

A Quick Primer On Spiritual Warfare

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Introduction

The following short handbook covers the basics of spiritual warfare in the Filipino context. It is designed to be a handy reference work for pastors, elders, and missionaries and lay preachers. It covers most of the main topics in a concise form and is an assembling of various articles I have written over the years massaged into book form. It is from a bible-believing, born-again, charismatic Christian perspective but most Christians should find it helpful and it does not push any particularly divisive doctrines. The first section deals with the nature of the spiritual realms and the place of Christians in them and the nature of religions versus Christianity. Then we examine issues such as astrology, the occult, curses, hexes and spells, deliverance ministry. We then look at how to acquire and exert spiritual authority and do spiritual battle and cover a spiritual armory and how to use our weapons and the blood of Christ and be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Lastly we move into the topics of deliverance ministry and some of the “weird stuff” such as the nature and types of angels and demons.. There is an index at the end to help you find your way around.

The Battle

Spiritual warfare is a battle between the kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan and the kingdom of light ruled by God and His Son Jesus Christ. The weapons of this warfare are not fleshly human weapons but spiritual weapons such as truth and righteousness, blessings and curses, forgiveness and repentance. The battle involves an intense wrestling with powers and principalities “in the heavenly realms” from which Christians need protection. (Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Colossians 1:13, Revelations 12:1-17)

THE THREE HEAVENS AND THE EIGHT SPIRITUAL REALMS

The word Heaven is plural “shamayim” or “ouranoi” (Gk). There are three heavens or “shamayim” mentioned in Scripture.

The first heaven is where “the birds of the heavens” fly. (Genesis 1:20, Psalm 104:12, Daniel 2:38)

The mid-heaven or second heaven is where the angels fly and do battle. (Revelation 12:4-12, 14:6,7)

The third heaven is where Paul or the person He knew was “caught up to” heard “inexpressible things” (2 Corinthians 12:2 NKJV) and is probably where Satan was first dwelling before he fell.

The Bible describes eight main spiritual realms:

Above the Heavens – where God’s glory dwells and where Satan once aimed to be. (Psalm 8:1, 108:4,5, Ephesians 1:20, 4:10, Isaiah 14:12-14)

Third Heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2) – the Throne, where Paul went and heard holy things.

Second Heaven (Revelation 12:4-12, 14:6,7) –Where Satan and fallen angels first fell to and demons are fighting for now.

First Heaven (Genesis 1:20, Psalm 104:12, Daniel 2:38) – birds dwell, Satan dwells as prince of the power of the air since the cross.

Earth esp. “The Face Of The Earth” (Genesis 6:1, Acts 17:26, Job 1:7,2:2, 1 Peter 5:8) – the place of human habitation, also where Satan prowls, and will be cast down to in the end times.

The Grave/Under The Earth /In The Sea/The Deep (Genesis 1:2, Exodus 20:4, Deuteronomy 5:8, Job 28:14, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 5:3) – the place human bodies, some righteous souls before the cross, and the strange creatures of the deep dwell. In 1 Samuel 28:15 the prophet is “brought up” by the witch of Endor. In Matthew 27:52,53 there is a partial resurrection of the righteous OT saints “from the graves”.

Abyssthe Bottomless Pit/Hell (Isaiah 14:11-15; Numbers 16:33, Ezekiel 32:15-18 Luke 8:31, 10:7, Revelation 9:1,2; 20:1-3) – presently where the souls of the disgraced dead and confined demons dwell

The Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:10-15) – a future place of eternal punishment prepared for the Devil and his angels and those who accept the mark of the Beast.

“Sheol” is a general Hebrew term covering the entire world of the dead. Luke 16 indicates that Abraham’s bosom is a place of comfort in the OT world of the dead. Job indicates that some of the dead experienced rest and reunion with relatives hence the term ‘gathered to one’s people’. (Job 3:17-22, Genesis 15:15, 25:8,17; Deut 32:50).

Abaddon or Destruction (Gk Apollyon) is the name of the angel that guards the Pit (Revelation 9:11) and thus Hell is given the name Abaddon in Job 26:6, 28:22, Proverbs 15:11. It is seen as a place of silence, loss of identity and oblivion as well as of torment. There is no knowledge of God just active torment and judgment. (Psalm 6:5, 88:12, Deut 32:22) God’s Presence is still there – as wrath. (Psalm 139:8)

Tartarus was the legendary Greek place of extreme torment. 2 Peter 2:4 indicates that the rebellious demons were confined here. It seems equivalent to the Pit.

What Happens When Christians Die

Christians are already “seated in heavenly realms with Christ” (Ephesians 2:6) who have already come to the heavenly Zion (Hebrews 12:22-24) whose citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20) and whose treasure is stored up for them in heaven (1 Peter 1:4) and who have died and whose life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-4). When Christians leave this earthly tent behind they go to where they already are – with Christ, in God (Philippians 1:23) for their death has no sting (1 Corinthians 15:51-55). The resurrection of the dead when Christ returns shall complete our redemption and we will be given immortal resurrection bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:1-58)

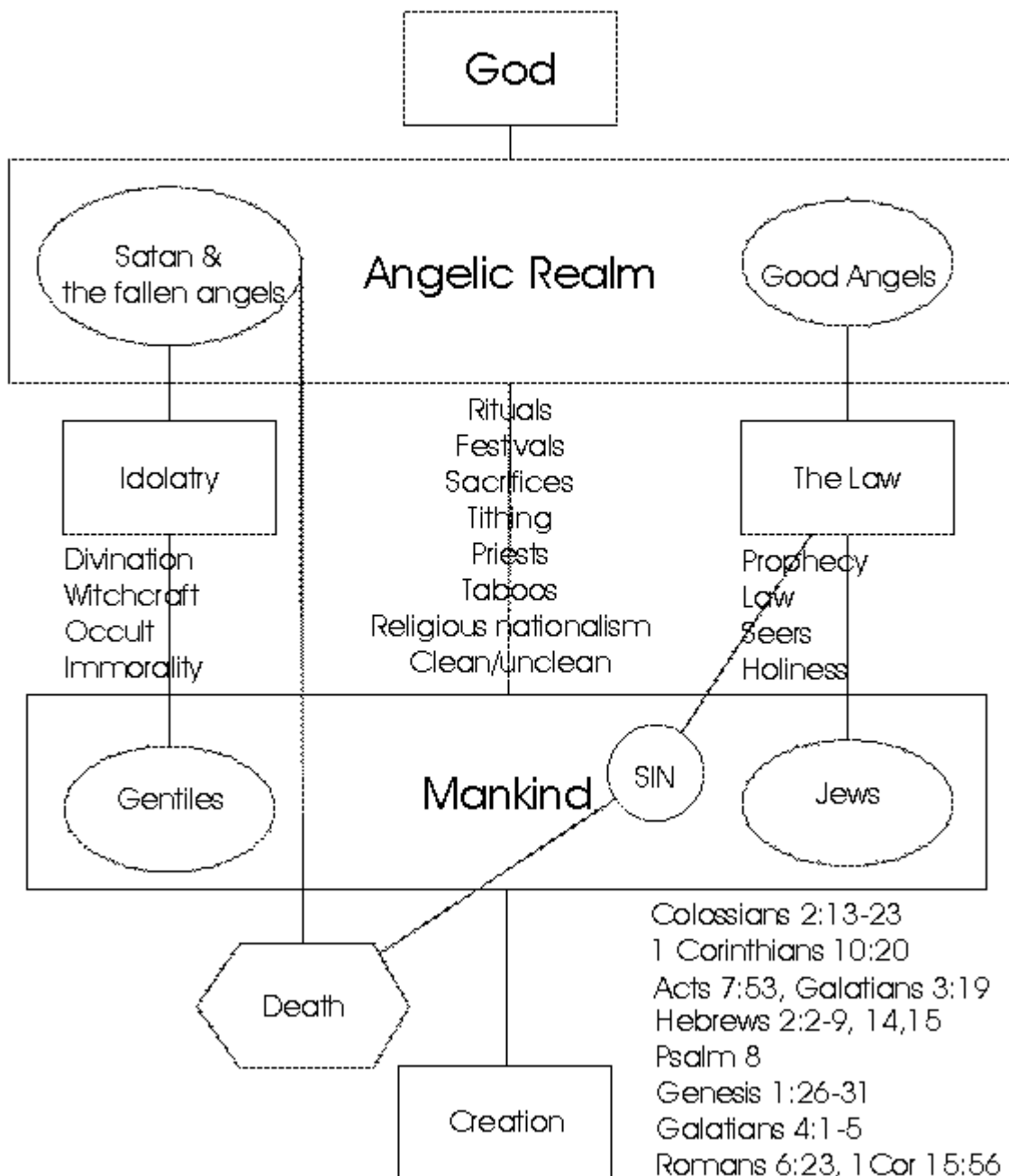
THE FALL OF SATAN

Satan falls from third heaven where he was an anointed cherub (Ezekiel 28:1-19, Isaiah 14:12-20), to second heaven in the OT, after the cross he falls from second heaven to become “the prince of the power of the air” in Ephesians (Ephesians 2:1-4). After a battle in Rev 12 where Satan tries to retake the second heaven he is cast out of the heavens entirely. He is forced to Earth and incarnates as the Anti-Christ. (Revelation 13) He wars with God and is cast to the Pit. (Revelation 19,20:1-3) After 1000 years Satan tries to retake Earth and loses yet again and his final place of punishment is in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20) Satan can go “down a level” any time he likes – say from first heaven to earth, but he cannot go up a level unless God calls him up temporarily. Satan constantly fights to go up a level, loses, then is cast down even further. During the OT period Satan had some access to the courts of Heaven as we see in Zechariah 3 and Job 1 & 2 and evil spirits were part of those standing before the Lord as the “host of heaven” (1 Kings 22:19-23). Since the cross and the spoiling of Satan during the ascension (Ephesians 4) they have been cast out and there is no indication in the NT that evil spirits are now part of the heavenly court in any way. The Church is now above the angels (1 Corinthians 6:2,3, Matthew 11:11-13, Hebrews 1:14) and the true citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20)

ANGELS AND THE LAW, DEMONS AND THE GENTILE RELIGIONS

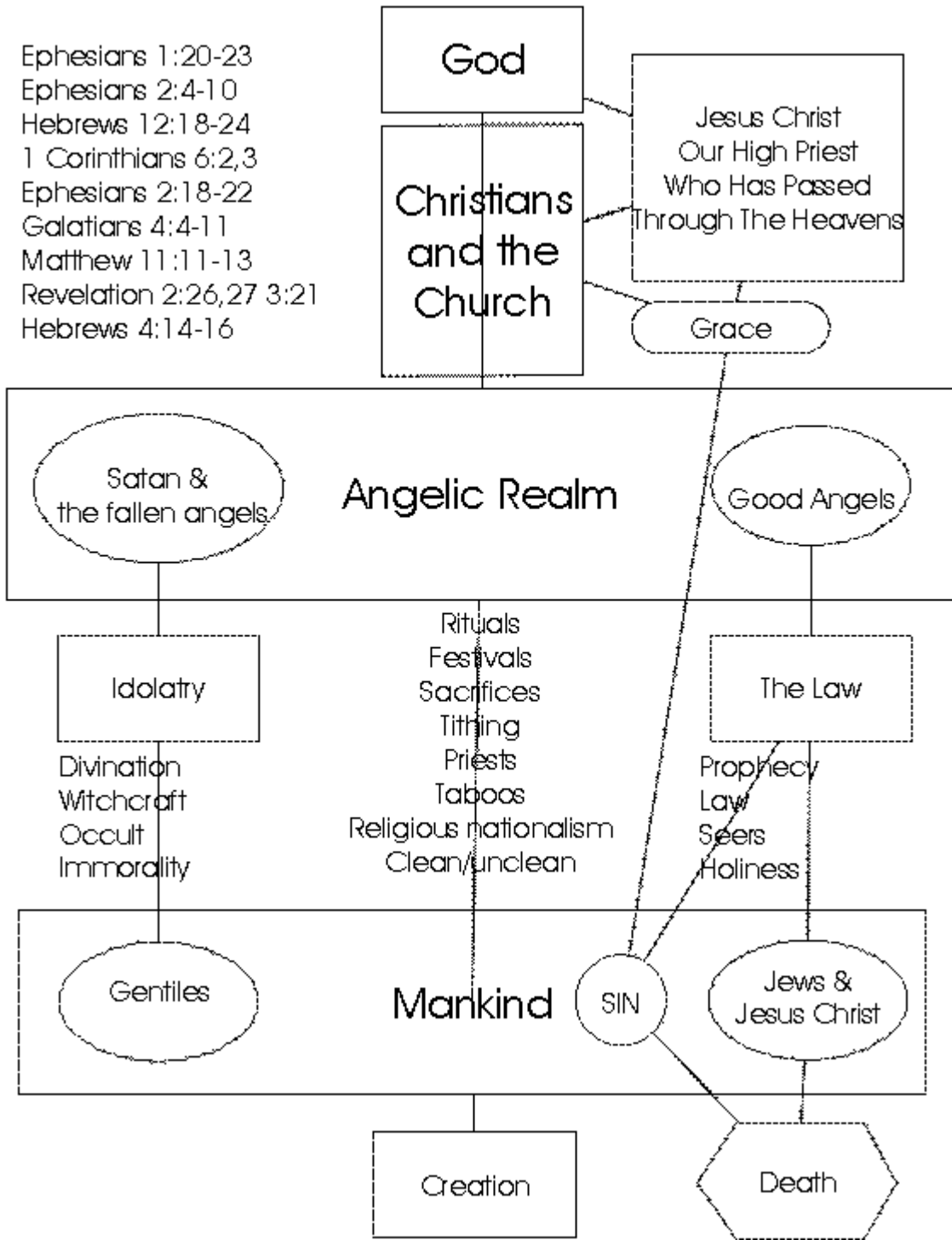
We can see from Acts 7:53 and Galatians 3:19 that the Law was given through and enforced by angels. 1 Corinthians 10:20 also tells us that the Gentile religions were the work of demons and that the worshippers worshipped demons and not God. So we see that **before Christ both Jewish and Gentile religion was under the direct control of the angelic realm**. The good angels mediated the Jewish religion and the demons mediated the innumerable Gentile religions. Both systems were **somewhat similar** (though the Law was vastly superior) and listed in the middle of the diagram are some of the similarities. **Both** Jewish and Gentile religions had temples and priests and sacrifices and tithes and offerings and dietary restrictions and special days and festivals and various taboos and categories of clean and unclean things.

The Old Testament



The New Testament

Ephesians 1:20-23
 Ephesians 2:4-10
 Hebrews 12:18-24
 1 Corinthians 6:2,3
 Ephesians 2:18-22
 Galatians 4:4-11
 Matthew 11:11-13
 Revelation 2:26,27 3:21
 Hebrews 4:14-16



THE CHURCH

In these two diagrams, the Church is the “big change” in the heavenly realms. Mankind is now divided into two: a) the redeemed humanity which is seated in heavenly realms with Christ and b) an unredeemed humanity which is under the power of angels and demons. In Acts 19 the ineffectiveness of Jewish exorcism compared with Christian exorcism is made very obvious in the dramatic accounts of the sons of Sceva.

(Acts 19:11-17 NKJV) Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, {12} so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. {13} Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." {14} Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. {15} And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" {16} Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. {17} This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Thus the Jews though superior to the Gentiles, did not possess the power that Christians possess. That is because they are still under the old order, they are not a new creation and have not been seated in heavenly realms with Christ. Thus non-Christians cannot cast out demons effectively, nor do they possess the (often unused) authority that Christians possess.

The Church is thus not just a building, nor is it just a group of people or even an organization or a community. The Church is a powerful spiritual mystery, a new reality, a spiritually empowered and mightily blessed group of eternal beings seated in heaven with Christ. Here is a rather complicated passage that spells this out:

(Ephesians 3:6-10 NIV) This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. {7} I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. {8} Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, {9} and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. {10} His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

In verse 10 we see that the church is God's way of bearing witness to Himself in the heavenly realms. Earlier in Ephesians Paul makes clear that we are a heavenly people: *(Ephesians 2:6-7 NIV) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, {7} in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

In verse 6 we see that the church is God's “big surprise”, His mystery. No-one expected such a huge alteration in the nature of spiritual reality. It was a surprise for Christ to dwell in human hearts (Colossians 1:25-27) or Gentiles to enter the Kingdom (Ephesians 3:6). The Church not only declares God's wisdom but is Christ's body and the “fullness” or completion of Christ! *(Ephesians 1:22-23 NIV) And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, {23} which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Colossians 1:18-19 NIV) And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. {19} For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,*

The point for spiritual warfare is this. **The Church is POWERFUL**, it is Christ's heavenly body, and wields His authority, wears God's armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) and is capable of “pulling down strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). In the end Satan shall be crushed under our feet (Romans 16:20) and it is the saints, through the word of their testimony and the blood of Jesus that shall cast Satan down to earth (Revelations 12:1-11). The saints will judge angels and the world (1 Corinthians 6:2,3). To grasp this a bit more and to get a handle on our spiritual authority we shall look at the change-over period between the Old and New Testaments.

THE TIME OF TRANSITION BETWEEN OT & NT – JOHN THE BAPTIST

(Matthew 11:7-15 NKJV) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? {8} "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. {9} "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. {10} "For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' {11} "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. {12} "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. {13} "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. {14} "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. {15} "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

John the Baptist was the prophetic forerunner of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the last prophet based in "Moses" and the Torah, the last and the greatest of the Old Testament saints. (Matthew 11:11-13)

Yet Jesus makes the extraordinary statement that the least of the New Testament believers would be greater than John the Baptist. Not better than, but greater than, for the salvation that is by grace through faith has seated us in heavenly realms with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-10) far above the principalities and powers (Ephesians 1:20) and able to cast out demons - which no OT saint is recorded as doing.

