

Issues in Spiritual Warfare

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Introduction

The Bisorio tribal people of Papua New Guinea say they talk with the *malefa* parrot, a black cockatoo. The parrot will initiate conversation with Bisorio hunters when they are looking for food (Walker 2003). A missionary from Brazil claims that birds in the Amazon talk with the Yanomamo tribal people providing facts from the past and from distant geographic regions. Are these phenomenological experiences or instances of demonic activity?

Exorcists will speak to demonic powers. Demonic powers will respond with voices dissimilar to the person that is demonized. Sometimes the demonized person is surprised that such voices are speaking through her or him. Accounts of demonization¹ are found in the Bible (Demoniac in Capernaum Synagogue – Mk. 1:23 – 28; Gerasene Demoniac – Mk. 5:1 – 20; Daughter of Syrian Phoenician Woman – Mk. 7:24 – 30; Epileptic Boy – Mk. 9:14 – 29). Similar accounts are widely noted in the historical and cultural contexts for all time periods of the Bible. Demonization predates the written Scriptures (i.e., ca. 1500 BC) in the Ancient Near East cultures (Black and Green 1992). Accounts are common for the historical settings of the New Testament as well (Arnold 1992:19).²

What does the Bible say about Satan and demons? This paper will provide a biblical study of Satan and demons. It will not explore the history of demonization nor the methodologies associated with exorcisms and deliverance ministries. Although Satan and demons are mentioned throughout the Bible, there are differences in how

¹ Dickason defines demonization as “demon caused passivity or control due to a demon’s residing within a person, which manifests its effects in various physical and mental disorders and in varying degrees” (1989:40).

² Cp. Acts 17:16

demonization is described during the progress of revelation. The Gospel narratives of the Synoptics have more frequent references to demonization than do the historical narratives of the Old Testament. Additionally, the Gospel narratives describe various methods employed by Jesus and his disciples to affect deliverance from demonization. The Epistles are void of such methods.³

This paper will demonstrate that the Bible does validate the real existence of Satan and demons. A scientific view that excludes the spirit world is in opposition to the biblical worldview. While validating the reality of Satan and demons, the Bible also addresses the subject of demonization in different ways depending on the historical setting. Consequently, the question regarding the reality of demonization today must be first answered from a hermeneutical perspective. It is assumed that a future study of the history of demonization may provide additional insights into the reality of demonization post New Testament canonization.⁴ It is assumed that a future study of deliverance methodologies may also be beneficial in developing a complete view of demonization.

Sydney Page answers the question of why one would establish a biblical foundation first.

“My underlying assumption is that the Bible’s authority is primary; thus, experience must be judged in the light of what is taught in Scripture. One cannot expect to be able to assess contemporary phenomena with discernment without having a solid grasp of what the Bible actually teaches” (1995:9).

³ Demon [daimonion] occurs over 50 times in the Gospels and in Acts, but only 9 times in the remainder of the New Testament. The expression “evil spirit” appears 21 times, half of which are in Mark. The demonological teaching in the Gospels and Acts relates almost exclusively to demon possession (Page 1995:138).

⁴ Dickason makes distinctions between biblical, clinical, and reasoned evidences. He writes, “Having researched the evidence in broad fashion by proper application of both biblical and clinical parameters, we may come to the valid conclusion that Christians can be demonized. When we say this, we cannot say that this is biblical doctrine or theological deduction from biblical evidence. We recognize the lack of conclusive evidence in the Bible on this issue and would not elevate the conclusion to the stature of biblical truth. But we have found the factual truth to be that Christians can be and have been demonized” (1989:157).

Dickason agrees at one level, but ultimately forms conclusions that he freely acknowledges are extrabiblical.

“We must be careful not to formulate doctrine where the Scripture is not specific. Theological statements may be considered valid if based upon proper biblical exegesis and understood in the historical perspective of the progress of revelation contained in Scripture” (1989:16 – 17).

Issues in Spiritual Warfare

This paper will provide a biblical study of Satan and demons. The hypothesis of this paper is that biblical hermeneutics is the first and the key arbitrator in the question of the reality of demonization today. Consequently careful attention will be given to the art, science, and spiritual act of hermeneutics (Osborne 1991:5). Five assumptions will be made regarding biblical hermeneutics (Strauss 2003b).

