

Are Demonic Powers Behind the 'Trump Derangement Syndrome'?

Light versus darkness. Good versus evil. God's plans and purposes versus the enemy's deceitful agenda. That is the binary way Bible-believing Christians see the world. An argument can be made that, at one time, most Americans would have understood this and seen it the same way. So the struggle politically isn't just between differing political philosophies but between good and evil. And I believe that behind the craziness manifested by so-called "Trump Derangement Syndrome" are principalities and powers.

If you're Pentecostal or charismatic, you are probably familiar with the phrase "spiritual warfare." It's a phrase we use to describe the unseen battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Everything we do has an effect on this spiritual battle, and spiritual forces have an effect on us as well. At times when we are under spiritual attack, we can feel an increased intensity or struggle to accomplish what we feel God has called us to do.

Many Christians see this increased resistance as a sign of spiritual warfare. It can happen in our personal lives or in our families, our churches, our communities and even our country. There are spiritual beings assigned to oversee various realms and territories. This explains why charismatics and even many evangelical Christians see what is going on in our country and in Donald Trump's presidency as a spiritual battle. Even some mainline Protestants who usually avoid acknowledging such things as demonic spirits admit that the vitriol has gotten so extreme in America that maybe there is spiritual warfare behind it.

Granted, I'm not a theologian. I'm a Christian journalist. And my new book, *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election*, is not a

treatise on the supernatural. But as a Christian who is aware of this unseen world and someone who believes that we have authority over these powers through the name and blood of Jesus, I could not write a book about all that is at stake for our country without shedding light on the very real struggle in the spiritual realm. It's critical to look with spiritual eyes at America and our unlikely president, who stands strong for what I believe is right while experiencing unparalleled attacks that often defy reason.

In fact, to me, the vengeance with which some people hate Trump can only be understood if seen in spiritual terms. Of course, there are many examples of unspeakable evil that at least make sense when seen in spiritual terms. Recognizing spiritual forces makes it easier to understand the actions of a Hitler or why there has been genocide in places such as Rwanda. Poverty, war, murder, hate and many other sins make sense if you believe there are malevolent forces at work in the world. Even the hatred of brother against brother, horrible domestic violence and nasty divorce fall into the same category. You can understand these horrible things better when you realize that both God and Satan operate in the earth through people.

So if we can accept that there is a devil and he influences humans to do his bidding, then we can conclude that people are subject to these spiritual authorities even if they don't understand what they are doing or why.

Even Christians can be Satan's tools. If you've ever lived through a bitter church split, you know the devil's influence on church politics. Or ask a Christian couple who survived a nasty divorce. Yes, Christians can be influenced by demons too. But my goal is not to open a debate about whether a Christian can be possessed or oppressed by a demon. My point is that even if *oppressed* is the more accurate term, if Christians aren't tuned in to God's voice, they too can fall prey to the lies of the enemy and be used for his purposes.

Other books about Trump's presidency or our country's current affairs will likely explain everything in political or cultural terms. I believe, however, that the only way to truly discern what's happening in our nation is through spiritual eyes. This is not a war between Left and Right or between Democrats and Republicans or even between President Trump and his political opponents. It's spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare surrounds us all the time. It's a daily battle the enemy wages in our personal lives, in our homes, in our cities and even in Washington.

Only those with spiritual discernment will understand this. And it explains why the Left went berserk when Trump was elected. You could see it in all the protests, some of which involved violence. You also see it in the way the Left attacks Christianity in general. For example, some on the Left are actually introducing bills that would make it illegal for Christians to help people with same-sex attractions or who were uncertain about their gender identity. Is the next step labeling the Bible a hate book because it condemns sins that people love and want to make legal? Thankfully that legislation has not passed, but it goes to show the extremes people will go to oppose biblical principles.

If this kind of behavior goes unchecked, I believe we are only two or three elections away from extreme liberals getting a firm upper hand. And as Ronald Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it and then hand it to them with the well thought lessons of how they in their lifetime must do the same."

We need to heed his words and fight harder, because the Left already has the upper hand with the younger generations of voters through the news media, academia and popular culture. The Left gets the church to go along with its values by

creating a false dichotomy between politics and spiritual matters. The Left has taken abortion—which is really a spiritual matter of defending life—and turned it into a purely political issue. It has taken same-sex marriage—a spiritual matter of biblical marriage—and turned it into a political issue of defending the rights of the LGBTQ community. Once leftists turn these spiritual matters into political issues, they tell the church to stand off with their false understanding of separation of church and state.

I don't believe this struggle in America is just about separation of church and state, and neither do most Christians. It's a battle between spiritual forces, but which ones?