In the OT in Psalm 8 man is "a little lower than the angels" but in the NT Christians are seated above and with the angels (Ephesians 1:20, 2:6) and we will one day judge them and the entire world. (1 Corinthians 6:2,3). Jesus makes this quite plain that in Luke: *(Luke 20:35-36 NKJV) "But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; {36} "nor can they die anymore, for they are **equal to the angels and are sons of God**, being sons of the resurrection."* Thus Christians are equal to the elect angels, superior to the fallen angels and no longer under angelic control, rather even some angels are our servants (Hebrews 1:14) Thus Christians are no longer "a little lower than the angels" and a huge transformation has taken place in the heavenly realms. Thus we are not to worship angels (Colossians 2, Revelation 22). Note" In the diagram above "the angelic realm" refers to the realm the angels administer not to where angels dwell. Christians are no longer in the realm that is administered by angels but are administered by Christ alone and are co-equal to the elect angels.

The Church is now the body of Christ, and Christ's body is where He is. Thus we are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) who have already come to the heavenly Zion (Hebrews 12:22-24) and who have a risen life in heaven with Christ. (Colossians 3:1-4). Galatians chapters 3 and 4 tell us that OT saints were slaves to the law, but Christians are sons, come into maturity and freed from the law that was administered by angels. We will inherit as sons of God, gain eternal life and rule and reign with Christ upon His throne. (Revelation 2:25-28, 5:10). This marvelous change in spiritual status and authority and the reception of the blessing of the Holy Spirit as a deposit of the things to come (Ephesians 1:13,14), is all of grace. We have not earned it, nor do we deserve it. It is by grace through faith. [For a more full explanation of the Christian's new status in the heavenly realms refer to my article on the Ascension of Jesus Christ at <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/ascension.htm>]

Thus John the Baptist is the end of the old Covenant. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John". After John, as the old order came to an end there seems to have been some turmoil in the Kingdom. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.". This instability ended at Pentecost when the new order, the Church, was fully brought into being through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the ascended Christ enthroned at the right hand of the Father. (Acts 2:30-36) The external structures of the Old Covenant lasted another 40 years until 70 AD when they were destroyed by the armies of Titus having refused their fulfillment and redemption in Christ.

John the Baptist was "the greatest of those born of women" - but he was less than those "born of God". Born-again believers, filled with the Spirit, are greater than those who are without a new nature in Christ. John the Baptist was a great prophet and the Spirit was upon him, but the Spirit did not make John the Baptist a new creation, nor did it dwell permanently in Him. Old Testament saints had a relationship with God via their human spirit, but they did not have the indwelling "Christ in you the hope of glory" of the New Covenant, not could it be said of them "behold all things are become new". They were not new creations, they were old creations in contact with God, loved by Him, but not re-created by Him. They were part of the kingdom of Israel but not part of the kingdom of Heaven. However since then, and together with us, they have been "made perfect". (Hebrews 11:40, 12:22-24). I believe that we will see the OT saints in heaven.

Does this mean that the Jews are saved? That is, if John the Baptist and the OT saints were saved and we will see them in Heaven, then are modern Jews who follow the Law able also to be saved apart from faith in Christ? That is a misunderstanding. Paul makes it clear that because of sin, no-one can be saved through obeying the Law and the Law is meant to lead us to Christ. John the Baptist told those who came to him to believe in Jesus. The Law is not a substitute for Christ but a tutor to lead us to Christ. The Law led the true believers in Israel to faith in the messiah when he appeared in their midst. After that the Law had done its job and was abolished. Thus the Law, without faith, only brings condemnation. So Jews that believe the Law but do not believe in Christ, have missed the purpose of the Law, and are not saved. (See Romans 1-8, Galatians 2-4, 1 Timothy 1, Romans 10:1-3). Here are a few verses from Galatians that make the point quite clearly.

(Galatians 2:16-21 NKJV) "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. {17} "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! {18} "For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. {19} "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. {20} "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. {21} "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

So who is John the Baptist? John is the forerunner spoken of in Isaiah making straight the highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3-5). He is the greatest born of women and the ultimate product of the law and the prophets which prophesied "until John" and were fulfilled in Christ. He is not a born-again believer and the least born-again believer is greater than John the Baptist and all who are "born of women". The new nature and high heavenly position that we receive through being "in Christ" and filled with the Spirit makes us higher than the angels (1 Cor 6:2,3) and greater than (but not better than) John the Baptist. He was the last of those OT saints who were "slaves under the Law" while we are the sons of God who will inherit through Christ. Our new nature and status is a grace-gift through faith in Jesus who John points to and tells us to believe in so that we can receive the Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Acts 19:1-7).

The essential truth for spiritual warfare is this: **You need to be born-again to do spiritual warfare.** Keeping the Law and being even as good as John the Baptist or the OT saints is not enough and will not give you spiritual power, you need to be born-again, born of God, a new creation and part of the kingdom of heaven. You cannot earn spiritual authority through keeping the Law, you get authority from Christ, for free, by grace through faith and the least, most emotionally disturbed, insignificant Christian has a higher heavenly status than all the OT saints.

Kingdom Of God/ The Heavens

The Kingdom of God is where God's will is done on earth, including in the individual life, the church, the city and the nation. The gospel is the gospel of the Kingdom and involves a Christian order, a Christian way of living, of treating people well out of the love of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is righteousness, joy and peace and involves life being ordered by the Spirit in freedom, grace and love.

The kingdom of the heavens is where God's heavenly power is manifest, where the will of God is done 'on earth as it is in heaven' where His power reaches out from the Throne and out of the heavens and down to us in healing, resurrections, exorcisms and transformations and in the gospel being preached to the poor.

(Matthew 10:1-8 NIV) He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.{5} These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. {6} Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. {7} As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' {8} Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

THE OLD RELIGIONS, FEARS, TABOOS AND RITUALS, & THE “STOICHEA”

As noted earlier all the “old religions” before the cross had a certain structural similarity. They all had priests and temples and sacrifices and offerings and clean foods and unclean foods and things that were “taboo” and feasts days and ceremonies. But New Testament Christianity, the Christianity we see in Acts, had none of these things. There were no casts of priests or temples, or even church buildings in Acts and the first festivals such as Easter and Christmas were not observed until much later. What are these old religious forms? Why are they significant and what do they have to do with spiritual warfare?

I will have to introduce a Greek word - the “stoichea” often translated as the “elemental things” in modern translations but probably better translated “the measured out things”. This latter usage is retained in Chemistry where “stoichiometry” is the ratio between elements in compounds - the art of balancing equations. The stoichea are the measured out “abc” building blocks of the spiritual realm.

In terms of day to day practice the BIG difference between OT and NT is the end of the “stoichea”. The end of having to have a faith that is measured out, regulated and precise. In the OT everything was precisely allocated. Judah lived in this bit of land, Simeon over there, only people from Levi could be priests, this bit of temple furniture went here, the other over there, behind the curtain was certain death, this food was clean, that was unclean etc.

The cross ended that “measured -out-ness” and we can now move the church furniture and eat pork and lobster with impunity. To us that seems very ordinary but it was a revolution back then. In fact it was one of the hardest lessons the early church had to learn. There were no more add-ons, no circumcision, no taboos, no lists, no 613 laws.

Taboos, Fear and Dread

The “stoichea” - the taboo things, the measured out things, were spiritually enforced and a certain dread and awe accompanied them. People had fear and trembling about them and would say “You CAN’T do that.” The stoichea were enforced by angelic beings in Judaism and demonic beings in Gentile religions (more on that soon). For instance if you intruded on the temple of Diana of the Ephesians and broke her taboos you were in great danger. For a fascinating read try the Idylls of Theocritus which is filled with the dread of breaking minor taboos e.g a shepherd would never play his pan-pipes at noon as Pan rested then and to wake him would arouse the god’s wrath and cause great harm.

Taboos ruled the life of Jews and Gentiles alike. Quite a few times in the NT we hear the phrase about “the law that came through angels” e.g.

(Acts 7:53 NRSV) You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

(Galatians 3:19 NRSV) Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. The role of angels in enforcing the taboos is shown in:

(Exodus 23:20-21 NKJV) “Behold, I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. {21} “Beware of him and obey his voice; do not provoke him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in him.

These taboos even applied to where they should go to the toilet!

(Deuteronomy 23:12-15 NKJV) “Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; {13} “and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it

and turn and cover your refuse. {14} "For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

These verses imply that God would turn away from them if they did not cover up their excreta! Full relationship was very conditional. It was a world of regulations, taboos, and limitations.

The main religious systems are "angelic" in origin. Both angels and demons operate in similar ways because, before the Fall, they were the same category of creature. The pagan religions had temples, and priests and tithes and taboos, and festivals and laws and ceremonies etc - and so did the Jewish religion. They had very similar modus operandi because they were both under the angelic (good or fallen) realm and its dominion. (see the diagrams earlier). Everyone was a slave of the system from the High Priest to a commoner and the system was run by spiritual beings who inspired dread and awe. In the New Testament the authority of the angelic and demonic realm over human beings is broken. A key concept here is the "heavenly realms" and our new place in them so I will take a paragraph or two to explain that.

The Capturing Of The Heavenly Realms

After His resurrection Christ ascended "through the heavenly realms" and we ascended with Him and are placed in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6) and there we receive every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3) and can wrestle against the very same powers and principalities that once dominated life (Ephesians 6:10-18). Captivity (domination by spirits and their taboos) is taken captive and spiritual gifts are lavishly distributed (Ephesians 4:10-12). A clear sign of the change in status is the common casting out of demons by Christians. This did not happen in the OT because we were under the angelic realms. We can do it easily in the NT because we are over the angelic and demonic realm. One day we shall judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3) and they are our servants now (Heb 1:14). Their power over us has been broken.

Along comes Jesus and breaks the power of the spiritual beings on the cross (Colossians 2:13-15). He introduces a new way of being where no-one is a slave of the system any more. Taboos are gone and so is fear and dread. Our position in the spiritual realms is so high and the power of taboos so completely broken that we are "dead" to any requirements to live by superstition and taboo.

(Colossians 2:20-23 NKJV) {20} Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world (the stoichea), why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; {21} "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," {22} which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men? {23} These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

The Perils of Religion

Attempts to reintroduce the stoichea aroused such great concern in Paul that it caused him to accuse people of apostasy over things that at first may seem to us to be minor such as observing a religious calendar. He saw such things as placing us back under the authority of minor spiritual beings such as angels and demons.

(Galatians 4:8-11 NKJV) But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. {9} But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements (the stoichea), to which you desire again to be in bondage? {10} You observe days and months and seasons and years. {11} I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

We can see that Paul saw "observing days and months and years" as so grievous that it involved enslavement to "those who are not gods" and "bondage" and he was "afraid for them" lest they had become apostate. Letting traditions and ceremonies and Sabbaths and diets govern life was a huge backward step.

It was stepping out from the heavenly realms where we were placed in Christ and back under angelic or demonic dominion. It was spiritual disaster. In Colossians when Paul writes of Christ's triumph over the demonic powers he notes that it had, as its first and foremost outcome, release from having to observe dietary regulations and feast days!

(Colossians 2:15-17 NKJV) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. {16} So let no-one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, {17} which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

We are not to live in the "shadows" - of ritual observances but in the reality which is Christ. To the Greeks this was a striking analogy to Plato's cave illustration where a person chained (for life) to a cave wall and looking away from the entrance saw all reality as shadows cast upon the wall by the fire. Pagan or Jewish religion is just these shadows - the substance is Christ. Thus Paul pits stoichea-enslaved religion against Spirit-empowered Christianity.

This even applies to the "good bits" of the Old Covenant. As we saw in the last chapter to observe ANY of the practices of the Old Covenant in order to gain God's approval was to place one's self under a curse and cut oneself off from Christ. (Galatians 3:10-14, 5:1-4) The old religious system of stoichea operated via "curses" for disobedience and "blessings" for obedience. When the Jews agreed to the Law at Sinai they also agreed to the curses and blessings that were listed in Deut 26-28. However Christ put an end to curses for disobedience (Galatians 3:10-14) and gave us every spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3, Romans 8:31-32). Therefore under the new Way in Christ there are no taboos, no curses (from God) and no striving for blessings. The old religious system is killed stone dead.

The New Way is not the way of effort and earning but the way of faith and trusting. It is no longer "if I am good and keep the rules God will bless me" but it becomes "as long as I abide in His love I am abundantly blessed".

To summarize

Religion is bondage to the stoichea and systems. Its being a servant of a system ruled by a spirit. Christianity is sonship, freedom and Spirit-led and joyous. There is NO system. There is only faith worked out in love. Praise the Lord!

To wind up this section lets look at a few observations and questions for further discussion.

When we create taboos in church we are re-instituting the yoke of bondage of the stoichea. According to Galatians that seriously imperils the salvation of people. It is in fact "anathema".

When we teach that ANY part of the old Jewish law is binding on believers we imperil them - and that includes Sabbath keeping, tithing and religious festivals. Christmas, Easter and Sunday worship are not required of believers in fact their current form is a carry over from the stoichea. All feasts days, religious calendars, days, months, seasons and years -not just those on the dates of ancient pagan festivals - are "stoichea".

Saints, holy statues, church festivals, religious calendars, holy days, propitious times, lucky numbers, charms, Feng-Shui, religious coins, holy handkerchiefs, images of St. Michael etc are of the demonic realm of the stoichea, belong to the elemental powers and principalities and are NOT for Christians.

Church formalism with spiritual overtones is "stoichea". This includes robes, furnishings etc where such formalities are given clear spiritual overtones. If you like robes - wear them, there is nothing wrong with that per se. However if you have to have a robe on before you can minister - then that is "stoichea" - subjecting yourself to elemental things. That would be going back to the days of Aaron, high priestly garments and

immovable furnishings. It is nothing like Jesus ministering to a hill full of people or Phillip sharing the gospel in a moving chariot in the desert.

There is no blessing for tithing or cursing for not tithing. We give freely as God leads. If you have a release of conscience when the coin drops into the bag or plate you have put yourself under the stoichea and enslaved yourself to a ritual. It is the blood of Christ that cleanses your conscience not a gold coin. God's pleasure cannot be bought, it is given freely in Christ. The fear and dread that some people experience regarding their giving is thus sub-Christian.

Alcohol and tobacco may be foolish, unwise and addictive but they are not spiritually unclean or taboo. This calls for wisdom. Paul told the Corinthians to be cautious around idols temples not because they were in danger spiritually but because it could mislead people into idolatry. Even the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth was not taboo and off limits spiritually - it was just the wrong place to be seen! It could hurt someone's faith. I live in a house with a recovering alcoholic therefore I do not drink. Not because it is "unclean" , taboo or unspiritual or because I will incur the wrath of some minor deity but because it would harm my house-mate and not be an act of Christian love.

Don't import superstitious "second heaven" principles into the Christian life which is lived above that. Some Christians read books about pagan religions and spells etc and become enamoured of things like holy water and things to repel demons and sometimes make statements like "drums attract evil spirits". This may or may not be true. However it is living in fear when we have all the power we need to deal with those things in the name of Jesus Christ. We have left those pagan concepts behind. "God has not given us a spirit of fear". Canberra, the capital city of Australia was planned and laid out by Masons - yet I visit there and enjoy my visits. We don't need to run around fearing a pagan symbol on every corner. We can be grieved by it as Paul was in Athens but we do not need to be fearful of it.

There are no "six keys to blessing in the Christian life" - practices we have to do in order to be victorious.

There is only one - faith in Jesus Christ outworked in love. We have the blessings in Him already. We have EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (and by implication the earthly blessings that are subsumed under that) simply because we are "in Christ", "in the beloved" and with Him God freely gives us all things. In Christ we have them, by faith we appropriate them, in love we live them out. There are no "keys" , no technique we must follow, no teacher that we must slavishly imitate, no denomination or particular church we must join, in order to be blessed. We are blessed, already, and completely, in Christ. Mind you it will take all eternity to plumb the depths of those wonderful blessings!

THE OCCULT - WHAT'S WRONG WITH EXPLORING THE "OTHER SIDE"?

People are fascinated by the occult - the dark, the mysterious, the X-files , the tarot cards and the Ouija boards. But "the truth is out there.." - is a falsehood! The truth is in Jesus who said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no-one comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).

Participating in the occult is very dangerous - not just because of what may or may not occur - but because it brings God's anger down on you and your children for up to three or four generations.(Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; {5} you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

When Israel was about to go into the promised land Moses gave these warnings against being involved with idols, images or occult practices.(Deuteronomy 7:23-26 NKJV) "But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. {24} "And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. {25} "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. {26} "Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

Notice the penalty for bringing an object of occult worship into one's house "lest you be doomed to destruction like it... for it is an accursed thing". Idols carry the curse of God on them as do Ouija boards, tarot cards, things used in Satanic rituals, crystal balls, magic books, divination instruments etc. When these things are present in the home, alcoholism, mental illness, chronic diseases and even suicide soon follow.

But you don't have this stuff in you house - you just "get your cards done", have your palm read, read your horoscope etc...(Leviticus 20:6 NKJV) 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.'" Consulting mediums and spiritists was so serious that it resulted in God's wrath falling in a particularly severe form - banishment forever from Israel.

Here is a catalog of verses about the occult.

The Torah

(Leviticus 19:26-31 NKJV) {26} 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. {27} 'You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. {28} 'You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD. {29} 'Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness. {30} 'You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD. {31} 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

(Leviticus 20:6 NKJV) 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.

(Deuteronomy 7:5 NKJV) "But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

(Deuteronomy 7:25,26 NKJV) "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. "Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

(Deuteronomy 18:10-14 NKJV) 10 "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13 "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 "For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you

Old Testament History

(2 Kings 17:17 NKJV) And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

(2 Kings 21:6 NKJV) Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

(2 Kings 23:24 NKJV) Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

(2 Chronicles 33:6 NKJV) Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

Old Testament Prophets

(Isaiah 8:19 NKJV) And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?

(Jeremiah 14:14 NKJV) And the LORD said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.

(Jeremiah 27:9 NKJV) "Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon."

(Ezekiel 12:24 NKJV) "For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.

(Ezekiel 13:6-7 NKJV) "They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. {7} "Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says,' but I have not spoken."

(Ezekiel 13:18 NKJV) "and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the women who sew magic charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive?"

(Ezekiel 13:20 NKJV) 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against your magic charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds.

(Ezekiel 13:23 NKJV) "Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD." "

(Malachi 3:5 NKJV) And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien; Because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts.

New Testament

(Acts 19:19 NKJV) Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

(Revelation 21:8 NKJV) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

(Revelation 22:15 NKJV) But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

What Should I Do?