- 1) **Oneness of Meaning** – A biblical text generally has one basic meaning or interpretation.⁵

A Framework

(Concept adapted from Osborne 1991:19f)

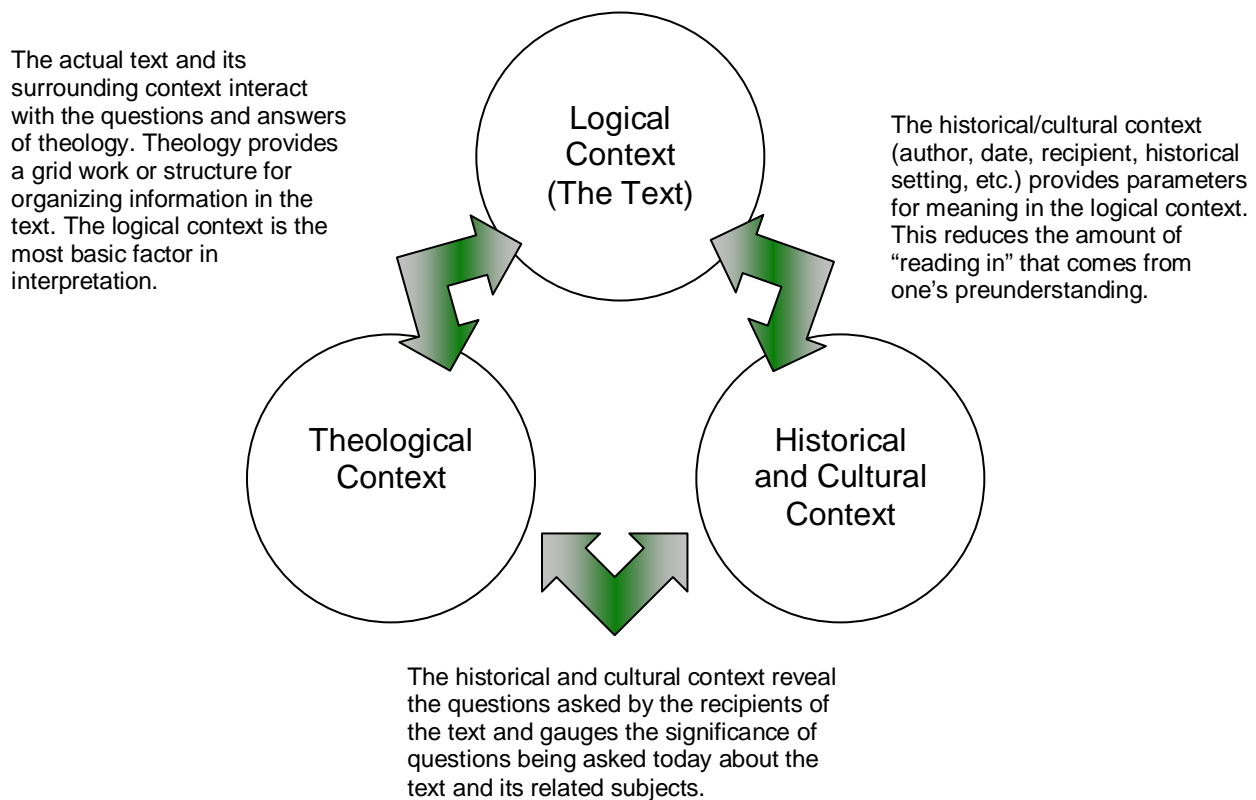


Table 1

⁵ “Oneness of meaning” stands in contrast to Augustine’s four-fold sense of Scripture (quadriga), a hermeneutical method that dominated the Middle Ages. Augustine argued that every Scripture had meaning in four senses, (1) literal, (2) moral, (3) anagogical, and (4) allegorical.

