

Ephesians 6:12

Noted psychiatrist Scott Peck believes there is an evil force in the world

He wouldn't call this force the devil but he believes it exists

Now this is unusual because

Dr. Peck is a graduate of Harvard and Case Western Medical School

He served in the army as assistant chief of psychiatry

And as neurological consultant to the Surgeon General

He is no lightweight in his field and he has come to the conclusion

That there must be an evil force in this world

And this evil force is able to control and even possess people

He has written about his beliefs and his book has been well received

What brought about this change in his ideas – and it was a change

He has worked with people who love and practice evil just to do it

And he has participated in exorcisms

What Dr. Peck has experienced is demonic possession

And starting with skepticism he has become a believer

Through his observations

Dr Peck has found the truth the church has always known

The devil is real – he is not a figment of our imagination

He has not been made up to scare is into being good

Scripture is clear about Satan's very real and personal existence

The devil is real – he is powerful – and he hates you

That is the truth

And if we saw him as he truly is – we would be terribly frightened

But he is not God and therefore

The devil does not have any of the attributes of God

He is not eternal – he is a created being

Satan is the first created being to rebel against God

He is not omniscient – all knowing

Nor is he omnipotent – all powerful

Nor is he omnipresent – everywhere all the time

Before Satan became what he is he was a very powerful angel

Angels are nonmaterial beings

Who are limited in their presence their knowledge and their power

Now when God created the world

He saw that everything that He had made, and it was good

That means that there was no sin in all creation

Satan had not fallen – the angels had not rebelled

So sometime between the events of Gen 1 and Gen 3,

There was a rebellion in the angelic world

With a significant number of angels turning against God

The NT speaks of it in several places

2Pet – God did not spare the angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to pits in the nether gloom until the judgment

Jude writes – the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by Him in eternal chains until the judgment of the great day

The emphasis is: they are removed from the glory of God's presence

They are kept under control - and certain judgment awaits them

The fallen angels sin against God seems to have been pride

Once these angels fell Scripture rarely refers to them as angels

But instead they are called demons

Satan is the name of the head of the demons – he is the chief demon

READ ISA 14:12-15

There is a hierarchy in God's kingdom and Satan was a leader

He was an angel in charge of other angels

Satan was an angel most likely equal to or above Michael and Gabriel

I say that he might have been above

Because our scripture implies that he was favored of God

But that wasn't enough - he wanted more – he wanted to be his own god

So Satan rebelled against God and went from being God's servant to God's enemy

And when he rebelled he took those who were under him with him

If there were three archangels – Lucifer Michael and Gabriel

Each having a third of God's angels subservient to them

And if when Satan fell he took those under him with him

Then a third of God's angels fell and became demons

And he has been working against God and men ever since

In the OT

He was the one who tempted Eve

We see Satan cause David to break God's command and number Israel

We see him in front of God opposing and accusing Job

Zechariah saw a vision of Joshua the high priest standing before God

With Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him

The name Satan is a Hebrew word meaning adversary

The Bible uses other names for Satan as well

He is called the devil – the slanderer

He is called the serpent – the evil one – the accuser

He is called Beelzebul – which means “the lord of flies”

He is called the ruler of this world – the prince of the power of the air

The god of this world

And Lucifer – which means light bearing

Lucifer may have been his name before he defied God

When Jesus told Peter – **Get behind Me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me**

He was stating that Peter's attempt to keep Him from the cross

Was really an attempt to keep Him from obedience to the Father's plan

This is important Jesus called him Satan because

All opposition to God comes not from men, but from Satan

It may be men or women who openly oppose the things of God

They may be the voice or the hands and feet Satan uses

But behind that opposition is the devil

So let's begin by looking at the activity of Satan and demons

The first thing we ought to know about him is this

Stan was the originator of sin

Satan sinned before Adam and Eve

Satan sinned before any other angelic being

The NT tells us that Satan was a murderer from the beginning

And he is a liar and the father of lies

I believe that both of these statements are referencing the Book of Genesis

He lied to Eve and she believe the lie

He is the one who caused Cain to kill his brother

The devil's mode of operation is to sin and to tempt others to sin

Now listen as a child of God he cannot make you sin – he can only tempt you to sin