The early church used to have as part of the baptismal formula "I renounce all the works of the Devil" and those becoming Christians were required to destroy any idols or charms or magic books that they owned (see Acts 19:19 above for an example). Because the sins of idolatry, witchcraft, and involvement in magic or the occult are "abominations" that is very offensive to God - then they must be confessed and sometimes using a prayer for spiritual cleansing can be a big help. Here is a procedure for dealing with any occult involvement.

1. Do a personal inventory of both your involvement and your families involvement in the occult - could your grandmother tell fortunes, did you have an uncle who was a magician (not tricks - real magic), were your parents members of an organisation like "The Spiritualist Church". remember the punishment for these sins goes down the generations and could be affecting you. Confess all these that you know of to God and ask His forgiveness.
2. Burn everything that is associated with the occult -jade Buddhas, temple wind chimes, tarot cards, magic books, demon masks, even the "dark" kind of heavy metal music, things with pentagrams on it (the five pointed occult star), astrology books, love magic , charms, books from cults such as the JW's or Mormons, when in doubt destroy it. Many people are trapped by the value of these items as they can be covered with gold or silver or be "old and rare books" etc. The Ephesian Christians burnt 50,000 drachmas (about 5 million dollars worth) of magic books when they became converted. The Bible tells us (Deut 7:25) that we are not to covet the silver or the gold that is on them - its tempting but its dangerous.
3. Set yourself a program of bible reading and prayer and ask God to renew you spiritually and be Lord of your life. (John 3:1-17)
4. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit so you can know the true spiritual power that is from God and serve Him.

DEALING WITH CURSES, HEXES AND SPELLS

Curses are an unusual topic, but they are real, you can even buy numerous books on how to curse people in most bookstores especially New Age bookstores. They are now part of "teenage witch" type TV programs. However curses are not playthings and are profoundly emotionally disturbing for those who experience them. They are not just angry words or swear words; they are acts of power in the spiritual realm. Curses are mentioned over 200 times in Scripture, and were foundational to the Old Covenant (see Deuteronomy 28-30). God Himself was the first one to pronounce curses – on the earth, on Eve's fertility and upon the serpent. Curses are not just a primitive superstition; they are spiritual pronouncements recorded in Scripture, that profoundly affect the very structure of reality in some way.

Curses And Creation

The world was created by the word of God and is held together by the power of His Word (Genesis 1, Hebrews 1:1-3, Colossians 1:17-20). Thus God's words can change creation and Jesus' curse caused the fig-tree, representing barren Israel, to shrivel up. Blessings and curses are first of all God's words that operate at this fundamental level of creation and "tilt the playing field" of life one way or another. Secondly curses and blessings can be from evil spirits or flow from the human spirit. Goliath's curses against David were "by his gods" (1 Samuel 17:43) and were ineffective for reasons we shall see later. The David and Goliath encounter was a power encounter of one spiritual system against the other and both contenders came in the name of their respective deities. Shamans and magicians such as Balaam were hired to curse people in OT times and still do this today. Though curses from evil sources much less powerful than curses from God they still were feared and were able to do much damage. There are 22 references exhorting believers not to curse others. Curses are finally ended in the new creation (Rev 22:3).

The Origin of Blessings and Curses

The origin of blessings and curses is found in the book of Genesis. The first blessing is upon the living creatures, which were told to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:22). When God made mankind He also blessed them saying "be fruitful and multiply" and added a third blessing "have dominion over" (Genesis 1:28). These three basic blessings of: "be fruitful", "multiply" and "have dominion over" form the basis of all future blessings, such as the Abrahamic blessings, and their reversal forms the basis of all future curses such as those in Genesis 3. Lets look at this a little bit further:

Fruitfulness is the ability to joyfully express your inner nature and feel that which you are doing is truly creative, worthwhile and significant. Its opposite is pain in creation especially barrenness.

Multiplication is exponential increase - increasing as in 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 not additively as in 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, Multiplication is a huge increase in productivity for a small increase in effort. Its opposite is frustration and futility. Putting in a huge effort for little or no reward.

Authority to rule over means dignity, headship, authority, the ability to be ascendant, to be the head not the tail. Its opposite is being humbled, to eat the dirt, to be crushed and humiliated, to be unable to rise.

In Genesis 3 we see the first curses in operation. The woman is made unfruitful, the man is made to work in futility and the serpent is told he will eat the dirt. The three things that make life good are reversed. Life becomes unbearable. Thus when we are cursed we find life very difficult indeed. No matter how hard we try to rise we never quite make it. Time and time we get to the brink of success only to have it snatched away. Curses can affect health, particularly reproductive health. They can affect earning power and they can affect our ability to have authority and command over our lives and people who are cursed may have to endure lifelong humiliation.

The Effect of Curses And Witchcraft

As a missionary I can say that curses are real and in some cases they are even lethal; Ezekiel talks of magic charms that hunted lives (Ezekiel 13:18-20). Curses are on the rise in Western culture as people dabble more and more in the occult and in organizations where people take secret oaths that invoke curses (such as the Masons). Emotionally curses produce deep confusion and despair and an inability to think straight.

[There is not a lot of good literature on the topic of curses and all such books need to be read critically and subjective material carefully evaluated. Derek Prince's book "Curses and Blessings" is reasonable, Ed Murphy's chapter is good but gives no hint on how to break curses, and Francis Frangipane has some very good books on living in the place of protection from curses and spiritual attack.]

On one hand we do want to acknowledge the reality of curses and to deal with them and to break them on the other hand we do not want to become overly superstitious and fearful seeing curses everywhere. If your life is affected by sterility, barrenness, constant lack of success and failure to gain any sort of ascendancy no matter how hard you try then a curse may be in operation. If you think this may be the case then do some research on your life and family history and take the matter before the Lord.

The good news is that breaking curses can be surprisingly easy for Christians because we dwell under the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ. Curses have greatest power where the person who has been cursed has committed some great act of wickedness such as involvement in the occult. The reverse is also true, curses have little or no power over a righteous person and Proverbs says that a curse without cause will not alight on the head of a righteous man.

Curses may come upon you because of your own conduct because of : idolatry, participation in the occult, prostitution, fornication, sexual immorality, adultery, theft, injustice, direct defiant disobedience to God in an important area, and involvement in secret societies with rituals and vows.

Curses may be aimed at you by others because of: hatred, envy, greed, jealousy, the use of magic, spiritual conflict and the desire for revenge. In some cases parents curse their children, particularly the first-born son, in order to attain power in a deal with Satan or his representatives. This is said to occur in Masonic rituals.

Preventing Curses Having An Effect On Your Life

Scripture reveals a number of ways in which we can break curses and/or be protected from them

- 1) Live a righteous life free from major sin and acts of injustice. Abide in the righteousness of Christ where no curse can penetrate. (Malachi 4:6, Proverbs 26:2, Romans 8).
- 2) Put on the full armor of God in Ephesians 6 :10-21 which is actually armor against spiritual attack. Ephesus was noted for its magic practices (Acts 19) and its curses and witchcraft. The primary purpose behind Paul writing to the Ephesians was so they could have some understanding of their power, authority and degree of protection in their pagan and occult city. The armor of God is like the Kevlar of the spirit world protecting the Christian against curses, magic and occult practices.
- 3) God is able to turn a curse into a blessing. He did this when Balak tried to get Balam to curse Israel. (Nehemiah 13:2, Deuteronomy 23:5, Numbers 22&23). A brief prayer by Jabez that has received a lot of popularity lately is a case of a person appealing to God to have a curse turned into a blessing and succeeding. David is particularly bold when he says in Psalm 109 where he seems to have been the victim of a curse (see verses 17 & 18) (Psalms 109:28 NKJV) Let them curse, but You bless; When they arise, let them be ashamed, But let Your servant rejoice. David did not fear the curse, but instead asked God to bless him and outdo the curse, and then to turn the curse back on those who uttered it.

God can out-bless the most fearsome and disabling curses. It gives us hope that our prayers to God based on the name of Jesus can not only break curses but have them turned into blessings instead.

4) Understand and plead the fact that Christ has taken all the curses due to us when He became a curse on the cross (Galatians 3:10-14). In Christ that ground for curses to succeed against us is removed because on the cross Jesus became a curse for us and took all the cursing that may have been due to us due to our violation of God's laws.

5) Break associations with the sins of parents and ancestors particularly those involving the occult or idolatry. Exodus 34:6,7 says such sins bring a curse "to the third and fourth generation". We have to break ties with such sins by not participating in occult ceremonies that may be traditional and even confessing such involvement of your parents and ancestors and forsaking them in a prayer of renunciation to God. The essential thing is to make a clear break with the familial sin in your own heart, mind and spirit.

6) Get rid of objects that bring a curse particularly objects associated with pagan worship, idolatry or the occult. For instance if we have our Grandmothers pack of tarot cards we need to get rid of them. (Deuteronomy 7:25,26) The Ephesian converts were moved by the Holy Spirit to burn their magic scrolls and occult objects. (Acts 19:18-20).

7) Do not engage in secretive or dishonest sins that you think you can get away with unobserved. In Deuteronomy 27: 15-26 certain sins are singled out as bringing a curse notably the making of idols, incest, bestiality, treating parents with contempt, injustice against migrants, widows, the disabled or the poor, hiring a contract killer, and moving your neighbors landmark or boundary stone. Most of these are crimes that would never be tried in court because of the secret nature of the crimes, the lack of two or three eye witnesses willing to testify or the difficulty of proving of the case such as the "my word against yours" case of the boundary stone. The curse was God's way of making sure that such secret crimes did not go unpunished. People knew that if they did these things God would repay. Even in the New Testament God is referred to as the one who punishes those who defile the marriage bed. (1 Thessalonians 4:4-6, Hebrews 13:4). If you have done any of the things in the above list then repentance, restoration and an earnest appeal to God for mercy would be a good starting point in breaking the curse over your life.

8) Curses can alight where there is deep abiding injustice against an ethnic group. Saul's bloodthirsty massacre of the Gibeonites, which lay uncorrected for years, later resulted in a curse and a famine in the time of David.

(2 Samuel 21:1 NKJV) Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."

David broke this curse by going back to the offended ethnic group, humbly asking how they would like to see justice done and then enacting it. After ten of Saul's sons were hung the famine ended. (2 Samuel 21:1-14).

9) Slackness in ministry can result in a curse. The priests in Malachi were under a curse because of their slackness in God's work (Malachi 2:2) and the prophet Jeremiah cries out "cursed be he who is slack in doing the Lord's work (Jeremiah 48:10). If you are in ministry do the work of the Lord diligently and obey His specific instructions if you have been given such instructions.

10) Put God's interests ahead of your own. In the book of Haggai God puts a curse on the nation (Haggai 1:5-11, 2:16,17)for being self-centered and neglectful of their duty to God. The curse is removed when the people obey the prophets and lay the foundation on the Lord's temple (Haggai 2:18,19) and a blessing is given instead.

There are over 200 verses on curses in Scripture and the above list just touches on some of the main causes and their remedies. Basically a curse can only alight on an area that God has already judged as being worthy of a curse – such as incest, idolatry or murder. Most curses generally last only 3-4 generations though some have lasted since Creation. Repentance from sin, breaking ties with the occult and taking refuge in Christ who has become a curse for us are the main strategies we can use to break curses.

Part of this is putting on the whole armor of God, which is designed to protect us from curses leveled against us in the course of spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18). When the curse is lifted then the human spirit that has been affected by the curse and been bowed down with pain, confusion and futility will be quickly healed. The person will recover and emotional normality should soon follow.

A Prayer For Dealing With Curses

If you think that your life may have been affected by a curse then gather with a small group of believing Christian friends who support you and pray the following prayer:

We come in the name and authority of Jesus Christ to deal with curses pronounced over the life of X (your full name).

We ask the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ as we pray and we bind the activity of any evil spirits in Jesus name. We claim the full armor of God (read Ephesians 6:10-18).

We confess the sins of the parents and ancestors of X that may have given ground for a curse to alight upon him/her. (Name & renounce the sins esp. idolatry, witchcraft and murder)

We confess any sins in the life of X that may have given ground for a curse to alight upon him/her. (Name & renounce the sins esp. idolatry, witchcraft, sexual immorality and murder)

We claim the forgiveness and cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ and now assert that no ground remains for a curse to affect the life of X. We assert that X has been seated in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus far beyond the reach of curses. (Ephesians 1:20, 2:6)

We renounce the curse and all its effects. We break the curse and all its power in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We plead the blood of the cross on behalf of X and say that Christ has taken all his/her curses on the cross according to Galatians 3:10-14. In accordance with the Scriptures and the will of God we pull down and destroy any strongholds in X's life (2 Corinthians 10:4,5) and we destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8) and turn back the curses and all effects of witchcraft destroying them in the cross of Christ.

We pray for the restoration and blessing of X in accordance with the Scriptures especially Ephesians 1:3 that says we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. We pray for the blessings of Abraham that are ours in Christ (Galatians 3:8-29) to be appropriated by X and given to him/her in abundance.

We especially pray for the blessings given to all humans at Creation - that of fruitfulness, multiplication and dominion. We out bless all the effects of the curse and by the power of God we turn the curse into a blessing.

We ask Jesus to minister to all the places in X's life that the Devil has cursed. We ask for healing of body, mind and spirit and restoration of life and a just, fair and blessed prosperity in Jesus name. Amen.

You may need to do this three or four times. I have seen it work powerfully and bring peace to many.

Hexes & Spells

If you think your property may have been affected by a "hex" e.g. your computer or car inexplicably plays up then simply pray over it in the name of Jesus. Remove all items associated with the occult e.g. a lucky charm in the car. (see Deut 7:24,25). Pray something like "In the name of Jesus I remove the effects of any hex or spell."

Spells cast on persons are not an area I have had much to do with but they seem to involve confusion, often involve a "floating" mental state, sometimes a loss of memory during which actions are performed and a weakening of the person's will so they are easily seduced/manipulated etc. Others are like a sharp stabbing

pain in the head or abdomen that is without medical explanation and which is emotionally distressing. Drug addiction may sometimes be associated with occult activity and casting of spells against people.

Again the solution is to form a believing prayer group, and break the spell by applying the cross to the problem. Something like "Our son Jim seems to be being manipulated by witchcraft and may be under a spell Lord, therefore in the name of Jesus we break all spells and hexes, renounce all vows and free him from all occult bondages for the person you set free is free indeed. Free his will from the dominion of Satan and make him strong and full of the light of the Lord. In Jesus name. Amen." You can ask God to reveal the problem if you are unsure. Use the long prayer on curses as a model for how to pray in these other areas as well.

Astrology - "OH, BUT ITS ONLY A BIT OF FUN!"

An honest to God, down to earth, look at the stars.

Dr. P A Kraus

So many people love having a look at their horoscope. Of course they don't believe it, "its only a bit of fun," so they say. Many of these people have a firm belief in God. They wouldn't do anything against Him, they only look into astrology "at a very superficial level" where "it can't do any harm". Every newspaper and every women's magazine has several astrologers writing for each issue. People work out the "star sign" for a new born baby almost before they decide on a name for the infant.

Is a little dabble into the stars so harmless?

Lets have a look and see what God has to say.

There are numerous references to astrology in the Bible, from the books of Moses (1400BC) through to the New Testament (55 AD). Astrology is mentioned specifically by Isaiah in 700 BC (Isaiah 47:13). In a prophecy against Babylon, that ancient stronghold of the "New Age", Isaiah refers to "astrologers, stargazers and the monthly prognosticators." The words "soothsaying" or "soothsayers" and "divination" are mentioned more frequently. This meant foretelling the future by supernatural means, so including "the stars". Throughout the Bible all forms of witchcraft, mediums, familiar spirits, sorcery are all lumped together. You would have to be a little blind not to realise they still are.

Let's keep looking. We'll start with Leviticus, the third book of Moses.(Leviticus 19:26) "Do not practice divination or sorcery."That says it pretty clearly and in a nutshell!

"Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19 verse 31)

(God speaking)"I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people. Consecrate yourselves to be holy, because I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus chapter 20 verse 26)

Now turn to Deuteronomy, (the fifth book of Moses)"let no-one be found among you ...who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or a spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord. You must be blameless before the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 10 to 13).

In the second book of Chronicles, (written 400BC), we read of the evil king Manasseh:"He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshipped them....practised sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord.." (2 Chronicles chapter 33 verses 1-6).

Turning to the New Testament, the apostle Paul lists among " the acts of the sinful nature" (works of the flesh " in some versions) idolatry and witchcraft or sorcery. (Galatians 5:19-20)

Why

Why is God so down on a harmless giggle looking at this week's horoscope?

Because He says, "I am the Lord your God." We are to turn to Him, not "the stars", for our future security.

He, and He alone, is our God.

The very first of the Ten Commandments says "I am the Lord your God..you shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20).Having a little play with astrology is like having a little pretend breaking of the first commandment.

Don't play with fire. Understand that Satan hates God. Satan doesn't give a tinker's curse about us. He only wants to seduce us to spite God.

One of the most powerful forms of leading up the garden path is "gradualism". "Just a little bit of fun, don't take it seriously and its harmless."

Don't you believe it. Jesus called Satan a liar (John 8:44) and said "The thief (Satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they might have life and have it to the full."(John 10:10).

Some 1400 years earlier , Joshua said to the Jews he was about to lead into the promised land. 'But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

What will you do?

A Quick Review Of The Nature Of The Heavenly Realms

- There are eight main spiritual realms including three levels to “the heavens”. Satan is on a long journey down through all eight!
- The old spiritual systems, before the cross were all administered by angelic beings, the Law was administered by good angels and the Gentile religions were run by demons but structurally they still has a lot in common.
- There was an aggressive time of transition with John the Baptist, the Law and the Prophets prophesied ‘until John’. That system came to an end with Christ and its physical structures were swept away in 70AD.
- The new “kingdom of heaven” structure has the Church seated with Christ in the heavenly realms with authority over angels and demons.
- The system of blessings for good behavior is finished – we are given all spiritual blessings in Christ, upon being born-again.
- The system of curses for bad behavior is finished – Christ has taken our curses on the cross and there is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1,2) This is what it means to be justified apart from being good or the “works of the Law”. (see Galatians 2-4).
- The entire old religious order is finished. All the measured out things” and taboos have no power over born-again believers. We are not blessed for being good (though we are rewarded) or cursed for being bad (though we may be disciplined) we don’t have to fear magic charms or observe holy days. The fearful system of old religion is now the habitation of demons. God’s system is a loving Father-Son relationship.
- Christians now have the power to cast out demons in the name of Jesus.
- Christians are in the heavens with Christ and have enormous spiritual authority.
- Christians can forfeit their authority if they go back to the stoichea or play with the occult and put themselves under the old systems once again. Christians must burn all objects associated with the occult, magic, astrology etc.