- 2) **The Clarity of Scripture** – A text’s meaning can be understood when read with its literary, linguistic, and historical contexts in mind and with illumination from the Holy Spirit. Concerning literary genre, the meaning of each statement in any composition is “genre dependent.” Historical narratives function differently than didactic epistles. Wisdom literature may be different from apocalyptic literature. Genre analysis and interpretation recognizes three elements of literary genre. Each literary genre has recurring patterns that are characteristic of that particular genre – form. Each literary genre has similar characteristics of style and tone - features. For example, historical narrative tends to be chronological and may include dialogue. Finally a literary genre may be more associated with certain types of authorial purposes – function.
- 3) **Progressive Revelation** – God’s self-disclosure has been over time to different people. This is manifestly seen in the revelation of Jesus Christ as Savior. What was revealed through Gen. 3:15 is far less than in 1 Cor. 15:1 – 5.
- 4) **Analogy of the Scripture** – The Bible has unity and consistency in its teaching on any particular subject. Because Scripture is unified and consistent, obscure passages, which are difficult to understand, are interpreted in the light of clear passages that address the same subject.
- 5) **Historical and Cultural Context** – Interpretation of a text must be done with sensitivity to its historical, political, military, social, ideological, and economic setting.

The function of the narrative genre is extremely important when considering the Gospel descriptions of demonization.

Satan and Demons in the Old Testament

Table 2 outlines the references to Satan and demons in the Old Testament. Page argues that Satan is “a very minor figure in the Old Testament, where he is mentioned *explicitly* in only three passages” (1995:11, 43). Arnold says, “In the Old Testament the activity of evil spirits is described a few times, and usually with the author carefully subordinating them to God’s sovereign control” (1992:60).⁶ Yung likewise acknowledges that Satan is not a major figure in the Old Testament, but that a theology does begin to develop (2002:13).

Satan	Comments	Demons	Comments
Gen. 3:1f	Through the hermeneutical principle of “intertextuality,” we understand that the serpent of Gen. 3 was Satan (Page 1995:23) or at a minimum, the instrument of Satan (Chafer 1964:22-	Gen. 6:1 – 4	The three primary interpretations of “the sons of God” are (1) demonic angels, (2) descendents of Seth, and (3) nobles or kings. Modern scholars and the church father’s earliest

⁶ Anderson erroneously states the Old Testament “abounds” with evidence of evil spirits (1993:119).

	23). Cp. 2 Cor. 11:3, Jo. 8:44, and Rom. 16:20. Genesis 3:15 is significant for salvation-history. The offspring or seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. The implications are that a future victory is promised to the woman's offspring. The details are not provided.		references to Gen. 6 prefer the first (Page 1995:47). Augustine preferred the second interpretation and argued the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The literary context describes the descendents of Cain and Seth (Gen. 4:17 – 24; Gen. 5) 2. Elsewhere in the OT the descendents of Seth are referred to as the sons of God (Ex. 4:22 – 23; Dt. 14:1; Ps. 73:15) 3. The judgment from God in Gen. 6 – 9 is against humanity 4. Angels are not described in the Bible as sexually active⁷
Job 1:6 – 9, 12; 2:1 – 4, 6 – 7	The Satan of Job appeared in two heavenly scenes where beings presented themselves to Yahweh. The text demonstrates that Yahweh is sovereign in every way and in each circumstance. Job 1:11 states that the affliction of Job was by the initiation and hand of Yahweh. ⁸ God was the first cause. Satan was subordinate and limited. Satan's role was mediation (Page 1995:30).	Ps. 82:1	"God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the 'gods':" Two views prevail. One says that 'gods' refers to evil supernatural beings (Page 1995:54). The other says that the word refers to human judges (Walvoord 1986b:854).
Zech. 3:1 – 2	The historical setting of Zechariah's oracle is 520 BC. Joshua, the high priest and co-leader of the exiles along with the governor Zerubbabel, is in view. The writing prophet sees a vision. Satan is described as standing beside the angel of the LORD as an accuser.	Is. 24:21 – 22	"the powers in the heavens above"
1 Chr. 21:1	The context of 1 Chr. 21 is a census ordered by David despite the objections of Joab, his military commander. The narrator describes Satan as inciting David to take the census of Israel.	Dan. 10:13, 20 – 21; 12:1	Page and Walvoord agree that "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" refers to a fallen angel under the direction of Satan (Page 1995:64 and Walvoord 1971:246). Although Page agrees that a fallen angel was malevolently influencing the king of Persia, he sees no Scriptural warrant for territorial spirits, spiritual mapping, and prayer walks (1995:65). Page suggests that cleansing places and things has more in common with animism than Christianity (1995:225).

