

Satan is Real

By Warren B. Smith

Note: As we were coming into the faith, Joy and I were understanding that the Bible was trustworthy and our New Age teachings were not. But was Satan a real spiritual being? To get our answer we consulted the Bible and we consulted God. The following lengthy excerpt is taken from *The Light That Was Dark: From the New Age to Amazing Grace* (Chapter 13, pp. 139-142).

What a month it had been! The spiritual tornado that hit us on the night of March 17 had set up a rapid progression of events which included near sleepless nights, a confrontation with the mad magician in the park, the end of our participation in the Course group, and our decision to marry. It had been a wild roller coaster as a lifetime of events were compressed into a frighteningly real, incredibly powerful thirty days.

But the ride wasn't over. Far from it. Joy and I still woke up some nights knowing that a spiritual presence was in the room. But when we called upon Jesus and prayed, it always left.

We still saw the mad magician, but our conversation was usually minimal. And Joy and I always prayed carefully after seeing him. We wondered how many other black magicians were walking around, pretending to be nice guys but secretly doing their evil thing.

We continued reading from *A Course in Miracles*, but we were much more enthusiastic about the teachings of the Bible. No longer believing that the Scriptures were outdated and impractical, we had learned from the recent events in our lives that they were quite the opposite. The Bible had helped us meet the challenges of the massage client and the mad magician when nothing else could.

But as much as we were reading the Bible, we didn't pretend to understand everything it said. Sometimes we came upon Scriptures that we just didn't know what to do with. However, we were now praying about the things we didn't understand, rather than pushing them aside or discounting them altogether. Whenever we had trouble with a particular verse or teaching in the Bible, we would ask God to open our eyes and help us see what we were confused about.

And one issue that was hanging us up was the description of a real spirit being named Satan. He was described in the Scriptures as the enemy of God, the one who worked evil in the world and in people's lives.

Since first addressing the evil presence in Joy's mom's backyard that day, Joy and I had regarded Satan as a generic, all-inclusive term for evil, rather than a specific spirit being. Now we weren't so sure. Although we had never given the possibility of his existence a second thought, we had learned enough about evil spirits of late that the idea of their reporting to a spirit leader no longer seemed so out of the question.

As we studied and prayed about the subject, I couldn't help but remember the old "Flip Wilson Comedy Hour" when he played a character named Geraldine who was always blaming

everything on the devil. She would say, “The devil made me do it!” and the audience would roar with laughter.

Clearly, the devil has been used as a convenient scapegoat by many, many people through the years. Like Flip Wilson’s Geraldine, people have tended to avoid personal responsibility for their own mistakes by projecting them onto the figure of Satan. And untold wars, witch-hunts and other horrors were committed by people who said they were on the side of good, fighting “the devil.” Yet even as we understood the projection and displacement which had gone on in Satan’s name, we strongly believed that the scapegoating in and of itself didn’t mean that Satan couldn’t be real.

In the Scriptures, Jesus was constantly dealing with the devil. He was tempted by him, talked to him, taught about him, confronted him, and ultimately defeated him on the cross of Calvary. We asked ourselves, “Was that all symbolic?” The world said yes. The Scriptures said no. The Scriptures warned everyone not to be taken in by the lies of the world. The world warned everyone not to be taken in by the myths of the Scriptures. Round and round it went.

One thing we had to consider at this point was that it was the Scriptures, not the world or our metaphysical/New Age teachings, that had been accurate in describing the reality of evil and evil spirits. Could they now be wrong about Satan? The question was crucial for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the issue of the overall reliability of the Scriptures. If they were wrong on the subject of Satan, then everything else they said was suspect, too. Could we trust the Bible as God’s truth if some things in it were untrue? Joy and I had come to believe that the Bible was the first spiritual teaching we could rely on. So far, it hadn’t let us down.

Knowing we could no longer depend exclusively on our logical human minds or on our metaphysical understandings, but not completely sure of the Bible, we knew we could depend on God Himself to help us. So we prayed and asked Him to show us the truth about Satan.

In the coming days, God answered our prayer in many different ways. Perhaps the most significant and straightforward was a dream that Joy recorded in her journal.

April 30, 1984—Dream: The Tester

Warren and I are at Mom’s house. A man picks us up in his car. He takes us to see many things. This man encompasses the whole planet and knows about all people. He’s manifesting to us as a physical person, yet he really isn’t one per se. He shows us all destruction, disease, crime, unhappiness, etc.—he’s in charge of all the bad in life, yet we’re also made aware that there is a positive thing to all of this: It often brings people to seek the almighty God. This man, however, tries to divert people’s attention and tests people. He’s a powerful guy. He takes us back to my folks’ house and leaves us. He has quite a sobering and chilling presence. We are shaking all over—we’ve been shaken to our senses. That was Satan! We now see life quite differently. Our lives will never be the same.

Especially in that dream, but in other ways, too, we strongly believed God was telling us that the Scriptures stood as truth. Satan was real.

When Joy and I had time to reflect, we realized that we had both spent much more time, thought, and prayer in coming to believe in the reality of Satan's presence than we ever had in believing that he did not exist. We wondered how many people ever stopped to question their assurance that Satan was only a myth. How many people had ever really searched their hearts and prayed about it? We certainly hadn't. But when we did, the answer was clear. We were starting to understand that Satan's ultimate deception had been to convince us that he was not even real. As I thought about it, *A Course in Miracles* with its metaphysical/New Age philosophy was playing right into his hands by claiming that evil was only an illusion.

But Joy was about to take it a step further. Even though I had read Johanna's book and the entire New Testament, I was still so identified with my metaphysical background that I had completely missed the forest for the trees. I had come to understand the reality of evil and spiritual deception, but I had missed the most obvious thing of all. Joy was about to point it out and hand me my biggest shock yet. And when she did, it turned what was left of my metaphysical world inside out and upside down.

A Further Note: In his book *The Shack*, author Paul Young's counterfeit "Jesus" states that evil and darkness do not have any actual existence (p. 136). In fact, Satan is not even mentioned in Young's heretical novel. This plays right into Satan's emerging New Age/New Spirituality that is attempting to eliminate the reality of Satan and the reality of Jesus Christ's *victory over Satan* on the cross of Calvary.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
—Hebrews 2:14

Rick Warren, much like a football coach who doesn't properly prepare his team for their opponent's clever tactics, says "It helps to know that Satan is entirely predictable." Paul Young, on the other hand, chooses to completely ignore Satan in his book, *The Shack*. But the Bible does *not* downplay or deny the devil as so many of today's Christian leaders do. It clearly warns of a very powerful and deceptive adversary (1 Peter 5:8). It exhorts us to put on the full armour of God and to stand fast against the devil:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
—Ephesians 6:10-13

Excerpts from the powerful hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” express the reality of this spiritual battle:

*For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe,
His craft and power are great, And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not His equal.*

*And though this world with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed, His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him. His rage we can
endure,
For lo, his doom is sure: One little word shall fell him.*

What Joy and I learned, twenty-seven years ago was that the “one little word” was *Jesus*. Victory over Satan and over evil and over sin, is assured through Him.

*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ.
—1 Corinthians 15:57*

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