How Satan Operates

Why We Need To Be Aware

(2 Corinthians 2:11 NKJV) lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

(Ephesians 6:11 NKJV) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Accusation

(Revelation 12:10-11 NKJV) Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. {11} "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

(Zechariah 3:1-2 NKJV) Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. {2} And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Satan accuses in four different directions:

Us to God – accusing us before the Lord as with Joshua above. To this Paul replies:

(Romans 8:33-34 NKJV) Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. {34} Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

God to Us – Satan accuses God of being unfair or slow or inadequate and tries to get us to resent God. See Psalm 37 and 73. Satan also accuses the Bible, certain doctrines and the Church to us.

Us To One Another – Satan tries to create division by exaggerating hurts and slights and differences. That is why we should be always forgiving one another. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11 NKJV) Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, {11} lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Us To Ourselves – Satan tries to get us to believe that we are wretched, useless, unloved by God, doomed and tells us that we have committed the unforgivable sin. By doing this he discourages us and defeats us. See Romans 5-8 for an answer to this.

Rumors, gossip, accusation, division, enmity and strife are all due to the accusing work of Stan and must be rebuked, confessed, and forsaken.

A predictable path is followed if things are left alone: **Resolve** → **Resent** → **Reject** → **Revenge**

If the issue is not resolved, people will resent one another (or God), then resentment over time will turn into rejection and they will distance themselves from each other, finally they will take revenge in some form. You must therefore solve issues through love, forbearance, patience, repentance, forgiveness and mutual acceptance of one another.

Unless we resolve our relationships we will "give place to the devil":

(Ephesians 4:25-29 NKJV) Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. {26} "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil. {28} Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. {29} Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Unless our life is together Satan will ensnare us with many accusations and reproaches: (1 Timothy 3:-7 NKJV) } Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Creating Spiritual Blindness

(Mark 4:15 NKJV) "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

(2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NKJV) But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, {4} whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Hindering Servants Of God

(1 Thessalonians 2:18 NKJV) *Therefore we wanted to come to you; even I, Paul, time and again; but Satan hindered us.*

Steal, Kill and Destroy (also see Job chapters 1&2)

(John 10:10 NKJV) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

(John 8:44 NKJV) *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

Schemes

(Isaiah 32:7 NKJV) Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words, Even when the needy speaks justice.

(Daniel 8:23 NKJV) "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

Worldly Agendas

(Matthew 16:23 NKJV) But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Devouring The Weak, Vulnerable, The Unwatchful And The Gullible

(1 Peter 5:8 NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

(Revelation 12:4 NKJV) His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

Persecution

(Revelation 2:10 NKJV) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Satan Operates From a Throne Or Power Base

(Revelation 2:13 NKJV) "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

By Unleashing A Flood...of Persecution, Lies etc

(Revelation 12:15-16 NKJV) So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. {16} But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

Temptation

(Matthew 4:1 NKJV) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

(1 Corinthians 7:5 NKJV) Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

(1 Timothy 5:14-15 NKJV) Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. {15} For some have already turned aside after Satan.

Lawlessness and Disobedience

(Ephesians 2:2 NKJV) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

(2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 NKJV) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

Spiritual Deception

(Matthew 24:24 NKJV) "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

(2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV) But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

(2 Corinthians 11:14-15 NKJV) And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. {15} Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NKJV) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, {10} and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

(1 Timothy 4:1-3 NKJV) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, {2} speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, {3} forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

(2 Timothy 3:13 NKJV) But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Deceiving Leaders

(Revelation 12:9 NKJV) So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

(Revelation 16:13-14 NKJV) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. {14} For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

(Revelation 20:7-10 NKJV) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison {8} and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to

gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. {9} They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. {10} The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Theological Error

(2 Timothy 2:23-26 NKJV) But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. {24} And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, {25} in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, {26} and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Pride and Self-Exaltation

(1 Timothy 3:6-7 NKJV) not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. {7} Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

(1 Chronicles 21:1 NKJV) Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

Betrayal By False Brethren And Offended Christians

(Luke 22:3 NKJV) Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

(Matthew 24:9-10 NKJV) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. {10} "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

(Galatians 2:4 NKJV) And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

(Matthew 13:38-39 NKJV) "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. {39} "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

(Revelation 2:9 NKJV) "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Hard Testing

(Luke 22:31-32 NKJV) And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. {32} "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Financial Dishonesty And Greed

(Acts 5:3 NKJV) But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

(1 Timothy 6:9-10 NKJV) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. {10} For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE FOR THE TOTALLY AFRAID

Demons are variously caricatured as "naughty spirits" and even portrayed as "sources of wisdom" in some New Age teachings. The Bible however sees demons as truly evil and deceptive beings arrayed in rebellion against God and whose fate will be eternal torment imprisoned in a lake of fire. This latter view is far closer to the reality experienced by demon-possessed people and those who have dealt with demons in others.

A demon possessed person is often deeply deceived - thus showing the deceptive nature of demons, a demon-possessed person often engages in activities that display a lack of conscience toward others or a delight in the evil and the bizarre. This betrays the evil, amoral and actively wicked attitude of the demonic. A demon-possessed person is often angry at ministers, scornful of Scripture, fearful of communion, mocking at morality and may hold bizarre views of Christ. Christian praise and worship can cause strong negative reactions. This displays the demonic hatred of God and rebellion toward His legitimate authority over this Earth that He made. Those who deal with demons sometimes find that demons are both aware of and terrified of the eternal fate that awaits them. They believe in the lake of fire even if some theologians do not. This article will look at what the Bible says about demons, their fate, and how we can stop them hindering our Christian life.

Lets start with the positive.....

Jesus' Triumph Over The Demonic Realm

(1 John 3:8 NKJV) He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

(1 John 4:4 NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

(1 John 5:18 NKJV) We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

The book of 1 John was probably written when the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian really began to bite. Satan and the his instrument - the pagan Roman Empire seemed to be indefinite ascendancy over the church, God and all the forces of good. 1 John is thus a very radical and bold epistle in its claims to victory in Christ. There are three realities described here:

1. The reality of Christ's mission in particular His incarnation. The reason Jesus Christ was manifested in human form was so that He could tackle Satan on his own turf and destroy all his works. Like a hand-grenade exploding in the Devil's face the incarnation brought the awesome power of the Son of God into proximity with evil so that it might completely destroy it.
2. The reality of Christ in us the hope of glory. He who is in us is He who came to destroy the works of the Devil. Jesus overcame the world then, and now, He is in us, and continues to overcome the world.
3. The reality of the indestructibility of our real eternal selves which are based on Christ in us. A person who has been born again has a new self that is created on a new order and a higher plane. It is eternal, imperishable and indestructible, it cannot be defiled. It is sinless and cannot sin. It is born of God and partakes of the very principles of the nature of God (but on a much different scale).(1 John 3:9 NKJV) Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. This new self battles with the flesh in a life long struggle for dominance (Galatians 5:16-18) so Christians still do sin but this sin is not a part of them that will still be with them in Heaven. There will be no need for

Purgatory, the new self has been sinless from the "new birth". This new self cannot be "touched" by the evil one. The person we will be for the next ten million years cannot be affected by sin, defilement or temptation and it has already passed out of the judgment of God (John 5:24, Romans 8:1,2). While Satan can destroy your flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5) he cannot touch the real eternal you. (See article on the Inner Man for more detail)

These three powerful realities mean that even though Satan and his demons are at times quite formidable foes they ultimately cannot harm us. They are defeated rebels whose rebellion will come to nothing in the end. Jesus Christ came to destroy ALL the works of the Devil and through His church that task is being completed and will be finally climaxed at the return of Christ. Let's look at how the Devil lost the weapons from his armoury.

(Hebrews 2:14 NKJV) Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

The incarnation gave Jesus the flesh and blood He needed so that through death He could defeat Satan's ability to wield the power of death, keeping the world in fear and abject slavery.

(Colossians 2:13-15 NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, {14} having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. {15} Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

(For further expansion on this verse see the article [The Cross In Colossians](#)) These verses in Colossians indicate that the weapon of accusation has been removed. Satan has been disarmed by the forgiveness we have received. He no longer has any basis for accusing us. The Charge sheets are all nailed to the Cross.

Satan's ultimate defeat will be an ignominious vanquishing (Revelation 20:10 NKJV) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Christian's Power And Authority Over The Demonic Realm

The Christian's power and authority over the demonic realm is not based on having more "might" than the demonic realm (I do not know of any Christian with the spiritual might anywhere near that of Satan) but on authority. The distinction is important. Joash became king of Israel when he was 7 years old. Though physically puny and intellectually hardly a match for bad queen Athaliah he had more authority than her or nay of his rivals. He was king. Similarly even a "baby Christian" has more authority in the spiritual realm than the biggest baddest demon on the block. As a small child is more important than the largest fiercest lion so God has deemed that even the least Christian outranks the mightiest power and principality. The authority comes because of their position in the heavenly hierarchy. In God's household we are the "sons" and angels, even the mightiest of them are just servants of God. And sons outrank servants.

(Hebrews 1:14 NKJV) Are they (i.e angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

(1 Corinthians 6:3 NKJV) Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

We have undergone a spiritual transformation as a result of the gospel. In the Old Testament we were "a little lower than the angels", we were like children who, in their minority, have less status than say the butler and

are expected to treat the household servants with respect. But with the gospel we have come of age and are now full-fledged sons of God

(John 1:12 NKJV) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

(Galatians 3:24-26 NKJV) Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. {25} But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. {26} For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

This transformation means that a huge change in status has occurred so that inhabitants of the Kingdom of God are truly awesome spiritual beings.

(Ephesians 2:6-7 NKJV) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, {7} that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

(Ephesians 1:20-21 NKJV) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the

heavenly places, {21} far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

(Matthew 11:11-13 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

We have been raised up with Christ and seated at His right hand in the heavenly realms far above all principalities and power and might and dominion so that Jesus could say of us that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than the mightiest of the Old Testament saints. This is "amazing grace" and is God displaying His kindness for all the world to see.

Wielding Our Weapons

With this in mind let's look the authority we have been given and how we are to wield it.

(Luke 9:1 NKJV) Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

(Luke 10:1, 17-24 NKJV) After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to.... Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." {18} And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. {19} "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. {20} "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." {21} In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. {22} "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." {23} Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; {24} "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."

Jesus commissions the twelve and then the seventy to have power of evil..In these verses we discover three things:

1. The power we have over the demonic realm is a gracious gift from Jesus"I give you.."to equip us for ministry (it is in the context of a ministry trip).
2. This power is both offensive I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. and defensive and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
3. That our operating principle is not to be power consciousness but instead humble gratefulness for the grace of God. "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Binding and Loosing....

The Apostle Peter

(Matthew 16:18-19 NKJV) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. {19} "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Christians in general

(Matthew 18:18-20 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. {19} "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. {20} "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Binding Satan and his demons

(Matthew 12:27-29 NKJV) "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. {28} "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. {29} "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

(Luke 11:19-22 NKJV) "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. {20} "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. {21} "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. {22} "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoils

Thus we see that the power to bind and to loose has been delivered over to God's church (Matthew 16:18-19) and can be exercised by any two or three Christians coming together in agreement before God (Matthew 18:18-20). Because of the authority we have been given on the basis of the completed work of Christ we can come against Satan as "someone stronger" and overpower him, binding his activities (Matthew 12:29), neutralizing his weapons (Luke 11:22) and taking back the things he claims ownership of. (Luke 11:22).

In The Name Of Jesus

(John 14:13-14 NKJV) "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. {14} "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

(John 15:16 NKJV) "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you

(Luke 10:17-19 NRSV) The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" {18} He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. {19} See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.

(Acts 16:18 NRSV) {18} She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

The name of Jesus is the delegated authority of the Son of God. In the Gilbert and Sullivan opera "The Pirates of Penzance" the pirates are arrested and the police say "We charge you yield in Queen Victoria's name...". They confront the pirates in the delegated authority of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. When we come against Satan and his demons we can say "We charge you yield in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords". The "name that is above every other name" is the ultimate source of authority. Say the pirates in the opera had answered...we resist in the name of the Pirate King..then there would have been a clash of authority (in fact they said "we love our Queen..it was very sarcastic..) In such a clash of authority it is the "highest name" that wins. A queen outranks a counts who outranks knights of the realm that outrank commoners etc. So it is in the heavenly realms. Such is the privilege of Christians that we are allowed to use "the name that is above every other name" when we challenge demonic authority. We come bearing the highest authority in the Universe.(Philippians 2:8-11 NKJV) And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. {9} Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, {10} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, {11} and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So to use the name of Jesus in prayer is a declaration of authority. Even Jewish exorcists found it had enormous authority until it was challenged (Acts 19:13-18). They were operating on "bluff" they were not converted and had no right to use the authority of Jesus name in exorcism. The basis of praying in Jesus name is , first of all, being converted. Jesus name can be used in two ways 1)In declarative mode "In the name of Jesus I command..." e.g. when Peter healed the lame man at the Gate Beautiful(Acts 3:6 NKJV) Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.". Secondly it may be used to request things from God eg, in the verses from John's gospel above" And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.". The difference between command mode and request mode is that we command lesser beings but command greater ones. So when addressing a demon, a disease or a mountain or a storm we operate in command mode as sons of God proudly bearing the authority of Jesus name. When addressing the Father or Jesus we do not presume on the authority we have been given but we come humbly as expectant children with every right to ask and to receive but always in wonder and awe for we have a majestic God.

Go boldly into the battle armed with the name of Jesus Christ.

Tearing Down Strongholds

(2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. {4} For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, {5} casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Strongholds are built out of thoughts (Gk. noema). When Satan builds a stronghold in a human heart, a church, a nation or across a whole planet he uses thoughts. Thoughts of fear, hatred, envy, enmity and strife. Thoughts that create jealousy and distrust. Thoughts that turn people against God. Thoughts that entice to pride and rebellion. Greedy thoughts, lustful thoughts, evil and cruel thoughts. Brick by brick, thought by thought, constellating together into a demonic aggregate, a wall that blocks out the light and keeps a world in darkness. Note that they are described as "arguments and every high thing that exalts itself". A spiritual stronghold is often characterized by a form of pride known as hubris that exalts itself against God. Herod in the book of Acts is an example of this when he accepted worship from men and was struck dead by God. (Acts 12:21-23) The Gnostic heresies of Colossae (Colossians 2:8, 18- 23) the bizarre "knowledge" of Corinth (1 Corinthians 8:1-3) and the "teaching of The Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6,15) seem also to fit this category. Those with religious delusions are nearly always full of pride and impossible to reason with. That is why Paul calls it a "stronghold" . Bible-based apologetics has its place here on demolishing the "lofty arguments" and replacing them with truth. Jesus' confrontations with the Pharisees and Sadducees and His teaching on the Sermon On The Mount were real "stronghold busters" (You have heard it said..but I say. to you..)

Thoughts control emotions and actions. If your doctrine tells you that you are no good then you will feel worthless. If your doctrine demands perfection you will feel constantly guilty. This will lead to actions based on your thoughts and feelings e.g a life of constant striving. A stronghold can become so intense that the person loses touch with reality. To see this in action we need only look at the severely demon-possessed with their destroyed thought life, shattered emotions, lack of contact with reality and constant fear.(Mark 5:1-20) Satan controls us to the extent that he can control our thinking. Yet God has given us weapons against this that are "mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds" so there is no problem with our weapons ! Lets learn to use them. The weapons are listed in Eph 6:10-18.

(Ephesians 6:10-18 NKJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. {11} Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. {13} Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. {14} Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, {15} and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; {18} praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;

The strongholds of Satan are pulled down by people whose lives show moral integrity and faith and who know the word of God and can pray in the Spirit at all times. It is a soldierly combat. For example say Satan has established a stronghold of lustful thoughts in your mind. You need to pull down those lustful concepts about the opposite sex through a thorough study of God's word and knowing what the human body is, and is not, meant for . (see article Your Body Is A Temple Of The Holy Spirit)then you need to fill your mind with things that are noble and lovely and true (Phil 4:8)) praying in Jesus name for God to demolish this stronghold in your life. If the stronghold is in your church - say a spirit of parsimony and greed then you may need to teach on generosity and giving prayerfully wielding the sword of the Spirit until the false concepts of stewardship have come tumbling down and the church is renewed in faith. If the stronghold is in your nation you may need to debate publicly, use the media and refute the lies that keep people bound while guarding yourself and your

own life from the counter-attacks that will come. As I said earlier our weapons are "mighty in God" they are amazing weapons if wielded rightly. Do not be intimidated the authority of Jesus and the "big guns" of God's weaponry are on our side.

A Tactical Armory

The following table summarizes the ways Satan attacks and the way we should respond to these attacks. I have called it a tactical armory since it tells us which weapon to select for the battle. You may notice that many of the Scriptures for Satan's tactics also contain the remedy for it close by or in the same verse! God is wise.