⁷ In a fallacious syllogism where he affirms the consequent, Anderson writes, "If there is such a thing as demonic transference from one person to another, I would say that illicit sexual union is the chief means by which it happens" (1993:137).

⁸ Consider these additional passages that speak of Yahweh as the source of wealth and poverty, blessings and disaster – Dt. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6 – 7; Job 42:11; Is. 45:6 – 7.

Is. 14:12 – 15	<p>In their historical context, Is. 14 refers to the king of Babylon and Ez. 28 to the ruler in Tyre. The traditional view is that these two Old Testament passages “evidently” refer to the fall of Satan (Chafer 1964:3, 18 – 22) – the assumption is a hermeneutical principle called <i>sensus plenior</i> (Strauss 2003b:32). Page argues that these interpretations are “not at all likely” (1995:38). For example, he does not believe the evidence in book of Isaiah demonstrates that Isaiah intended his hearers to understand that he was referring to Satan (1995:39). The assumption is that the error of eisegesis has been made in the traditional view. It seems rather casual to assume that these passages refer to Satan’s fall in view of the evidence provided by recent archeological discoveries. Chafer presumes that the gap theory is true (an undeterminable period of time between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 when Satan fell as described in Is. 14 and Ez. 28) (1964:3).⁹ Yung makes a case that the actual intention of these passages remains uncertain to current scholars (2002:13).</p>	Dt. 32:17	“sacrificed to demons” Cp. Ps. 106:37 and 1 Cor. 10:19 – 20
Ez. 28:12 – 19		1 Sa. 16:14 – 16, 23; 18:10; 19:9	<p>In 1 Sa. 15:26 Saul is rejected by God as king. In Sa. 16:13 David is anointed as king. The text says that the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. Six of the seven times the evil spirit is mentioned it is described as coming from Yahweh. Page argues that this is not paralleled in the New Testament (1995:77). The narration bespeaks of the idea that demonic forces are under divine control. For Saul the remedy from the torment was music.</p>
		Jud. 9:23	God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem
	1 Ki. 22:19 – 23	God sent a lying spirit to King Ahab (2 Chr. 18 also provides the same account); the text is not clear whether the lying spirit was a fallen or unfallen angel	

Table 2

⁹ Did Satan fall from heaven in the dateless past? Chafer argues that Satan “fell” morally when he sinned, but will be physically banished from heaven at a future date (1964:11). The question posited above is whether Is. 14 and Ez. 28 are referring not only to historical figures, but also to a previous event, i.e., the fall of Satan. Regarding the fall of Satan, note the following passages from Scripture:

- Lk. 10:18 “He (Jesus) replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’” Page argues that the defeat of Satan took place during Jesus’ lifetime and through Jesus’ death (1995:111).
- Rev. 12:7 – 9 “He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Twelftree posits an important question for Bible students, “When was Satan defeated?” He suggests these possible answers, (1) at Jesus’ temptation, (2) during the Gospel exorcisms, (3) at the cross, (4) at some future time, and (5) a combination of the above (1993:114 – 117).

The Old Testament acknowledges that the Israelites believed in the existence of malevolent spiritual beings. Evidences from the Ancient Near East demonstrate that the nations surrounding Israel had magical texts, incantations, and a great concern about the demonic realm (Page 1995:82). Interestingly, the Old Testament's emphasis on one God and His sovereign rule over the entire universe, including all spiritual beings, provided an environment for the Israelites that was free from superstition and fear.

Satan and Demons in the Gospels and Acts

Yung argues that the character and purposes of Satan are made clear in the New Testament (2002:13). In the Gospels Satan is referred to as Satan, the devil, the tempter, the evil one, the prince of demons,¹⁰ the prince of this world, Beelzebul (Beelzebub in NIV), and the enemy. According to Jesus' worldview a person either belongs to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan.

Matt. 13:36 – 39 “His disciples came to him and said, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.’ He answered, ‘The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.’”