Flip Wilson made a good living with the line – the devil made me do it

He is on the prowl looking to deceive you

But the devil cannot make a child of God do anything

He can entice you – he will lie to you

He does not have the ability to be truthful

Every statement he makes comes with a lie embedded in it

But he cannot make you sin

Then demons oppose and try to destroy every work of God

Satan tempted Eve in the Garden

Because he wanted men created in God's image to reject God

And he was successful

Then he tried to tempt Jesus - the second Adam - to fail in His mission

So that men would not be redeemed – and he was not successful

The tactic of Satan and the demons is to use lies deception

And every other type of destructive activity

To cause people to turn away from God and destroy themselves

Demons will try every tactic to blind people to the truth of the Gospel

And keep them in bondage

They will use temptation fear doubt guilt confusion sickness envy pride

Any means at their disposal

And all their power will be used against the Gospel of Jesus

When it comes to you as a child of God

Demons will try to hinder your usefulness and destroy your witness

That is at least part of what the Bible means when it tells us to be wary

The devil is prowling around like a roaring lion seeking to devour you

He cannot take away your salvation – that is sealed in heaven forever

But he can discredit your witness and make you useless to God

Now listen - even if that happens God is not done with you

Peter tried to keep Christ from the cross

And he denied he even knew Jesus – even cursed when he did it

But when God moved in his life – he became the leader of the apostles

God is the God of grace and second and third and fourth and fifth chances

He will never give up on you

So when you fall get up – repent of sin and get back into the fight

Now demons are more powerful than anyone on earth

But they do not have the power they once had as angels

Sin is a weakening force and destructive influence

Rebellion against God has weakened their power

Also demons are limited by God's control and have limited power

They are not free to willy nilly attack every believer on earth

The story of Job makes it clear that at least in the life of a believer

Satan can only do what God allows him to do and nothing more

When Christ won the victory at the cross demons were put in eternal chains

1Thes tells us that **Satan and the demonic forces are currently restrained**

Meaning they are not free to do everything they want

Can you imagine what planet earth would be like

If there were no restraints on demonic forces

You can get a picture of that in the Book of Revelation

All forms of idolatry and every type of sin – every person involved

The righteous being killed or imprisoned and the rest of the world cheering

We should praise God that there is currently a restraint on demonic activity

Then demons do not have perfect knowledge of the future

They know enough to mislead

But the key is – they know enough to mislead

Can fortune tellers know accurately predict your future – no

They can tell you enough to peak your interest and bring you back

But in with a little truth will always be a lie – because they don't know

You can be certain that God alone completely knows you and your future

God controls the events of history and He is intimately involved in the events of your life

Isa 46 – I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things not yet done

Only God can make that statement

Demons do not know your thoughts

Jesus knows the thoughts of men and demonstrated it while on earth

Matt 9 – Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?”

Matt 12 – and knowing their thoughts, He said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste.”

Luke 6:8 – He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, “Rise and come forward.”

Jesus knows our thoughts – demons don't

Daniel told the King Nebuchadnezzar that

No one speaking by any other power than the God of heaven

Could tell the king what he had dreamed

He said, **“No wise men, enchanters, magicians or astrologers can show to the king, the mystery which the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven, who reveals mysteries.”**

How do we account for what seems to be supernatural knowledge

Of fortune tellers witch doctors and others who are under demonic influence
And able to tell people accurate details of their lives

Demons can and do watch us and see what we do

And they are able to hear what we speak

They are incredibly intelligent and able to draw conclusions
From the things they see and hear

Do not be led astray if you encounter members of the occult

Who display what seems to be secret knowledge

That is the result of demonic observation and it does not prove

The demons know what you are thinking or know your future

Remember - only God has that kind of knowledge

Now Satan and his army of demons are all about sin

Satan was the first to sin – he is the author of sin

In fact they are unable to do anything that isn't sin

But not all sin is from Satan

Scripture tells us that we have three great enemies

They are the world, meaning this worldly system set up in opposition to God

The flesh – that is our old sin nature that does not want to die

And the devil

I said before that Satan cannot make you sin

But he can entice and encourage you to sin

He can and will attack you at your weakest point

He can bring temptations your way

But when you sin you are responsible - for the desire to sin is already in you

James 1 – Each one of us is tempted when he is carried away by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin.

