



# What Does the Bible Say About Satan Really

*Dr. James Stone*

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Did Jesus believe there was satanic power? Absolutely, for He said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

Did Peter believe there was satanic power? Absolutely, for he said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Did Paul believe there was satanic power? Absolutely, for he said, "And the God of peace shall bruise [to crush completely] Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20).

Did James believe there was satanic power? Absolutely, for he said, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

The New Testament writers obviously believed there was satanic action in the world of their day. They knew the powerful potential for destruction the adversary possessed. They continually warned of the ever present temptation that could beset every person. They were well aware of satanic activity in the lives of the people. They, however, were not mythological in their belief. They did not make Satan into something it was not. They knew that the enemy of their souls would never come from without. The temptation to corruption that would destroy them would always come from within their own thinking. They knew the mind, when out from under the control of the Holy Spirit, was the adversary that brings death and destruction to the soul of man.

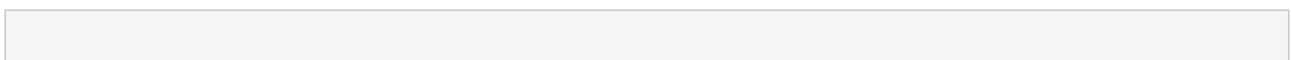
The teaching of Jesus illustrated exactly where this satanic power lies. When He told his followers that he would be killed (Matt. 16:13-28), Peter responded with "not so Lord, be it for from thee." Jesus then said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou art an offence unto me." Peter's expression, "Not so Lord," placed him in an adversarial role to the outworking of the will of God for the life of Jesus.

The reason why Peter now found himself in opposition to the Father's will for Jesus' life was he did not fully understand the plan of God. He knew Jesus was the Christ, but he did not know exactly how that was going to be worked out by the will of God. Jesus told him that his problem began when he had exercised his mind and came up with a faulty conclusion: "For thou savourest [translated from a word meaning, "to exercise the mind"] not the things that be of God, but those that be of man." Peter's own imaginations had brought him to an erroneous belief. This faulty thinking put Peter in opposition to what Jesus said was going to occur. At this point of the conversation, Peter was an adversary to the purpose of God in the life of Jesus.

Peter would eventually come to understand the basic struggle for man would be for the control of his mind. He would later write, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober . . ." Do not attempt to experience life in the thinking of the mind. Do not become entangled by the intoxicating fantasy of your own imaginations. Be sober. Let your mind be sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Satanic activity, the forces of the adversary to God, always come from the inner working of the mind of man. As Paul warned the Philippians, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (3:18,19). The glory of man (the intellectual power of the mind under control of the Holy Spirit) becomes the shame of man (the power of the carnal mind now taking man down and away from God with every thought).

In a world created by his fantasies and imaginations, man now believes he controls the events of his life. God still rules every action of the universe, but in the make believe world of his mind man thinks he controls his life. His own imagination is the great adversary to the ways of God in the life of a man.



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