This mindset is corroborated elsewhere as the unbelievers are similarly described:

- Jo. 8:44 “You belong to **your father the devil**”
- Acts 13:10 Paul to Elymas in Pathos on the isle of Cyprus, “You are **a child of the devil**”
- Eph. 2:2 “You used to live when you **followed** the ways of this world and **of the ruler of the kingdom of the air**, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”
- 1 Jo. 3:8, 10, 12 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the **children of God** are and who the **children of the devil** are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his

¹⁰ In Matthew 25:41 there is the only reference to Satan and his angels. “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” As “prince of demons,” Satan coordinates the demonic attacks and the demons represent Satan (Page 1995:102).

brother. This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who **belonged to the evil one** and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Page argues that starting with his temptation and subsequent baptism, Jesus' relationship with unearthly powers was unique as the Messiah – see Ps. 2:7 and Is. 42:1 (1995:93). As such, the life and ministry of Jesus are an inimitable display of the divine person and divine work of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Jesus' messianic ministry is highlighted in Luke/Acts with Is. 61:1 – 2 as the basis.

- Lk. 4:17 – 21 “The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.’ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”
- Acts 10:38 “...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were **under the power of the devil**, because God was with him.”
- Is. 61:1 – 2 “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn...”

The Synoptics highlight the conflict between Christ the Son of God and Satan (Page 1995:124). Twelftree argues that Jesus' dealings with the demon-possessed are of central significance in understanding Jesus and his ministry (1993:3). The conflict is a cosmic struggle. It is the leading motif (Page 1995:135). The Gospel of John clearly

indicated the role Satan played in the death of Jesus Christ (Jo. 6:70; 8:44; 12:31; 13:2, 27; 14:30; 16:11).

Note the purposes described in the Gospel narratives for choosing the disciples:

Mt. 10:1	Mk. 6:7	Lk. 9:1 – 2	Lk. 10:17 – 20
"He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."	"Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. "	"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom ¹¹ of God and to heal the sick."	The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy ; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Table 3

There were four exorcisms¹² performed by Jesus recorded in the Synoptics.

Each situation was different and Jesus handled each differently. Hayward teaches that the dissimilarities make it obvious that Jesus was not modeling a methodology, but was demonstrating a principle of authority (2003:51). Page concurs stating that both Mark and Luke connect the exorcism with Jesus' authoritative teaching in the synagogue (1995:139).¹³

1. **The Demoniac in the Capernaum Synagogue** – Mk. 1:23 – 28 and Lk. 4:33 – 37
 - a. The Situation – A man possessed by a demon was in the Capernaum synagogue where Jesus taught authoritatively. Without being addressed the demon spoke through the man. The demon manifested an accurate knowledge of Jesus' identity and his work. Through the demon's questions it is apparent that the demon understood the fundamental conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.
 - b. Jesus' Response – Both in Mark and in Luke this is the first miracle Jesus performed. Jesus recognized the demonic presence. Jesus spoke to the

¹¹ Twelftree argues that preaching the kingdom involved a ministry of exorcism (1993:125). "In themselves the exorcisms of Jesus are the kingdom of God in operation" (1993:170).

¹² Twelftree notes that peripatetic exorcists and healers were not uncommon in Palestine (1993:23) and that people would commonly believe in preternatural beings (27). Acts 19:13 – 19 records the use of incantations to restrict demonic activity.

¹³ Those who observed Jesus' exorcisms responded in one of four ways:

- They were moved to fear and amazement – Mk. 1:27/Lk. 4:36; Mk. 5:14/Mt. 8:33/Lk. 8:34; Mt. 12:23/Lk. 11:14
- They concluded Jesus was mad and demon-possessed – Mk. 3:21, 30
- They ascribed his power to Beelzebul – Mk. 3:22/Mt. 12:24/Lk. 11:15
- They believed he was the Messiah – Mt. 12:23