Scripture Ref	Satan's Trick	Our Victory
John 10;10	Steal, Kill, Destroy	Take hold of the abundant life in Christ
1 Timothy 3:6,7	Pride leading to condemnation	Wise appointing of those in spiritual authority
Rev 12:10,11	Accusation	The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony..testifying to what the blood of the Lamb has done for you.
Luke 4:1-13	Temptation through misapplied Scriptures that seem to validate fleshly desires for physical appetite, specialness to God and power.	Knowing the Scriptures so well that you can spot the lie and counter it with a more appropriate Scripture.
1 Timothy 4:1-7	Deceptive false teachings	Reject fanciful tales, teach the Scriptures, sound doctrine, thankfulness, prayer
James 2:17-26 Matthew 7:15-28	False assurance of salvation	A godly life of good works based on Jesus teaching is evidence of having true faith.
Deut 7:25, 18:10-13, 32:7, Lev 19:31 Isaiah 47:13, Acts 19:19 1 Corinthians 10:14	Ensnarement in the occult , divination astrology, and the worship of false gods.	Destroy all objects associated with it. Complete disassociation from it.
2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Ephesians 6:10-21 Romans 8:4-6,.12:1,2 Philippians 4:8 Colossians 3:1-4.	Strongholds made of thoughts that oppose God -especially prideful thoughts and unbelief. These thoughts can control the life and emotions of a person, church or country.	Biblical apologetics, renewing the mind. Setting the mind on the things of the Spirit Use of our spiritual armour combined with faith, the word of God, prayer in the Spirit and humble submission.
Matthew 23:17,19,24,26 Luke 4:18 John 9;39 Romans 10:7-10,25 2Corinthians 3:14-17, 4:3,4 Ephesians 4:17-24, 1 John 2:10,11	Blinding the minds of unbelievers. Especially those who stubbornly refuse Christ.	Turning to Christ. Having a willingness to accept the light and seek it further. Renewal of the mind. Loving your brother in Christ Good teaching and intercession can "open the eyes of the blind".

1 Corinthians 10:14-22	Religious ceremonies that appear "cultural" but are in fact demonic.	Awareness of the spiritual realities that undergird such things. Not participating in them.
Matthew 12:27-29, 16:19, 18:18-20, Luke 11:19-22	Unrestrained Satanic activity. Spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realms. Spiritual "strong men" occupying a person, place or nation.	Binding and loosing in Jesus name which may often have a corporate dimension to it.
Matthew 9:32-34 Luke 13:11-16 Matthew 8;16,17 Mark 9:14-29	Disease caused by demons (not all disease is meant)	Healing. Prayer and fasting. Faith. Use of command prayers in the name of Jesus.
Luke 10:17-19 Acts 16:16-18 Mark 5:1-20, 9:14-29 Luke 11:20-26 Acts 5;16, 8:7	Demon-possession	Use of the name of Jesus with authority. Command the demons to leave. Sometimes it may help to identify the demons. Then the delivered person must live a Holy Spirit filled life. Faith and prayer are necessary and sometimes fasting.

Conclusion

I hope you are feeling a bit more confident in spiritual warfare by now. Please answer the following revision questions. They will help you learn the material.

What was one of the purposes in Christ's coming as a human being? (1 John 3:8 , Hebrews 2:14)

What victories did He win? (Eph 4:8 , Colossians 2:13-15, John 16:33, 1 John 5:4)

What change took place in the heavenly status of believers between the time of John the Baptist and the day of Pentecost? (Mt 11:11-13)

Are Christians greater or lesser than angels in authority? (1 Cor 6:3, Heb 2:14, Eph 2;6,7))

What is the importance of authority in spiritual warfare? (See section on the power and authority of the Christian)

What are strongholds made of? How do we combat them? (2 Cor 10:3-5)

What are the two ways of using the name of Jesus? (Acts 3:6, 16:18 John 14;13,14, 15:16)

What is meant by binding and loosing? (Matt 12:27-29, 16:19, 18:18-20)

Why can the demonic realm "not touch us"? (1 John 4:4, 5:18)

What is the right tactic for combating involvement in the occult? (See table above)

THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

(John 6:53-56 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. {54} "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. {55} "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. {56} "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

It offends our social sensibilities to be told to drink someone's blood and to eat their flesh. It certainly offended many of Jesus' followers who turned away at this point. (John 6:60). The blood of Jesus Christ is not an easy topic and yet understanding it is absolutely central to the Christian life. We will look at twelve benefits of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Eternal Life (John 6:53-56). Unless we "drink His Blood" we have no life in us (6:53) but when we partake of what Christ has done for us on the cross we have eternal life (6:54). Eternal life has two aspects. Firstly it is life that has its origin in eternity and which flows from the eternal realms. The blood of Jesus Christ introduces us to a life that flows from the throne of God, which is holy, pure and full of praise, and which lifts us up to be citizens of heaven seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6). It is the opposite of a selfish sensual life that flows from the world or a life of envy and hatred energized by evil that flows from Hell. (James 3:15,16) It is life energized by love. Secondly eternal life is eternal and lasts forever because it is made of something incorruptible, something glorious that cannot fade away. It is grounded in God's eternal Spirit. It is immortal, imperishable and undefiled (1 Peter 1:4).

Abiding in Christ (John 6:53-56) "Abiding" means that we are to have a continuing personal relationship with God. It is like taking a guest in to "abide with you a night". We become God's guest through the blood and are "at home with Him" and also he becomes our guest and is "at home with us". God and man visit each other in love because of the blood of Jesus Christ. (John 6:56)

Purchased by His blood

(Acts 20:28 NKJV) "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. The blood of Jesus Christ is the precious purchase price that bought us back from sin and from the hand of the Devil who is the enemy of God. (Psalm 107:2). This purchase price also bought us out of our useless way of life that we used to live in. (1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV) knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, {19} but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. To be redeemed means to be purchased from slavery or imprisonment or the ownership of another. The blood of Jesus Christ is the price that has moved us from darkness to light and from a futile and aimless lifestyle to productive membership in God's Kingdom.

Our bodies were also bought by Christ's blood

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV) Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? {20} For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Our bodies were bought for God by Jesus Christ and he now owns them and fills them with His Spirit and His temples. Like any temple they are for the glory of the God to whom they are consecrated. Therefore since both our body and our spirit were bought by the "price" which is the blood of Jesus our bodies should be set apart for God's service. (Romans 12:1,2)

We are washed from our sins by His blood.

(Revelation 1:5 NKJV) .. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, Jesus scrubs us clean from our sins through the use of His blood. 1 John 1:7 explains the process He uses (1 John 1:7 NKJV) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. There is an "if" that begins this verse. If we walk in the light as He is in the light. In other words we have to bring our sins out into God's light and let Him clean them. Just as its hard

to clean the bathroom if the light is off so God needs us to bring our sin-stains into His light if we are to be cleansed. There are two consequences that flow from walking in the light - fellowship with one another and the cleansing of the blood. Being truthful about our sin gets rid of hypocrisy, tears off our masks and makes us able to have true fellowship (instead of Christian pretense with one another. Instead of receiving condemnation we receive fellowship and purification. The blood of Jesus Christ is the effective cleansing agent for the sins we truthfully and honestly bring into the light of God.

We are made righteous. The term the New Testament uses for "made righteous" is "justified". (Romans 5:9 NKJV) Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. God no longer treats us as sinners. He no longer pours out His wrath toward us. It is turned away by the blood of the Passover Lamb. (1 Corinthians 5:7, Exodus 12:6-13). The blood of Jesus Christ makes us legally righteous - that is no longer the objects of God's wrath; it also makes us actually righteous cleansing us from sin and sanctifying us. (Hebrews 10:29, 13:12). This means that through the blood of Jesus Christ the Christian can appropriate all the blessings that flow to the righteous including boldness (Proverbs 28:1), peace, quietness and assurance (Isaiah 32:17) and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

We are made holy (sanctified).

(Hebrews 13:12 NKJV) *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.* Jesus went to the cross in order that you and I might become holy. Our holiness is not a religious game, it is something that Jesus died for. He shed His own blood so that our lives may be spotless in every way. Holiness has two meanings firstly it means "set apart for God". The blood of Jesus Christ when applied to our lives marks us as belonging to God and saves us from destruction. The Old Testament example of this was the blood of the Passover Lamb(

Exodus 12:12-13 NKJV) 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {13} 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'

This was a "type" or forerunner of Jesus who is our Passover. (1 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV) *For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.* God's wrath is turned away by the blood and we become a holy people that He spares. The second part of holiness is more well known it means "To be pure and without sin". The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin and works practical holiness into our lives on a continuing basis. (1 John 1:7). We work with the blood to achieve holiness. We cannot achieve any degree of holiness by our own efforts without the blood. The blood applied can do much work alone. But the applied blood plus our "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling" is most effective. It is a bit like cleaning an oven. Without the oven cleaner chemical the task is hopeless. A good oven cleaner when sprayed on can get rid of much of the grime. If we add a bit of our own effort a spotless oven results. This is, at best, a very poor analogy to holy things but it may help some of you. The blood of Jesus Christ makes us holy.

The blood of Jesus Christ brings us forgiveness of sins.

(Matthew 26:28 NKJV) "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Ephesians 1:7 NKJV) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace The blood of Jesus Christ brings about the forgiveness of our sins. Nothing we can do can make God forgive us. However the sacrifice of His Son on the cross has brought in a new covenant and basic to this covenant is the idea that God forgives all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ. This is a sheer undeserved gift. It is part of the riches of His grace (Eph 1:7). All your sins past present and future are forgiven by God because of the blood of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9;12,28,10;10).

A clean conscience

(Hebrews 9:14 NKJV) *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

What are these "dead works". These are the futile good works of the religious that always fall short of God's standards and which just end up bringing condemnation on us. (Isaiah 64:6 NRSV) We have all become like

one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. If we need to be cleansed from these "righteous deeds" how much more do we need cleansing from our blatant sins! The things that torment our conscience are forgiven, cleansed and removed by the blood of Jesus Christ so that our conscience instead of acting as the accuser is now put into God's service to strengthen and sanctify us.

Boldness in Christian living

(Hebrews 10:19-23 NKJV) Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, {20} by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, {21} and having a High Priest over the house of God, {22} let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. {23} Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Once we are fully aware of what the blood of Jesus has done for us then we become fantastically bold. The first place this boldness takes hold is in prayer "boldness to enter the Holiest" it then moves into other areas of our life giving us "full assurance of faith". The author to the Hebrews who was writing to Christians who had apparently lost much of their original boldness (Hebrews 6:12) takes the majority of the epistle to explain the working of the blood. He knew, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the knowledge of the work of the blood is the basis for boldness in the Christian life.

Victory over the Devil and his angels

(Revelation 12:11 NKJV) "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

When we testify to what the Word says about what the blood does we defeat the enemy of our souls. The testimony of the saints is about what Jesus Christ has done for them. By proclaiming this testimony they make it possible for others to believe and when these believe then Satan is defeated. Our testimony should always be about the cross and about the blood. Paul knew this when He wrote:

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV) And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. {2} For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. {3} I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. {4} And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, {5} that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Paul did not rely on persuasive Greek rhetoric but on the simple manifest power of the message of Christ crucified. The testimony of the blood is powerful overthrowing the fortresses of Satan (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Its message leads to a power which is spiritual but not hidden - it can be demonstrated in power. (1 Corinthians 2:4)

Unity in Christ

(Ephesians 2:13-14 NKJV) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. {14} For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

(Revelation 5:9-10 NKJV) And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood, Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, {10} And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

These two verses tell us that the blood of Jesus Christ is the basis for fellowship between Christians of every tribe and tongue and nation who have had the dividing walls between them broken down. We have been redeemed out of our cultures and into the church of God. No longer are we many groups but rather we are one group in Christ though our ethnicity will still be part of us.

The basis of this unity is not some constitution or set of rules but the sheer fact that we have all been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. And not just redeemed - given a heavenly status as kings and priests to God. And not just status but real power "we shall reign upon the earth". The blood has bought us back from separation and powerlessness to unity and being "more than conquerors".

Well that is the twelve things that the blood of Jesus Christ does for you. Are you as impressed as I am? Are you "shouting hallelujah through the bunghole" like Billy Sunday? Its magnificent. Why don't we end this article with a prayer of praise. Lets use the one from Revelation 5:9,10.

Prayer

(Revelation 5:9-10 NKJV) And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood , Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, {10} And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth. "PRAISE THE LORD!

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS AND THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Matthew 3:13-17 NKJV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. {14} And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" {15} But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. {16} When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. {17} And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(Mark 1:9-11 NKJV) It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. {10} And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. {11} Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(Luke 3:21-22 NKJV) When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. {22} And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

(John 1:29-34 NKJV) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! {30} "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' {31} "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." {32} And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. {33} "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' {34} "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

The Redemptive Qualities of The Baptism of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus represents His initiation into Spirit-empowered ministry. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and indwelt by the Holy Spirit from His mother's womb. This gave Him exceptional natural giftings unmarred by sin and a clear mind, filled with exceptional wisdom that could challenge the rabbis of His day from an early age. But as wonderful as these gifts were He still needed something more if He was to bear the burdens of the world in ministry. His identification with sinners at the Jordan and His plunging Himself into the stream of human misery and conflict represent a moving into public life and the bearing of not just His own burdens but the burdens of all the lost.

Jesus needed an empowering by the Holy Spirit before He moved out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. This may sound slightly heretical - after all wasn't He God - the fullness of Deity in bodily form, the incarnate Word full of grace and truth? (Col 2:9, John 1:14-18) Yes!! Absolutely, He was, is and always will be God. He did not "become divine" at His baptism or any other time. He was the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" - He was God before the world began and was intimately involved in its creation. (John 1:3, Col 1:17). However as God He "took on the nature of a Servant" and in this limitedness He was born of a woman, grew up as a child in submission to His parents and like anyone else entering ministry needed the anointing of the Holy Spirit before He took on the burden of proclaiming the Kingdom, healing the sick, raising the dead and suffering for righteousness' sake. In some way he limited Himself to what "a perfect believer" can do. He even said to His disciples that: (John 14:12 NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." Somehow in the economy of God the believer ("he who believes in Me") CAN accomplish the works that Christ did on earth ("the works I do he shall do also") plus a bit extra (and greater works than these he will do because I go to the Father).

Now let's put that in context - Jesus is talking about the works He did in front of the disciples, during His earthly ministry but before He went to the cross (the words were uttered during the last supper). We cannot work the works He did while in heaven - such as Creation. Neither can we take the sins of the world on our shoulders. He has done that and that is His glory alone. But in the power of the Holy Spirit which has been given to us since Jesus has gone to the Father we can work the works He did between His baptism and the cross. Don't take my word for it - it's Jesus who said it! And the book of Acts certainly reinforces the idea that the Spirit-empowered believer can do great things for God. Now turning this on its head for a minute... if Jesus said "those who believe" could do what He did during His ministry then His earthly ministry must have been "limited" to that of the "perfect believer". It is as the "perfect believer" that Jesus went and got baptized and it is as the "Spirit-empowered perfect believer" that he went forth in ministry. This leads me to a little theological hypothesis, that the life of the "perfect believer" has two stages. Stage one is that of perfect piety when we fear God and grow in wisdom. We become good in ourselves. Stage two is the stage of public proclamation when we receive God's power in ministry and our piety and wisdom becomes the foundation for a Spirit-filled life where we become "rivers of living water" to a world in desperate need. I must very quickly add that stage two is not "superior" to stage one. Without a foundation in ethics and goodness ministry can be a dangerous place. It's the wrong place to learn wisdom. No-one despises a doctor for going to medical school even though he may minister to no-one there. We understand preparation in secular things and we should be prepared to do the preparatory work on our own life. Power without ethics and wisdom is the last thing God wants in your life. Both stages are necessary if "the perfect believer" is to do and be all that God wants.

NT Christians were generally baptized immediately upon profession of faith. The day of their conversion was also the day of their water baptism. So they spoke of the day of their conversion as "the day of my baptism", not because baptism saves us but because it was the unique external event that occurred on the day they professed faith in Christ. Also, in the revival conditions of the early church their baptism was often accompanied by the laying on of hands and the impartation of a spiritual gift to the new believer in Spirit baptism. This occasionally was not the case. (Acts 18:24-19:7) Apollos was a believer with a great deal of natural speaking ability yet still needed to understand the baptism in the Spirit if he was to proclaim the gospel "accurately". Also some believers who knew only the "baptism of John" and had not "even heard that there was a Holy Spirit". This is not unusual even today as some Christians receive very little teaching due to isolation, misunderstanding or inadequate ministry. Ideally all three aspects of baptism belong together. But they have wandered apart. We have people who are baptised but not changed. We have converts who have never had water baptism. And we have strong Christians who have not received the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We need to press on and to desire to be Spirit-filled proclaimers of God's Kingdom. If we are to move beyond this accumulation of wisdom and truly minister to others in an effective way we need a "baptism in the Holy Spirit". This simply means we need an all-encompassing immersion in the God-head that empowers us for ministry. Baptism in the Spirit is not a private thing and it doesn't belong to any one denomination. It is not always accompanied by speaking in tongues or prophesy. Jesus' baptism had neither. The miracles came after the baptism. This baptism is an initiation not just into the church but into the power of the Kingdom. This baptism is what happened to Jesus as he moved from an obscure life to center stage. It happened to the disciples at Pentecost who finally got plunged into full revival ministry themselves. And it happened to Wesley and countless other leaders of the Christian faith. The Jordan is a place where we get the power to stand in the flood of human souls and minister Christ to them.

The "baptism in the Spirit" is real, powerful and moves us out of our private pietism into public proclamation of the Kingdom of God. For me this happened unsought when God confronted me with the utter self-centredness of my faith. I saw that I needed to cleanse out the filthy black mess of sin that remained in my life. It was an encounter with the awfulness of selfishness. It was evident that I had no hope apart from what Christ could do in me and with me. This was not a conversion, it was a dealing with the sin that entangled me, I was set free to run the race and I did. I led a huge number of people to God in the ensuing weeks. I was on fire with God because I had met Him in power. It was Jacob at Bethel all over again. This encounter with God, this "deeper

experience" was not ecstatic - except that in the middle of it I did have a vision of my sin and of God. It took my faith from the private realm to the public realm; from self-edification to spirit-filled ministry; from a complaining Christian to a proclaiming herald.

Jesus did not have all this selfish sin to deal with, but He did need the power that God would provide in response to humble obedience. And He identified with sinners and "went down the front" with all the people being ministered to. I still struggle with "going down the front", how can I, a Christian leader, admit that I too have needs. I should "be an example" a stainless steel "there's nothing wrong with me" Christian. There is a real live Pharisee in me just waiting to get out. Its hypocritical to say I don't need ministry, that somehow my faith puts me a cut above the ordinary Christian. I do need ministry - lots of it. I go down the front now perhaps more than ever. It still hurts to do it. But Jesus wandered out there and said He was in need of God. He said that "it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness". Many preachers have felt like John the Baptist when they give an appeal and some real saint of God comes down the front and wants prayer to be a better Christian. I think "I need ministry from you, not you from me..." but the saints attitude is "this is fitting..." . Its a humble person who can accept ministry from someone who is "unworthy to untie the thongs of their sandals".

