiosity as the bait* to draw in the unsuspecting, but Christians have been given special help to resist. The power to be strong and to resist evil influences is in God’s word. It is important, therefore, to see that our faith is a correct faith. False doctrines have driven people away from the Lord and, even worse, have caused the death of thousands of our brethren. During the Dark Ages, devilish ideas of God—*doctrines of demons*—gave rise to various forms of torture, all in the name of God. This was based upon misguided theology.

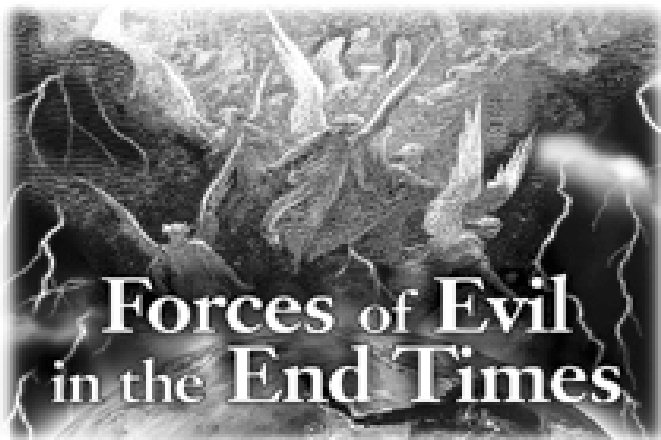
But how do we know if we are deceived into believing false doctrines or *doctrines of demons*? (1 Timothy 4:1) Put each doctrine to a simple test. The Scriptures say that “*God is love*” (not a God of sadistic torture), and, therefore, what we believe must harmonize with the loving character of God. 1 John 4:8

We are living in the end of the Christian era—the time of Christ’s return when he will reckon with the fallen angels. They are now on trial, and that is why demonic activity is escalating. All of the fallen angels that are not repentant shall be destroyed very shortly.

The Lord has permitted this time of evil as an educational period for mankind, as well as a trial and

development period for his true disciples. “*...this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*” (Ecclesiastes 1:13) Yes, God has permitted evil—He has not inflicted evil. When the *present evil world* comes to an end, then the education gleaned from the experience with evil will help the world of mankind up the *highway of holiness*. They will never again wish to tamper with sin, having experienced once and for all its painful consequences. Isaiah 35:8-10

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