- demon authoritatively. He commanded¹⁴ the demon to be silent and to come out of the man. No ritual¹⁵ was used, only the power of command.¹⁶
2. **The Gerasene (Gadarene in Mt.) Demoniac** – Mk. 5:1 – 20; Mt. 8:28 – 34; Lk. 8:26 - 39
 - a. The Situation – This is the most extensive exorcism account in the New Testament. An inhabited man was driven to live naked in nearby tombs and hills. The man possessed superhuman strength and would injure himself and those who passed by. The demons manifested themselves without being addressed by speaking through the man. They displayed an accurate knowledge of Jesus' identity. They plead for their own well being and Jesus permitted them to enter nearby animals.
 - b. Jesus' Response – Jesus recognized the demonic presence and verbally responded to the demons. Jesus verbally commanded them to come out. They did not immediately comply. He asked them their name. They pleaded to be permitted to enter pigs feeding nearby.
 3. **The Daughter of the Syrian Phoenician Woman** – Mk. 7:24 – 30, Mt. 15:21 – 28
 - a. The Situation – Set in a Gentile context, a woman approached Jesus about her daughter who was afflicted with a demonic spirit. The text does not indicate how the mother was able to make such a determination.
 - b. Jesus' Response – Jesus affirms the mother diagnosis, commends her faith, and "heals"¹⁷ (Matthew's terminology) the daughter from a distance. Page contrasts this story with modern practitioners of deliverance ministries who stress that the afflicted (1) have opened windows of opportunity, (2) should take responsibility for their self-imposed vulnerability, and (3) repent of their sinful behaviors (1995:159).
 4. **The Epileptic Boy** – Mk. 9:14 – 29; Mt. 17:14 – 21; Lk. 9:37 – 43
 - a. The Situation – A boy had been victimized by a demon since his early childhood. He had seizures, was thrown to the ground, rolled around, ground his teeth, and foamed at the mouth. The demon recognized Jesus.
 - b. Jesus' Response – Jesus did not interrogate the demon. He commanded the demon to depart. The departure was violent.¹⁸

Page argues that the role of Satan diminishes in the book of Acts. He is specifically mentioned in only four places – Acts 5:3; 10:38; 13:10; 26:18.¹⁹ Further, he

¹⁴ Twelftree demonstrates that "I command" was common phraseology in the historical and cultural context (1993:95).

¹⁵ Twelftree identifies the mechanical devices (hair, knots, water, branches, pottery, etc.) and cultic rituals utilized by the contemporary exorcists in Jesus' Palestine (1993:157 – 165).

¹⁶ Page comments that the simplicity of Jesus' method "stands in stark contrast to what is done by many who are engaged in deliverance ministries today" (1995:144).

¹⁷ In Luke 13:10 – 17, the story of the healing of a crippled woman, healing and exorcism are blurred.

¹⁸ Twelftree validates that in the ancient world violent departures were a common motif.

¹⁹ In Acts demons are explicitly mentioned in the following passages – Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16 – 18; 19:12, 13 – 17.

cautions that exorcisms, though practiced by the early Christians, are not at the heart of the church's mission (1995:171).²⁰

Satan and Demons in the Epistles

The following are references to either Satan or demons in the church epistles:

References to the Powers of Darkness in Paul's Letters		
Word RSV (NIV)	Greek Term	Occurrences
Satan		
satan	<i>satanas</i>	Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:15
devil	<i>diabolos</i>	Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim 3:6, 7; 2 Tim 2:26
evil one	<i>poneros</i>	Eph 6:16; 2 Thess 3:3
prince (ruler)	<i>archon</i>	Eph 2:2
spirit	<i>pneuma</i>	Eph 2:2
Belial	<i>belial</i>	2 Cor 6:15
the enemy	<i>antikeimenos</i>	1 Tim 5:14
the serpent	<i>aphis</i>	2 Cor 11:3
the tempter	<i>peirazon</i>	1 Thess 3:5
the god of this world (the god of this age)	<i>ho theos tou aionou toutou</i>	2 Cor 4:4
angel	<i>angelos</i>	2 Cor 11:14
Principalities and Powers		
principalities (rulers)	<i>archai</i>	Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10; 2:15

²⁰ Arnold correctly states that after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:3a), and after he spoke with the disciples for forty days about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3b), the disciples preached "the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23). The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome, where "for two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30 – 31) (1992:85). Chafer defines the "kingdom of God" as the entire universe, over which God is enthroned, and to this kingdom every enemy must finally be brought back to original subjection and adjustment, or be banished forever" (1964:24). He makes a distinction between the overall kingdom of God and a literal kingdom of righteousness and peace upon the earth. Chafer argues that this earthly kingdom was the burden of the Old Testament prophets, was announced by John the Baptist, and proclaimed by Jesus Christ and his disciples (1964:25). Chafer and other dispensationalists believe that when the Messiah was rejected by the Jews, God gave new revelations to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles – cp. Eph. 3:1 – 11. He argues that the church age is parenthetical in the history of the Jews (1964:27). Progressive dispensationalists would disagree with Chafer when he says, "Certainly none of the predicted and necessary events accompanying the establishment of their (Jews) kingdom have been experienced, nor is there any trace of its promised blessings" (1964:39).