A few quick correctives - the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" that we speak of here is NOT the same as the initial indwelling. All believers are indwelt with the Holy Spirit from the moment of their "new birth" just as Jesus was indwelt with the Holy Spirit from conception. Perhaps a better term would be "the empowering of the Holy Spirit", it is certainly less confusing. Three things are united in one term in the New Testament - water baptism, conversion and Spirit baptism. At Pentecost they all seemed to occur together. Water baptism is associated with repentance from sin and the appeal to God for a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21,22 Acts 2:38). Conversion represents the change of being from old man to new man that comes as God re-creates the sinner into a "saint" (holy one, believer)(Eph 5:8,9 Col 1:13,14). "Spirit baptism" involves being empowered to take up our place in the body of Christ in the exercise of whatever spiritual gifts have been imparted to us. (1 Cor 12:13) Just as it is bad manners to see a person as a lesser Christian if they have not had water baptism so it is not gracious to categorise people as "spirit-filled" and "un-spirit-filled". Such distinctions are divisive. Certainly to do as Priscilla and Aquila did and take someone aside and explain the way of God more accurately (and in love) is fine and helpful. However I sense a certain spiritual pride in some believers in spirit baptism that leads me to urge caution in the way we approach the issue. Also there is no hint in the New Testament that "tarrying", seeking, or any prolonged anguish is necessary as preparation. It is not some exalted spiritual but a frequently misunderstood part of the gospel along with water baptism and conversion. It is for all believers and like everything else is received by faith in the proclaimed word of Christ.

The Early Ministry

The early ministry of Christ is an outworking and authentication of His baptismal experience. I will deal with the temptations separately next month but here in His early ministry he comes primarily as the anointed one with the power to resist evil and to bring in the Kingdom of God in power.

(Matthew 4:13-25 NKJV) And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, {14} that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: {15} "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: {16} The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." {17} From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." {18} And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. {19} Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." {20} They immediately left their nets and followed Him. {21} Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, {22} and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. {23} And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the

people. {24} Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. {25} Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The anointing received at his baptism leads Him into a widespread ministry of proclamation. Matt 4:23a "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom,". From Galilee in north of Israel the word went out and many people were attracted to the "great light" (Matt 4:16). His fame caused people to travel hundreds of miles to see Him, people came from Syria in the north, Jerusalem in the south and from beyond the Jordan to the west. People came from the Greek speaking Decapolis and the Hebrew speaking Judea. Like moths to a flame multitudes were drawn to the ministry of Jesus. The anointing has "drawing power".

Secondly the baptism of the Spirit produces a public and obvious concern with holiness. Not that Jesus was unconcerned with holiness before! But now it is out in the open - His message is "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand..". This holiness is also reflected in a calling of others into ministry to lead lives separated from worldly concerns in the pursuit of the Kingdom. Simon and Andrew are called by Jesus not to be "nice people" but to be "fishers of men", to be apostles of a new Kingdom not just improved worldlings. The baptism in the Spirit imparts that eternal perspective that makes the Kingdom the only thing that really matters.

Thirdly the anointing has power to heal - after His baptism He healed "all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease..." . Before His baptism not a single healing is recorded. After it He puts the physicians out of business. All who came to Him were healed not by His diagnostic ability or His knowledge of herbs but by the power that flowed from Him that He received when the Spirit came upon Him. If we desire to heal others in body or in soul we will end up struggling to heal a handful by our own strength but we may heal thousands if God so chooses to impart His Spirit of healing in power upon us.

The final authentication of His baptism in the Spirit is the possession of extraordinary spiritual authority over the powers of darkness. This was, of course latent in Jesus from the beginning but it became obvious to all when His public ministry began and He moved in the continual power of the anointing of God. After Pentecost the apostles moved in this same power to heal the sick and to exorcise demons. These abilities are "graces" - no ordinary mortal by their own knowledge can heal the sick with a word or cast out a demon by their own authority. And they certainly cannot do it on the scale that Jesus or the apostles did it. And on Jesus authority we can know that we who believe can "do these works" and "even greater works" not because we are special but because Christ has gone to the Father. Because of this the Holy Spirit - who is God and who can do these things, has been poured out upon us. Jesus early ministry clearly shows that our effectiveness is not of ourselves but lies entirely in the power of God.

Summary

The "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as experienced by Jesus resulted in :

- (1) The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom.
- (2) An attractiveness to others that draws people widely to hear God's message, this is not natural attractiveness (of which Jesus apparently had very little) but a supernatural blessedness that draws people in like moths to a flame.
- (3) A concern with holiness that calls others to lead a repentant and separated lifestyle.
- (4) Healing of the sick that is way beyond normal expectations in its scope. This wide scope is both in the numbers healed and in the great range of maladies that are cured -including "incurable" conditions such as epilepsy and paralysis. (Matt 4:24)
- (5) Authority over the powers of darkness.

These five things are among the works of Jesus that we can replicate and even exceed (John 14:12) though few have done so or gone anywhere near it. They are the marks of an authentic baptism of the Spirit. They are the fruit produced by an empowered and prepared believer baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Authority

Matthew 10:1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

(Luke 9:1 NKJV) Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

(Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(Ephesians 1:20-21 NKJV) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, {21} far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

(Ephesians 2:6 NKJV) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

All spiritual authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus Christ. (John 17:2, Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Peter 3:22) He in turn gives it to whosoever He wishes – such as the Twelve or the seventy-two. (Luke 9:1, 10:19)

Notice the word **given** – spiritual authority is God's decision, He gives it to whosoever He chooses.

All believers have general authority over demons because they are seated in heavenly realms with Christ. However it is quite obvious that most believers are unable to exercise authority over sickness, death or the weather. This sort of authority is *given* as the Holy Spirit wills, to those who have the gifts or healing or of miracles.

Authority over major principalities and powers such as Communism is generally exercised by the Church as a whole, or the united churches in a particular city. Ed Silvano has written on this in his book "That None Should Perish".

How then can believers gain authority to bind and to loose, to heal, to deliver, to combat territorial spirits and to overcome the powers and principalities in the heavenly realms?

Firstly we must "ask, seek and knock" (Matthew 7:7). We must call on God to grant us the authority we require to accomplish the work that He has called us to do. God calls us to good works, and each of these good works requires some sort of spiritual authority. Even being a parent requires spiritual authority in the home.

Being a pastor or a missionary requires spiritual authority in the place of service and over the powers in that area. Counselling requires authority over indwelling demons and spiritual afflictions to speak the Word with power into a human life. The ministry of healing requires authority over sickness and death.

So we must work out what authority God wants us to have to do His work and carry out His Great Commission. Then we must "ask, seek, and knock" in prayer until we get such authority. This often requires real desperation and pleading with God. We often have to be at the point where we are crying out "Lord, I cannot do this unless you grant me power" before the power and authority is granted. The Lord Gives "authority to His servants and to each his work" (Mark 13:34, Luke 9:1, 10:19)

There are also many verses in the NT about how believers can gain and use their spiritual authority and as we obey these and follow these principles we will grow in authority, power and spiritual effectiveness:

- Praying in unity. (Matthew 18:19,20)
- Using the Scriptures –as Jesus did against Satan. (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Standing on the promises of God. (2 Peter 1:2,3)
- Praying for things that are clearly God’s revealed will. (1 John 5:14,15)
- Persistent prayer. (Luke 18)
- Prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29)
- Discernment (Romans 16:19,20)
- Innocence / purity of heart (Romans 16:19,20)
- Being born-again (1John 5:4)
- Right doctrine (1 John 5:5)
- Faith (1 John 5:4, Mark 11:23,24)
- Fearlessness & boldness (Rev 12:11, Acts 4:29-33)
- Testifying to Jesus (Revelation 12:11)
- The blood of Jesus (Revelation 12:11)
- The name of Jesus. (Mark 16:15-18, Luke 10:17, John 14:13,14)
- Understanding the indwelling Christ (1 John 4:4)
- Putting on the armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 6:7)
- Understanding Satan’s schemes. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
- Using our spiritual weapons (2 Cor 10 :3-5)
- Good works (Romans 12:21)
- Standing in the peace that Christ has given us. (John 16:33)
- Binding the strong man. (Luke 11:17-26, Matthew 18:19,20)
- The word of command (Matthew 8:16, 21:21, Acts 3:6)
- Anointing with oil (Mark 6:13, James 5:14)
- Knowing our identity in Christ. (All of Ephesians)
- Understanding the nature of faith and authority. (Matthew 8:5-13)
- Faith for miracles – particularly believing that nothing is impossible with God. (Matthew 17:20, 21:21)
- Destroying the things of darkness. (Acts 19:19)
- Repentance and confession (Acts 19:18, James 5:16, Acts 3:19)
- Forgiving sins in Jesus name (Matthew 9:1-8, John 20:23)
- Resisting the Devil, being vigilant and taking a stand against him. (James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8,9)
- Humble service increases our authority (Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45, 1 Peter 5:7)
- Sharing the trials of Jesus means we will reign with Him (Luke 22:28-30, Romans 8:17,18, Philipians 1:29, 3:10,11, 2 Tim 2:11,12)
- Faithful service to God. (Luke 19:17)
- NOT through our own power or godliness (Acts 3:12)
- A special apostolic or prophetic call from God. (Acts 26:15-18, 2 Corinthians 10:8, Revelation 11:4-6)
- By abiding in the cross and in redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Colossians 2:13-15)
- Accepting the grace of God in the midst of our weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:9,10)
- The strengthening of the Holy Spirit in the inner man. (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- Depth of Christian character. (2 Peter 1:3-8, 2 Timothy 2:20-26)
- Persistent long-term obedience, doing the works of Jesus. (Revelation 2:26,27)
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5-8)

To sum up, you must be born-again and baptized with the Spirit and seek authority to be granted you by God so you can carry out your ministry. You should travail in faith-filled prayer and live by the principles of those who God trusts with authority – those who are faithful, humble and obedient and who call upon Him.

The Keys Of The Kingdom

(Matthew 16:17-19 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. {18} "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. {19} "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 18:18-19 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. {19} "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

(Luke 11:52 NKJV) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

(Luke 13:12 NKJV) But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity."

(John 11:44 NKJV) And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

(Acts 2:23-24 NKJV) "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; {24} "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

(Revelation 1:18 NKJV) "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

(Revelation 3:7-8 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': {8} "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

(Revelation 9:1-2 NKJV) Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. {2} And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

(Revelation 20:1-3 NKJV) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. {2} He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; {3} and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Keys represent the ability to lock up (to bind) and the ability to let out (to loose) . If I have the keys to a jail I can use them to lock up a dangerous prisoner or to release a pardoned inmate. The key to the bottomless pit is used twice, once to release demonic horde of locusts, and secondly to confine Satan for one thousand years.

Also keys denote access and control. With the keys one can control movement, times of access and who and what goes in and out. This then controls other activities. The keys to a bank vault with a

time lock means that at certain seasons the bank manager can unlock the cash and the tellers will have something to give customers. This is the "key of David" in the sense of the Davidic dynasty, which was something that God opened that no man could shut. This is the key to opportunity, times and seasons.

Keys also denote power and authority. The one with the keys has control. Jesus has the keys of Hades and of Death. He has complete authority over who goes in and out. Death has been taken out of the Devil's control and is now in Jesus' power and its captives have been set free. (Hebrews 2:14-15 NKJV) Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, {15} and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Keys also denote our ability to explore and discover, to find a treasure or to leave it unaccessed. It is in this sense that Jesus uses when He speaks of "the keys of knowledge" that the scribes took away, thus not entering themselves and hindering others. (Luke 11:52 NKJV) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." By discarding the real spiritual truths and teaching the "doctrines of men" they left their audience without the keys to the spiritual life and its treasures.

Now we come to one of the most disputed verses in Scripture - Matthew 16: 19 where Jesus gives Peter the "keys of the Kingdom" with the clear implication that Peter's earthly actions would somehow either lock up heaven or release things from Heaven. When Peter allowed the Gentiles into the Church on an equal footing with Jews (Acts 10,11 and 15) he was using His keys to let people into the Kingdom. On the other hand Peter's stern judgment on Ananias and Sapphira seems to have been using the keys to bind up a spirit of greed, lying and deception that had started to creep in. (Acts 5:1-11)

Another use of the keys was during the Samaritan revival the Holy Spirit was only released after Peter's arrival:

(Acts 8:14-17 NKJV) Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, {15} who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. {16} For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. {17} Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The keys here are in the context of "upon this rock I will build my church" and seem to involve the setting of precedents for the Church as a whole. It was Peter who released the Holy Spirit in Judea at Pentecost, in Samaria during the revival and to the Gentiles with Cornelius's household. Peter then confirmed these precedents at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) freeing the other apostles and the Church to act in similar fashion. These "precedent-setting keys" also were used to "unlock" the issue of permissible foods...permitting the consumption of all foods. (Acts 10)

Have these keys been passed on? No. They were used by Peter to set spiritual precedents and define many liberating issues in the early Church. The realms have been opened up and now we minister within those areas bound and loosed by Peter, we can see the Holy Spirit coming on the Samaritans and the Gentiles, we can eat unclean foods, we have been released from the burden of the law. (Romans 7:1-6).

But did Peter release us from the Law or did Christ? Christ's work on the cross released us - it did the work in the heavenlies, then Peter with his decisions on earth loosed on earth what had already been loosed in Heaven. Similarly Christ released the Holy Spirit from Heaven but Peter then released it to others. The literal version translates the verse thus:

Matthew 16:19 LITV And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatever you bind on earth shall occur, having been bound in Heaven. And whatever you may loose on the earth shall be, having been loosed in Heaven.

Finally we need to consider our own "binding and loosing" where corporate decisions of the "two or three" have some sort of authority in Heaven. We cannot bind or lose anything we can like, we can only operate within the context of the finished work of Christ. We can release spiritual gifts into someone's life through the laying on of hands such as Paul did with Timothy:

(1 Timothy 4:14 NKJV) Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. (2 Timothy 1:6 NKJV) Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

In Paul's own life he was released from blindness and into Christian service through a similar procedure: (Acts 9:17-18 NKJV) And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." {18} Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

The laying on of hands seems to loose people from illness and infirmity (Mark 6:5, 8:23, 16:18 Acts 28:8) fill them with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:7,8 19:6 and impart spiritual gifts (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6) and ordination for ministry (Acts 6:6, 13;3). All of these bindings and loosings are of the finished work of Christ - His healing ministry, His Holy Spirit, His gifts and His call to ministry. We can also bind sin and forgive (loose) the penitent and set limits on church behavior, which is the major context of Matthew 18 and is seen in operation in Acts 5 and 1 Corinthians 5.

To summarize - all spiritual keys are aspects of the work of Jesus Christ that we are given some power to release or bind here on earth. There is not an apostolic succession but there is a "Christological succession" as Christians release that which Christ has done. Peter had a unique role in setting spiritual precedents for the Church. That role is finished. We now operate within the confines of the apostolic faith. We are to use our keys wisely and judiciously and not as the lawyers did who "took away" the keys in the name of spiritual control and safety.

The World, The Flesh And The Devil

There are three major battlefronts in spiritual warfare and the New Testament calls these “the world, the flesh and the Devil”. First a few definitions:

The World – Greek “kosmos”, society organized in complete disregard of God. Babylon and Tyre are symbols of this worldliness. The “kosmos” literally means “what is constructed from its constituent parts” (Kittel) in this case “human order” or ‘world order’ and implies that the World is a human construct, a system, with a hierarchy. The World is fallen, unredeemed creation setting up its own order in direct contradiction to the Kingdom of God. The contrast is so clear and absolute that whoever makes himself a “friend of the World” makes himself “an enemy of God”. (James 4:4). What we war against are evil world orders ruled by principalities and powers utterly hostile to God. This “World” is different from the general term world, which means humanity or society as in the sense of “God so loved the world”.

The World – leads us to make wrong alliances and pursue wrong objectives, to be short-term and pragmatic and to pursue a worldly kingdom rather than a spiritual kingdom. The world induces us to the pursuit of fame, wealth and human glory outside of the will and blessing and permission of God. When unsuccessful the World persecutes the saints so that Jesus said “in the world you will have tribulation”.

The Flesh – Greek – sarx The human body as the repository of sin and controlled by lusts that wage war with the Holy Spirit and which lead the believer astray from the will of God. (see Romans 7, Galatians 5:16-23). The NIV translates this as “sinful nature” to avoid connecting it to directly with the body which is created by God to be His temple, and which will eventually be redeemed and resurrected in glory. The body is not bad but the lusts that emanate from it and the sin that indwells it is evil, which is why the body needs to be redeemed.

The Flesh – leads us to satisfy right appetites in wrong ways or at wrong times and to prefer wrong and perverted appetites to righteous ones. Sexual immorality is just one aspect. The desire for justice can be turned by “the flesh” into murderous revenge and the desire to tell the truth; can be turned into gossip and slander. The flesh is extremely deceitful and enticing (Ephesians 4:22, Titus 3:3, James 1:14,15) and can fool us into thinking our actions are legitimate.

The Devil – Greek diabolos , the resister of God, Satan, the dragon of old, the accuser of the brethren. The head of the evil spirits, a very powerful demonic being, once a guardian cherub, now fallen, not a divinity but a powerful fallen angel. (See elsewhere in this book.)

The Devil – leads us to worship false gods, heed false prophets, use magic, pursue luck, fortune-telling and divination and to enter into demonic spiritual pacts and worship Satan rather than the living God. In order to trick believers the devil resorts to magic and false miracles, false doctrine and all manner of spiritual deception.

Fighting Back

The World is overcome through faith (1 John 5:4,5) and through righteous living with godly priorities (1 John 2:15-17, Titus 2:12) which may involve separation from the powers and structures of the “kosmos” (James 1:27, 4:4).

The Flesh is overcome through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18) and offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1,2). A key part of this is renewing the mind (Romans 12:1,2) and making sure it is set on the Spirit, and not on the flesh. (Romans 8:4-6).