You see your sin doesn't come from Satan

Matt 15 – For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness and slander

Your sin comes from within your twisted heart

I know there are differing views about this

But a Christian cannot be demon possessed

If - by possessed we mean

That a person's will is completely dominated by a demon

So that he has no ability to choose to do right and obey God

Then the short answer has to be no - Scripture is specific

Rom 6:14 – For sin shall not be master over you

On the other hand

There are different degrees of demonic attack and influence on the believer

A Christian cannot be possessed but he may be strongly influenced and attacked by demons

And these attacks can become a way of life

Causing ongoing problems with sin and temptation

The term most use for that is demon oppression

In every case the way to overcome demonic attack is the same

Rebuke the demon in the name of Jesus and command it to leave

What about those who are not saved

The major point I am going to make here is this

And I think most of us already know it

You are in Kingdom of God or you are in the kingdom of Satan

Those are the only two options

You are God's child or you are the devil's

John 8 – Jesus speaking to the crowd – You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear Him, for you are not of God.

Always remember this – the crowd belongs to Satan

The crowd is on the wide road that leads to hell

That is why spreading the Gospel of Jesus is so important

When you were redeemed you were saved out of the crowd

Out of the kingdom of darkness

That is the devil's realm

And transferred into the kingdom of light – the kingdom of the Son

Those who have not been transferred still live in darkness

Now even though you no longer belong to him

Christians can still follow Satan

Paul speaking to Timothy about members of the church in Ephesus

1Tim – Give the enemy no reason for reproach for some have already turned aside to follow Satan

Satan's deception of believers is why in 1Thess

Paul tells us to examine everything carefully

The devil's words will appeal to a part of our old nature

In effect they will tickle our ears

He will promise extra power – he will promise deeper knowledge

He will use Scripture to prove his point

The undiscerning and easily deceived will follow him

Although Christians cannot be possessed

The unsaved can be possessed by Satan

Luke 22 – Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot

Eph 2 – and you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience

Without the power and protection of the Holy Spirit men and women are easy targets for demonic attack and control

And I believe that as the time when Jesus return grows closer

There will be an increase in demonic activity

Satan has read the last Book of the Bible just as we have

He knows his time is running out

And in the last days – which we are now in

His activity will increase – he will go down fighting

You can see his increased activity in two ways

Anti-Christian and anti-Jewish sentiment will increase

Lawlessness will increase - righteousness will wane

And his attack on the church will lead many believers astray

Let's finish up

The unsaved are blinded by Satan

Ever talk to your friends or family about Jesus and get a blank look

Or worse yet be completely rejected

2Cor 4 – the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ

This is why prayer must always come before witnessing

Salvation is not a mental assent to some facts

It is spiritual warfare at its most urgent and most critical

Lives literally hang in the balance

And it is not you against someone's intellect

It is the kingdom of God attacking the kingdom of the devil

War in the heavenlies is taking place

The unsaved are blinded and they are deceived by Satan

They are deceived and because they are deceived

They already think they have all the answers

When Christ sets foot on this planet again

He will imprison Satan for a thousand years

But after 1000 years when Satan is released listen to what happens

Rev 20 – And when the 1000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations

When he is free to act Satan will always do what he always does

He will deceive

He is the deceiver

The unsaved are blinded by, deceived by

And the unsaved are ensnared by Satan

2Tim 2 – perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses, and escape the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will

The unsaved are imprisoned by the devil

The idea here is a person who has been caught by trickery

And thrown into a dungeon from which there is no human way to escape

They are slaves and they must do what their master says

And their master is Satan

Only God can bring them out so that they may escape

It does not take an act of the will to be saved – it takes a miracle

The unsaved are blinded by, deceived by and ensnared by Satan

Finally and most significantly

The unsaved will be punished together with Satan

Rev 20 – The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he too was thrown into the lake of fire

The final judgment of sin will include all those who Satan has blinded deceived and ensnared

There will be - absolutely - no - escape – ever

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior

You are going to heaven

Nothing and no one is able to prevent that

God has predestined chosen and sealed you – you are His – case closed

You have been saved to serve the Living God instead of the god of this world

What Satan can do if you are not careful is make you weak and useless

But God in Christ has given you all that you need to fight the battle

For your struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places

Jesus said – I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The church of Jesus Christ is meant to be a force unlike any other in all of history

Armed with divine weapons

Destroying every thing lifted up against the knowledge of God

Destroying fortresses - Setting captives free – are you doing that

If you have not received Jesus Christ as Lord you are blinded deceived and ensnared

But God is even now calling you