powers (authorities)	<i>exousiai</i>	1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10; 2:15
powers	<i>dynameis</i>	Rom 8:38; Eph 1:21
dominions (powers)	<i>kyriotetes</i>	Eph 1:21; Col 1:16
thrones	<i>thronoi</i>	Col 1:16
angels/messengers	<i>angeloi</i>	Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 11:10 (?); 2 Cor 12:7; Gal 1:8 (?); Co12:18 '
world rulers (powers)	<i>kosmokratores</i>	Eph 6:12
spiritual hosts (spiritual forces)	<i>pneumatika</i>	Eph 6:12
rulers	<i>archontes</i>	1 Cor 2:6, 8
elemental spirits (basic principles)	<i>stoicheia</i>	Gal 4:3, 8; Col 2:8, 20
demons	<i>daimonia</i>	1 Cor 10:20-21; 1 Tim 4:1

Table 4

In an honest assessment, Yung notes that it is important to note what Paul does not teach regarding spiritual warfare (the angelic fall, the activity of demons, how to thwart demonic activity, and territorial spirits). He makes a case that “the proper Christian approach is to avoid going beyond what Scripture teaches (Yung 2002:14).

The New Testament looks to the cross and resurrection as the significant point in Christ’s conflict with Satan – Jn. 12:31 – 33; Acts 2:34 – 35; Eph. 1:20 – 22; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:9 – 11; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jo. 3:8 (Arnold 1992:79). Specifically Col. 2:15 says, “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

“Since believers are risen with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms, we may infer that they are not subject to the control of these malevolent beings” (Page 1995:246). “That believers

Points of Difference Between the False and the True	
<u>SATAN'S IMITATION</u>	<u>GOD'S REALITY</u>
Self-sufficient	Helpless
Independent	Dependent
Self-righteous	Bestowed righteousness
	Absolute righteousness required
	Gift
	Debtor
Character building	Fruit of the Spirit
Conform	Transform
Improve fallen nature	Partake of divine nature
Self	God
Glory to man	Glory to God
Humanitarian dreams	Conversion

are to struggle against the powers is found in the New Testament only in Ephesians 6” (Page 1995:248). Satan’s method of operation is to imitate the truth and his ultimate objective is to deceive people, leading them away from dependence on God their creator. Chafer contends “the deception of the counterfeit depends wholly upon its likeness to the real” (1964:111). Satan is exploiting the “world system” (Gal. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Jo. 5:19) and enticing the appetites of the flesh.

For the Christian there are three compelling evil influences, (1) the world, (2) the devil, and (3) the flesh (the cravings of our sinful nature...its desires and thoughts).²¹ Arnold argues that the nature of spiritual warfare as portrayed by Paul is primarily concerned with Christian conduct and spreading the gospel – not with exorcism or eradicating structural evil (1992:154). Anderson writes, “Freedom from spiritual conflicts and bondage is not a power encounter; it is a truth encounter” (1993:22).

The Epistles declare that the victory is already won, but that an ongoing daily struggle is also a reality. Paul encourages his readers in the midst of struggles that “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Ro. 16:20). Note also 1 Cor. 15:24, “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.”

²¹ Anderson incorrectly defines the “flesh” as memories, bad habits, ingrained and self-centered habits, conditioned responses, and sinful thought patterns in your brain (1993:45, 52, 126).

Implications

The Old Testament historical narratives communicate that God is one LORD and the sovereign creator and controller of the entire universe. Nothing escapes his consciousness – he knows all and sees all. He is everywhere all the time. Concerning Satan and demons, the Old Testament is relatively silent compared to the Gospels and Acts. Nevertheless, in the Old Testament accounts that mention Satan and demons, God is depicted as being in total control. Satan and demons are subservient and subordinate to him.