The Devil is overcome by resisting Him (James 4:7) standing on the Word of God as Jesus did when tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11), standing firm in our faith (Revelation 12:11) and using our spiritual armory (Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Babylon, Empires, And Satan As The “Prince Of Trade”

Babylon means “gate of the gods” Spiritually It is the demon-possessed city (Revelation 18:2), the “gateway city” for the false gods. The tower of Babel was a tall tower reaching up to “the heavens” where the spirits dwelt. The ancient remains of the tower indicate it had a heathen temple at the top perhaps so that the evil spirits would use it as a conduit to earth similar to Jacob’s ladder. Externally Babylon is the great city, the worldly society based on trade, commerce and plunder. Originally Babylon was established as Babel by Nimrod “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10:8-14) Became proud and where was humanity was scattered from after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). It eventually became a mighty empire under Nebuchadnezzar and was responsible for the Jewish captivity and destruction of the Temple in 586BC. It later became a symbol of luxury, pride and human arrogance and of a society based on occult practices such as fortune-telling. It was invaded by the Medes and Persians and finally destroyed by Alexander the Great. There are many prophecies concerning Babylon particularly Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51. Babylon is identified as Rome and the Roman Empire, in the New Testament, then in the analogous societies such as the Eastern Empire based in Constantinople, the Roman Catholic Church, and wicked trading empires. I Revelation the final Babylon will emerge a vast trading empire in the last days and be a world system that persecutes Christians. Here is some material my book “The Market and the Kingdom” on this topic:

The Final Division

What will be the final division in history? Will it be Communist and capitalist? Will communism resurge and challenge democracy once more? Will it be Jew and Gentile? Will the Jews be all on one side and rest of the world on the other? Or will it be a North-South division with the Two-Thirds World on one side and the industrialized nations on the other?

I don’t think it will be any of these divisions. The Jew and Gentile division was broken down in Christ, Communism is rapidly just becoming another political party and political philosophy, the North-South division is blurring more and more each year as China industrializes and country after country is admitted to the WTO. I believe the final division of humanity will be between an immense, corrupt, lawless global Market ruled by the Anti-Christ and centered on a wicked trading city that Scripture calls Babylon after the ancient city of that name; and a lawful holy and righteous Kingdom of God. This fundamental division of humanity is described in the Bible in the book of Revelation chapters 13 -19.

Can we see any signs of this final great division in humanity emerging? If, at the end of history there are going to be two, and only two, main camps then each of these should be increasing in ‘space” while others are decreasing. If these are going to be the only two destinies available at the end of history we should be able to see some trace of that happening today. Market forces should be getting stronger and stronger, materialism should be increasing, a global economy should be expanding in dominance and in power. Small nations should be terrified of strong market forces and multinationals, then larger and larger nations until governments hardly count. Economic gurus like Allan Greenspan should hold the power of a head of state of a middle sized nation. There should be an irreversible triumph of the power of world trade. Is this happening? I think it is. On the other hand Christianity should be increasing, there should be an age of mission, previously unreached ethnic groups should be hearing about Jesus and believing. If Christianity is to be the only significant opposition to the World Market it should be increasing in strength and wisdom and global reach. There are certainly signs that this is happening. Also all other allegiances need to be decreasing in “market share” with some religions and belief systems disappearing almost entirely – and this is occurring also. For instance many tribal belief systems are either getting secularized or becoming converted to Christ. At the end of history there will have to be only two Grand Allegiances – Money or Jesus, God or Mammon, the temporal or the eternal. In the end people will choose their destiny. They will either follow the Beast - and become wealthy in his marketplace, or they will go follow Christ the crucified - and find eternal life.

According to the Bible this final Babylonian market will not just be dominant, it will be idolatrous and lawless. It will be manifestly wicked. It will be so bad that to participate in it will be to lose one’s salvation. Now world trade is not that bad yet. So if this is really going to happen then a change must be taking place. There must be an ongoing loss of ethics and of conscience in the market. Greed must gradually become the ultimate good. There should be a not so subtle contempt for the rule of law and a conscious ongoing attempt to evade

the reach of law and governments. From tax evasion to income protection schemes to keeping two sets of books, there should be widespread evasion of human and divine regulation. Also a lawless environment is ruled by the strong to the disadvantage of the weak. So the market must make protecting the weak seem bad and anti-competitive or a restrictive trade practice. Profit must increasingly come before people and ethics. There should be a steady increase in the lawless and darker areas of trade – such as the drugs trade, illegal arms trade, sex trade, slave trade and illegal wildlife trade. These areas of criminality should prove strangely untouchable. Can we see this gradually happening? I believe we can.

So on one side of the great divide will be a dominant, ruthless and lawless global economy. On the other side, wearing the white hats, will be a bunch of born-again Christians. They will be poor, persecuted, martyred but very loyal to Jesus. At this time there will only be two main religions in the world, the idolatrous Beast religion and the Jesus religion. So if Revelation is right fundamentalist Islam has to collapse at some point in the future. Muslims would never bow down to an idol and there is no indication of a third main faith in the Scriptures. At the same time biblical Christianity should be growing, possibly numerically as well as in depth and strength and purity. All other systems should be weakening their hold on people. They will be swept before materialism or they will be converted to Christianity or weakened to the point of irrelevance. Tribal religions, shamanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and any other belief that makes itself “absolute” will all go one way or the other - to materialistic idolatry or to the Lord. One by one they will crumble, or they will become hardened and militant, and fight and fall. We have yet to see this but I believe the early signs are there.

If Christianity is to be left standing in the field while all other faith systems collapse or are severely weakened to the point of irrelevance then Christianity must find a resurgence in strength and distinctiveness. It must somehow be able to stand uncompromised by the world system. As other faiths are conquered by the dollar on one hand or the gospel on the other we should see a “century of mission”, the gospel should be spreading and new groups should be claiming allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Tribal religions should be vanishing and the Church should be being accused of “destroying cultures” as various religious allegiances pass away and old gods are not worshipped as much any more. Allegiance to Jesus will take precedence to all other allegiances and Christians will discover what it means to be distinct from the world. Strength, power and authority will be rediscovered along with a love of the cross and the development of strong communities that can support believers in tough times. Is there any sign that Christianity will be the one world religion left standing? Yes, I think so, it certainly is growing while most others are shrinking.

Thus for this final division to occur two forces must sweep all before them – the Christian missionary with the gospel and the ruthless trader with money and guns. This has been happening for centuries and the East India Company with its opposition to missionaries probably understood this better than most. Since the earliest of colonial days the missionary and the trader have been the symbols of Empire but spiritually they have always been rivals. Where I was in Papua New Guinea the mission compound would be at one end of the village and there people would behave, at the other end would be the trade area with its bar and it would be considered the domain of darkness. For an interesting literary exploration of the darkness of colonial trade read Joseph Conrad’s “The Heart of Darkness”.

How bad will this be? Scripture says it will be very bad for a relatively brief period of time between three and a half and seven years depending on interpretations (probably three and a half years). During this time the Global Market will become openly and totally idolatrous and worship the Anti-Christ. The market will then give up any attempt to be just and fair and will be dominated by ruthless forces that will exclude Christians from being able to buy or sell.

(Revelation 13:15-18 NKJV) He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. {16} He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, {17} and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. {18} Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

The Beast, whoever he is, engages in enforced worship of an idol in his image. Worship of such an idol is of course forbidden to Christians. Those who refuse to do so are killed - so many Christians will become martyrs. Also people are to be marked with the name or number of the Beast as a sign of allegiance.

Obviously Christians cannot wear a sign of the allegiance to the Anti-Christ. Elsewhere in Revelation it is made clear that this mark is totally forbidden to Christians and those who receive the mark forfeit any hope of eternal life while those who refuse it and suffer receive a great reward. (Revelation 14:9-11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4)

However only those who receive the mark can participate in the Market. The mark of the Beasts puts you in the World Market but out of the Kingdom. On the other hand refusing the mark is part of being in the Kingdom but means you are unable to participate in the Market. At that point the Global Market and the Kingdom of God will be totally separate entities with the Global Market ruled by the Anti-Christ, and the Kingdom of God by Jesus Christ. If you are part of the Market, you will be excluded from the Kingdom. If you are part of the Kingdom, you will be unable to buy and sell and therefore not part of the Global Market. This separation will be both temporal and eternal. If you choose the idolatrous Global Market you will not have eternal life. If you want eternal life then you will be unable to be part of the Global Market. At that point Christians will be warned to flee the world economic system:

(Revelation 14:9-11 NKJV) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, {10} "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. {11} "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

(Revelation 18:4-5 NKJV) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. {5} "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

Thus the final division in history will not be between Jew and Gentile or between Communist and Capitalist. The final division in history will be between Christians and Materialists, between God and Mammon, between those who are in Christ and those who are in Babylon. Eventually idolatrous Babylon will fall, and the merchants will stand far off and watch the smoke of her burning. (Revelation 17:1-19:6). The final defeat of evil will follow swiftly and the Kingdom will triumph.

And from the next chapter....

Trade In Babylon

Trade, if it is just and fair, is actually more just and more responsible than having everything for free. I spent the first three years of my life on Nauru, a small Pacific island nation dependent on the mining of phosphate fertilizer as its main source of income. My father was the engineer in charge of building some of the port facilities there from 1956-59. In Nauru they had a custom called "bubiji" or "bubishi" which meant that you were given whatever you asked for or desired from another person. So if your cousin bought a new car you could just say "Gee, that's a nice car" and she would have to give it to you. Or you could see a pretty child and say "Wow what a beautiful child! And providing the child was in your clan line, then the child would be given to you. Our houseboy would arrive on a different bicycle each day.

Without a sense of private property, ownership or the price of things Nauru was set for disaster in the modern world. At the time of its independence in 1968 it had put away 3 billion dollars Australian of phosphate money for its 3000 citizens thus making it the richest nation on earth with every individual a millionaire. However this huge fund soon became a target for unscrupulous conmen and "advisors" and for corruption. The phosphate ran out and the nest egg was plundered and spent foolishly. Since the nation lacked a long history of private ownership, exchange and fair trade the Nauruan people were terribly vulnerable when it came to managing this kind of money. Now Nauru is bankrupt. The ideals of Paradise did not develop responsibility and wisdom but the realities of trade will I think eventually do that for this lovely Pacific nation.

On a larger scale can you imagine what would happen if everything in Los Angeles was declared to be free? The long lines outside the BMW showroom and the fights to be first in the door to grab a car, the top fashion stores under siege, the quickly emptied supermarket shelves as people wheeled out trolley after trolley of groceries. The strong and those with handguns would seize everything and the weak would get little. It would quickly degenerate into the rule of might. Thus it is very important that everything have a price and that this price be respected by law. This places a wise social constraint on the movement of property between persons. It ensures producers get fair value for their labour and in a just world, that consumers do not pay too much for their products. Even in heaven spiritual things seem to have a spiritual price such as sacrifice or earnest prayer. (Let me quickly add that we do not earn our salvation, the price for that has already been paid with something greater than silver or gold – the precious blood of Jesus.)

We have just seen that exchange without price is an irresponsible concept. But exchange at a price, quickly leads to the concept of trade. And trade can be corrupted and distorted. This appears to have happened even in heaven and led to the fall of Satan.

(Ezekiel 28:1-19 NKJV) The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, {2} "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,' Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god {3} (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you! {4} With your wisdom and your understanding You have gained riches for yourself, And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; {5} By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, And your heart is lifted up because of your riches)," {6} 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god, {7} Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers against you, The most terrible of the nations; And they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, And defile your splendor. {8} They shall throw you down into the Pit, And you shall die the death of the slain In the midst of the seas. {9} "Will you still say before him who slays you, 'I am a god'? But you shall be a man, and not a god, In the hand of him who slays you. {10} You shall die the death of the uncircumcised By the hand of aliens; For I have spoken," says the Lord GOD.'" {11} Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, {12} "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. {13} You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. {14} "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. {15} You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. {16} "By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. {17} "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. {18} "You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. {19} All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever.'" "

Bible scholars tell us that this “prince of Tyre / king of Tyre” lament is a dual prophecy describing both the doom of an earthly king and the fall of Satan. The prince of Tyre is the human king who has become so proud that he has declared himself to be a god. (Ezek 28:1-10) Greater than this prince is a fallen spiritual being who was in Eden and who was even an anointed cherub in heaven. This being is called “the king of Tyre” and is Satan. (Ezek 28:11-19) The indications that more than just a human king is meant by the “king of Tyre” include references to being “in Eden the garden of God” to being “an anointed cherub” and to being a created spiritual being of perfection that dwelt “among the fiery stones” which are the same as the stones in the

breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28:17) and the same as the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20). The prince of Tyre is just a man but is empowered by the spiritual and fallen “king of Tyre” and has a proud, darkened and fallen spirituality. The trading nation and its prince are actually pawns of a deeper and more ominous being. A being that is doomed to become a horror but that will take many with it along the way.

What caused this being of perfection and beauty to become the horror and monstrosity that Satan is and to plunge to its doom of eternal perdition? Lets look at what the “king of Tyre” passage says:

1. **Trading led to a predatory inner nature:** “By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within.”
2. **Which led to outward sin:** And you sinned.
3. **And a loss of holiness and a becoming secular and even profane:** Therefore I cast you out as a profane thing
4. **Pride and elitism:** Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty
5. **Corrupted wisdom:** You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor
6. **And a defiling of sacred places for the sake of trade:** You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading.
7. **Destruction arising from his own evil nature:** Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. {19} All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever.”

I will discuss each of this seven aspects in greater detail below:

Trading led to a predatory inner nature:

The Hebrew word for violence is the Hebrew word “chamac” and here is how Strong’s dictionary renders the word:

2555. *chamac, khaw-mawce'*; from H2554; violence; by implication -. wrong; by metonymy. - unjust gain:-- cruel (-ty), damage, false, injustice, X oppressor, unrighteous, violence (against, done), violent (dealing), wrong..

Thus the violence of trade that Satan was filled with within was unjust, cruel, damaging and oppressive and unrighteous. It is the strong desire to wrong others for commercial gain. It is the nature of the cold, calculating and complete predator. “Chamac” is reflected in the unjust, cruel, cunning and violent nature of many of the metaphors that picture Satan as “the dragon”, “the serpent” or “the wolf”.

Satan’s desire for trade developed a violent and cruel inner nature that was not present originally in him (he was created beautiful, perfect and holy). Satan is described as being created as the very seal of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty, and covered in precious stones. In the end he becomes a “horror”. Something has changed. Trade has made him violent. This violence that got Satan thrown from heaven may well have been murder, for Jesus describes Satan as “ a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

Which led to outward sin:

Whatever the sin was, we know that it caused Satan (probably then called Lucifer, Isaiah 14:12) to fall from heaven. The sinful heart resulted in sinful action and a rebellion so vast that many other angels fell with him (Revelation 12, 2 Peter 2:4). The violent nature of Satan was behind a massive rebellious attempt to be like God that is briefly described in Isaiah 14.

(Isaiah 14:12-15 NKJV) "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! {13} For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; {14} I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' {15} Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Trading success seems to have inspired Satan to stage an attempted coup against the “political power” of Heaven, Him who sits upon the Throne, that is God. Satan and his angels were variously imprisoned and demoted in the process. The details are obscure which is probably not a bad thing. What is clear though is that trading led to cruelty and violence and this violence then led to lawlessness and rebellion, which then led to judgment and inevitable destruction. The physical kingdom of Tyre was made an earthly example of this process and went from being a pre-eminent and luxurious trading nation to a bare rock on which fishermen spread their nets.

And a loss of holiness and a becoming secular and even profane:

“Therefore I cast you out as a profane thing...” (Ezekiel 28:16) God’s judgments are always just, so if Satan was cast out as a profane thing, then he must have been profane. The holy guardian cherub had become unholy and most unfit for heaven. Trade tends to profane things and Paul called it “filthy lucre” (1 Timothy 3:3,8 Titus 1:7) and Jesus calls it “unrighteous Mammon” (Luke 16:9-13). Trade profaned the temple in Jesus’ day and is profaning sectors of the church today. When we look at the New Testament and those who “fell” from high positions of grace such as Judas, Ananias and Sapphira and Demas we find they all fell because money caused them to move from being holy to being profane. Paul picks up this theme in his letter to Timothy:

(1 Timothy 6:9-10 NASB) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. {10} For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

Trade caused Satan to move from being holy to being profane, was the demise of Judas, the death of Ananias and Sapphira and causes many to wander from the faith and pierce themselves with many a pang. Thus it is a major source of “the profane” in our midst.

Pride and elitism:

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty The word for beauty “*yapeh*” denotes a fitness of form and function and a outworking of the original created intention so that cows that are unblemished sleek and fat are “*yapeh*” along with beautiful women and handsome young men. It is “perfect beauty” or “flawless beauty” and the kind that easily leads to vanity as in Satan and later with Absalom, who in some respects could be said to be a “type” of Satan. Satan was covered in precious gems and perfect in beauty and wisdom and this seems to have seduced the other angels to follow him, even today Satan appears to be “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). The corollary for the commercial world is that the riches of trade make people wealthy and “beautiful” and vain and this deep vanity is seductive to others but destructive in the end.

Corrupted wisdom:

You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor (Ezekiel 28:17) This corrupted Satanic wisdom is described in the book of James and I will quote it in three slightly different but well known as accurate translations:

(James 3:14-16 NASB) But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. {15} This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. {16} For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

(James 3:14-16 NKJV) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. {15} This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. {16} For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

(James 3:14-16 NRSV) But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. {15} Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. {16} For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

The wisdom of Satan consists of “looking after number one”. It is described as bitterly envious/jealous, self-seeking/selfishly ambitious, arrogant/boastful, lying against/false to the truth, earthly,

natural/sensual/unspiritual and demonic/devilish and results in confusion/disorder and every evil thing/wickedness of every kind.

This is "corporate wisdom" the wisdom of the person who pursues success at any price. It is the wisdom of selfish ambition and "career above all" and of office politics and ruthless international trade. It is not the wisdom that "comes from above", from God but is the wisdom that has inferior sources being earthly, sensual/natural and demonic in origin. It is worldly wisdom and the wisdom of the Prince of This World – Satan.