We know that the nations surrounding the Israelites were polytheistic and animistic. We know that they were afraid of the demonic realm and attempted to control it through varied rituals. The oral and writing prophets constantly addressed the syncretism that slowly entered and ultimately permeated the lifestyles of the Israelites, including their kings.

“Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal, and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel before him” (1 Kings 16:30 – 33).

“They worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines in the high places. They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought” (2 Kings 17:32 – 33).

“Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem” (2 Chr. 36:14).

In view of the situation in the Old Testament, I am befuddled as to why the Old Testament prophets did not employ the same analyses and techniques used today in deliverance ministries. The prophets did not seem to analyze the problem as demonic.

In a polytheistic and animistic environment where Scripture has identified that demons are behind the idols, why did the prophets not conclude that the problem was demonic. They did not write that modern day deliverance techniques were employed. Those today that are involved in the deliverance ministries must address this account from the biblical narrative.

Regarding Jesus' ministry of exorcism and the question of whether it is a model for the church today, Page offers three options (1995:180 – 181):

- 1) Maintain that exorcisms no longer have a place in the ministry of the church because science is now able to explain what was at one time experienced phenomenologically
- 2) Acknowledge that demons exist and that demonization is possible, but demonization was limited to the ministry of Jesus and the apostles²²
- 3) Accept the reality of demon possession and to consider exorcism as a valid way of treating it

Arnold acknowledges the debate regarding whether the Gospels are descriptive or normative. He writes, "Interpreters often disagree over the extent to which (or even if)²³ the mission of the Twelve and the mission of the seventy-two prefigure the ministry of the church and is therefore normative for us today" (1992:84).

Pop culture asks the question, "What would Jesus do?" The key question for Christians related to demonization and exorcisms is, "Can I do what Jesus did?" In other words, should the Christian today expect to replicate the messianic ministry of Jesus Christ?"

²² Page argues that the Achilles' heel of this second position is that exorcisms continued to be practiced in the patristic period and throughout most of the history of the church; cultural anthropologists have shown that demonization is a widespread phenomenon (1995:181).

²³ Anderson acknowledges "the apparent lack of instruction... in the epistles relative to demonization (1993:24).

Conclusions

No portion of Scripture denies the real existence of Satan and demons – not the Old Testament, the Gospels and Acts, nor the Epistles. A biblical worldview accepts the ontological reality of unearthly powers in the world today.

As a polemic to the rampant polytheism, animism, and syncretism in the Ancient Near East cultures, the Old Testament focuses exclusively on God as the One sovereign creator. Satan, unseen dark powers, and all of mankind are subservient and subordinate to him.

In the Old Testament the references to Satan and demons is limited and it is impossible to build a theology from them.

The Gospels explode with a full-scale struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The protagonist, Jesus Christ, is portrayed in a cosmic conflict with God's archenemy Satan. As Messiah, Jesus Christ confronts the demonic world demonstrating the sovereign power and authority of God and the kingdom of God.

I do not think the Gospel writers were intending to establish either models or methods to be replicated by all people in the kingdom of God. Their narrations serve to establish the authority and supremacy of Jesus Christ over Satan. The promised offspring of the woman lived, died, and rose from the dead victorious over Satan, sin, and death. Christ the Son of God is unique from all others.

The Epistles continue to affirm the reality of Satan and demons. Paul and others clearly frame Satan and his evil spirits are formidable foes against the Christian and the church. The tactics of Satan are made clear. His primary means of blinding the

unbelievers and diverting the Christians from a life of dependence on God is through subtle deception and imitation of the truth.

What about the phenomenological experiences of demonization today? I concur with Hayward that demonization may be one of three possibilities, (1) spurious, fraudulent, and simulated, (2) psychopathological,²⁴ or (3) supernatural. From the biblical evidence, the latter seems the least likely.

²⁴ Psychopathological demonization is either consciously induced (by drugs, chemical imbalance, rhythm, mind altering activities, i.e., prolonged fasting, extreme fatigue, hyperventilation) or psychologically based (schizophrenia, auto-suggestion, etc.) (Hayward 2003:45).

KEY:

- References that are shaded were read in their entirety.
- Other references were used as resources only.

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