Satan chose to be worldly wise rather than heavenly minded because he was chiefly concerned with his own glory and splendor. "*You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.*" (Ezek28:17). When the desire for human glory, corporate glory or national glory becomes paramount then ethics go out the window and pragmatism and earthly wisdom enter in.

Deep down world trade is not just about making a profit. It is about achieving splendor, beauty and a feeling of being amongst the very elite. While money is important, feeling elite and splendid, feeling that all doors open for you, that you are wanted, powerful, invited to the top gatherings and able to call the shots is a deep driving force among the wealthy. The desire for glory and splendor for one's self are a large part of what drives world trade. It is certainly not run to give glory to God or carry out His will. Rather it is run to give glory to the elite and carry out their will. This deep and subtle distortion twists the nature of world trade and injects it with a dark and pragmatic wisdom that eventually results in "disorder and every evil thing" (including, I will argue, world terrorism).

When people decide to frantically pursue their own greed, ambition and self-interest regardless of the welfare of others then disorder quickly sets into that community. A corporate power struggle can tear apart an otherwise good business. A takeover bid can leave many unemployed and corporations that drive competitors out of business pursuing ruthless ambitions cause much grief. Even in churches, when ecclesiastical politics and "hard business decisions" take over an organization or a denomination, then "disorder and every evil thing" seems to invade like storm-troopers. Years of pain often follow such a shift in focus.

World trade, based on earthly wisdom is thus demonic in its reasoning and the very assumptions it is based on and the very foundational practices of global corporate life will create "disorder and every evil thing".

And a defiling of sacred places for the sake of trade: *You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading.* (Ezek 28:18) The word for sanctuaries here is "*miqdash*" and is defined as "a consecrated thing or place, espec. a palace, sanctuary (whether of Jehovah or of idols) or asylum:--chapel, hallowed part, holy place, sanctuary."

Satan seems to have had some holy places in heaven that he administered. Anyway he is accused of defiling them. The besmirching and defiling of the holy is very much part of Satanic activity. In this case it was Satan's trading activity that did the defiling. Nothing is sacred to the purely commercial world of trade and this defiling through trade is seen in areas as diverse as the traders in the temple in Jesus day, to churches become bingo halls, to those trying to enter Jerusalem on the Sabbath in Nehemiah's day, the push for Sunday trading in recent years, the prosperity gospel, the selling on indulgences in the Middle Ages, the trade in so called religious relics and the intrusion of crass commercialism into the gospel preaching of certain televangelists.

In Scripture there are a number of ways a sanctuary or temple can be "defiled". These include the presence of idols (Ezekiel 5:11), physical destruction (Psalms 74:7, 79:1), human sacrifice of children to the pagan god Molech (Leviticus 20:3, Ezekiel 23:37-40), profaning the Sabbath (Ezekiel 23:38), trade (Ezekiel 28:18), having priests who were foreigners, that is not of the covenant people (Ezekiel 44:7) [This would be the equivalent having a non-Christian pastor today.] Antiochus Epiphanes, the type of the Anti-Christ defiled the sanctuary by removing the daily sacrifices and setting up an image of Zeus (Daniel 11:31). Finally the church is defiled by false doctrine not founded on Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-17).

Unjust trade does all this and more. Third World debt repayments are estimated to result in 7 million children a year dying just as surely if they had been fed to Molech. Sanctuaries and holy places are physically destroyed or removed. I was regularly preached at a lovely old church that was physically removed miles out of town because McDonalds wanted the prime corner block and the denominational hierarchy wanted the money. I was also a member of a Baptist church that appointed a pastor who was clearly unconverted because of his good management skills, and because he was recommended by people of money and influence. Shameful idols are erected by some businesses to placate local religious minorities and false doctrine based on Mammon abounds. The idolatrous nature of trade offends Christians, Jews and Muslims. The Sabbath is kept very strictly in some parts of Israel and buses traveling through orthodox Jewish neighborhoods on the Sabbath are stoned. In Islamic countries there is a strong feeling that Western influence is idolatrous and defiling and so the USA, which is the source of so much of this defilement is seen as "The Great Satan". But how does God feel? God is furious and this defilement of holy places was seen as a "multitude of iniquities" that resulted in a fiery doom.

Self-destruction flowing from his evil nature:

(Ezekiel 28:18 NKJV) "You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought **fire from your midst**; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you.

"Iniquity" is a powerful word and is much more than mere "sin" or transgression. The word for iniquity is "*awon*" which is defined as perversity, i.e. (moral) evil:--fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin.

Iniquity is the concept of a peculiarly perverse and twisted sin that accumulates to the point where judgment is inevitable and doom is sure. It is used of sin being like a bulge in a wall that steadily grows until the whole situation becomes unstable and those under the bulge are crushed to death. It is sin that crashes down like a landslide upon the sinners. In this case iniquity results in a self-destructive fire (Ezekiel 28:18 NKJV.... *Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you.* The fire that will devour Satan will somehow be brought "from your midst". In a broader context world trade tends to reach a point where it self-destructs. Irresponsible tech stock booms go bust, junk bonds end up bankrupting those who buy them, and dishonest trade "burns" people. At various points, such as the Great Depression, the burning can become a wildfire. If world trade continues to be unjust it will "go up in smoke" and this indeed will be final fate of the unjust system of world trade that is centered in a city that the Bible calls Babylon.

(Revelation 18:8-18 NKJV) "Therefore her plagues will come in one day; death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. {9} "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, {10} "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'... "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. {15} "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, {16} "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! {17} 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance {18} "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'

The iniquity of world trade will finally reach a point where it is catastrophically and suddenly judged "*in one hour your judgment has come*". This burning of the city will be accompanied by death and mourning and famine. While this will be the eventual judgment of a wicked economic system it does not have to occur just yet. There is still time to repent. The World Trade Center attacks were a prelude, a wake-up call, an

enactment of the destruction of Babylon on a smaller scale. From first attack to final collapse this mini-judgment took one hour or so just like the final judgment will.

Satan's control of world trade will only lead to a system that crashes and burns. If we let an unjust system prevail God will tear it down and we will lose our investment in it. In fact God tells us to flee the system of unjust trade: (Revelation 18:4 NKJV) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

When Lot was heavily invested in Sodom he lost everything. His fortune, from the abundance of Sodom referred to earlier, literally 'went up in flames'. He lost his goods, his wife, his sons-in-law and ended up committing incest with his daughters. Yet Scripture calls Lot a "righteous" man (2 Peter 2:7). He was what we would call a good Christian, with bad investments.

So we see that trade, though originally meant to teach people justice, responsibility and right values, has become a me-first scramble for wealth and privilege among the selfishly ambitious. We see that this perversion of the original purpose of trade was due to the trading activity of Satan and has passed to mankind through Satan being the "ruler of this world" and the "power that is at work in the sons of disobedience"(Ephesians 2:1-4). International trading has now a deep warp in its nature so that it tends to be violent, predatory and cruel without any mercy on the poor or powerless. Trade now results in disorder and every evil thing and leads to the defilement of all that is holy and consequently is destined for a fiery doom.

A Brief Biblical History of Trade

The biblical history of trade is long and inglorious starting with Abraham being sold the cave of Macpelah at an inflated price to bury Sarah (Genesis 23:16) and wending its way through Ishmaelite slave traders (Genesis 37:28) and the centralization of Egypt as Joseph acquired all the lands of Egypt for Pharaoh by exploiting the poor during a severe drought (Genesis 47:20,21). There is the glory of Solomon's trading and the ships arriving every three years bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes and monkeys (1 Kings 10:22). Interestingly Solomon's income was 666 talents of gold! (Kings 10:14). Jehoshaphat tried to emulate this and lost his entire fleet of ships (1 Kings 22:48). The final corrupt days of the Northern Kingdom were characterized by such impatient and wicked trade that Amos prophesied against it in absolute terms:

(Amos 8:4-7 NKJV) Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail, {5} Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, {6} That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals; Even sell the bad wheat?" {7} The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works.

By the time of Isaiah the merchants of Tyre were "princes" and "among the honourable of the earth and wealth from trading was achieving social prominence for its possessors (Isaiah 23). By Nehemiah's day merchants were part of society and making repairs to the walls of Jerusalem. This reflects the fact that merchants and traders do achieve a lot of social good through philanthropic efforts. (Nehemiah 3:31,32) but by the end of the book they are back to trying to trade on the Sabbath and Nehemiah is threatening to lay hands on them! (Nehemiah 13:20). Ezekiel calls Babylon " a land of merchants" with obvious derision (Ezek 16:29, 17:4) and prophesies against the trading activities of Tyre in chapters 27 & 28. The long list of traded wares in chapter 27 shows a worldwide trading nation with a wide assortment of goods from luxury items such as gold, silver and spices to more common items such as saddles and the Greeks traded "human lives and bronze" with Tyre. (Ezek 27:13) The final days of Nineveh were also characterized by numerous merchants, predatory practices and unjust trade as Nahum prophesies the gain would be temporary and all would be lost as the Babylonians would swarm on Nineveh like locusts:

(Nahum 3:16 NKJV) You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away.

The post-exilic prophet Zephaniah predicts that the doom of the merchants will come about shortly before the "great and terrible day of the Lord"

(Zephaniah 1:8-18 NKJV) "...That I will punish the princes and the king's children, And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel. ...Who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. ... For all the merchant people are cut down; All those who handle money are cut off. ...And punish the men Who are settled in complacency, Who say in their heart, 'The LORD will not do good, Nor will He do evil.' {13} Therefore their goods shall become booty, And their houses a desolation; ...The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. {18} Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

In the New Testament Jesus says that the temple has become a "house of merchandise" (John 2:16) and drives out the traders from the sacred place. Yet He is not entirely contemptuous of merchants using their trading ability as a parallel to the building up of spiritual riches and seeking after truth (Matthew 13:45, 25:16). Trade and idolatry are linked especially via the work of the goldsmiths, silversmiths and coppersmiths who made the idols. They were responsible for the riot in Ephesus and for doing Paul and his co-workers "much harm" (Acts 19:24-27, 2 Timothy 4:14). Finally in Revelation 18 the final vast trading empire meets its doom as the world staggers to its inglorious end. So we see that Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, Babylon, and both the Northern and Southern kingdoms were steeped in unjust trade just prior to being finally judged by God and the prior to the final judgment of God unjust trade will fill the entire earth. This should give us pause.

Conclusions For Spiritual Warfare

The battle against the World is a lot bigger than just not wearing lipstick. It's a battle against principalities and powers who control world trade and nations and armies and who are filled with murderous greed. It's a battle against Rome of old, and ancient Babylon and the wickedness in high places. It's a battle that requires a finely honed conscience and the ability to see past publicity and propaganda right to the spiritual heart of world events and to pray and act accordingly.

Christians have to be alert to seduction by worldly wealth and status and the desire to be included among the world's elite. When the crunch comes we do not want to be like Lot's wife longing for Sodom! Rather we should be like Moses :

(Hebrews 11:24-26 NKJV) By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, {25} choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, {26} esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

We are approaching the days of the final and very deceptive spiritual battle. We must be ready to be challenged by imperialistic economic systems and wickedness in high places. We must purify our hearts against the love of money and strengthen ourselves in righteousness and the love of Christ. Here is what the apostle Paul advises:

(1 Timothy 6:6-12 NKJV) Now godliness with contentment is great gain. {7} For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. {8} And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. {9} But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. {10} For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. {11} But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. {12} Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses

Overcoming the Flesh Through The Masterful Spirit-Filled Mind

(some material from my book “Biblical EQ” EQ is “emotional intelligence”)

The Flesh – And The Good That I Wish I Do Not Do....

Christians are a mixture of Christ-like emotions and evil lusts. While we cannot stop the evil lusts arising within us (because of our fallen nature) we can prevent their controlling us completely. The classic verses on this are Galatians 5:16-18

(Galatians 5:16-18 NKJV) I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. {18} But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Christians are capable of victory because of the Holy Spirit within them. They may get angry but they do not murder, they may feel strong lust but they walk away from the temptation to commit adultery. The Spirit can bring the flesh under control so that it does not do all that it wants to do. We stop short. God pulls us back from the brink of moral disaster through the work of the Holy Spirit.

This leaves us with two obvious questions that need to be answered. Firstly – what is the nature of “the flesh”? And secondly “how do non-Christians, without the Holy Spirit, gain any measure of victory over sin?”

The “flesh” is the set of negative impulses that arise from our fallen bodies. Some translations call it the sinful nature but it is not a “nature” as such. It is physical, it is our physical flesh interfering with our quickened spirit and maturing soul. It's what Romans 7 calls “the law of sin in our members”.

Some people doubt that our sin nature is physical and is grounded in our mortal bodies. However it is quite clear that the “flesh nature” will no longer be with us after we die. All sinful impulses will stop when our body dies. While we are in this body we desire to sin. When we leave this body we lose the desire to sin. Therefore the desire to sin is located in the fallen physical body. If you were to shoot a born-again Christian and then a few minutes later go to Heaven and ask if anything was different about his or her nature they would say “all desire to sin is gone, I have left the flesh behind.” In heaven we shall neither sin, nor desire to sin.

When sin dwells in the flesh it programs our physical bodies to react wrongly by inappropriately activating physical appetites like food, sex and comfort and through the corruption of the natural fight or flight response. Thus the flesh is sum of the demanding impulses of the body that has been disconnected from reference to God and formed habits and neural pathways inimical to the Spirit. Neural pathways are like tracks through the grass that are worn by much travelling. They connect stimulus with response and sometimes with the wrong response.

I will illustrate with a brief incident in my own life. Prior to my conversion I was quick-tempered and would pick fights. After it I of course left this behind. Many years later some friends decided to “ambush” me for fun. In a split second I had my fists up before my thinking intervened and I of course put them down. The reaction programmed into me by sin was still there in my neural pathways and was activated by my previously well learned response to fight or flight situations.

The apostle John says that which is “born of God” cannot sin, nor does it desire to do so (1 John 3:9-11). That part of us that is born of God, that is Christ in us, has no desire to sin. However that which is, in the words of the gospels, “born of woman” does sin. The flesh, born of human genetics inherits the Fall. The “new man” part of the born-again Christian is born of heaven, born of the will of God, born from above and does not inherit the Fall. The “new man” is born of God, free from sin and even free from the desire to sin. Paul says this new nature is “enslaved to righteousness”. Thus Christians are a mixture of the Fallen which born of human genetics and the Eternal which is born of God.

The Decent But Natural Man

How then can non-Christians lead decent lives as many of them do? Through the law of God written in their consciences by the common and prevenient grace of God and activated by their will. God places some restraint on human evil through various checks and balances including government, the human conscience, the Law, religious teachings and examples and even though direct communication through dreams and visions, signs and portents such as Abimelech had when he was warned in a dream not to touch Abraham's wife Sarah (Genesis 20:3-7). The non-Christian is given much assistance by God to restrain evil but they do not have the ultimate assistance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The natural, not yet converted man has a conscience from God but is not yet born of God. The not-yet-converted can restrain sin to some extent but they cannot be truly holy in the eternal sense as they lack Christ in them.

The Mind, The Spirit and The Flesh

How then can a Christian have victory over the evil passions that arise within them? By setting our inner nature, our Mind, on the Spirit.

(Romans 8:3-8 NKJV) For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, {4} that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. {5} For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. {6} For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. {7} Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. {8} So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

After the tussle between flesh and spirit in Romans 7 Paul presents the secret of life and peace in chapter 8. The mind, which can be renewed (Romans 12:1,2) can be set on the things of the Spirit and bring life and peace. If it is set on the churning and burning desires of the flesh then there is trouble leading to death. We can choose where to set our consciousness, what to meditate on, what to think about. We are not forced to dwell on sin and negativity. Rather we can seek those things which are above (Colossians 3:1-4) and contemplate that which is beautiful, spiritual, noble and true. (Philippians 4:8).

This training of our consciousness is vitally important. Napoleon Hill puts this well from a secular perspective when he talks of "Your inalienable right to the full and complete control and direction of your own mind to whatever ends you desire." He goes on to say: "Our mind is the only thing we can control. Either we control it, or we relinquish control to other forces, and our minds and our wills become as chips in a puddle of water, being swept one way then another, and never coming to any satisfactory conclusions, easily falling prey to any negative wind that blows."

For the Christian we need to learn we have control of our minds and to forcibly direct them to the ends we desire such as eternal life and peace. If we want a victorious Christian life we must take charge of our minds and they must deliberately be directed on the things of the Spirit. The next section will look at this in some detail.

The Masterful Mind

(Romans 8:4-6 NKJV) that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. {5} For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. {6} For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The decisive factor in Biblical EQ is the Mind of the believer. If it is set on the flesh and we are carnally minded the result is death. If it is set on the Spirit and we are spiritually minded the result is life and peace. Chapter after chapter in this book has demonstrated the truth of those two statements in Romans. The previous chapters have laid the ground-work showing how our emotions flow from our perceptions and our beliefs and

how they are affected by our physiological state. This chapter looks at the decisive act of setting our mind on things above, on the things of the Spirit, on mastery of our life and our emotions. Through the Mind we gain mastery. This chapter is about experiencing that mastery.

Fight, Flight or Mastery

You may have heard of the “fight or flight response” that humans and animals have in response to threat. It does not take high level thinking to engage in the fight or flight response. Even the most unthinking of creatures such as an ant can make the decision whether to avoid an intruder or whether to stand their ground and fight. The fight or flight response is fast, rough, instinctual, and sometimes quite inaccurate. It is a useful instinctive response with high survival value but it is not the stuff of wisdom, ethics, or the Spirit. When societies give in to their instinctive fight or flight responses we see factions, disputes, wars and vendettas breaking out. Survival may seem to depend on the fight or flight response but true civilization depends on taming and mastering it.

Why is the fight or flight response so destructive and if so why do we have it? Why is it almost the exact opposite of being Christian? I suppose initially it was not a bad thing. The fight or flight response was meant to operate in a human being who was connected to God. This connection would have moderated and altered the response. But now it isn't so well connected and its become one part of us that has been most affected by the Fall. Cain was the first person in Scripture who was faced with the task of managing murderous rage (Genesis 4:7) – and he chose to fight instead. His descendant Lamech boasted of murder (Genesis 4:23,24) and by the time of the Flood his descendants had “filled the earth with violence” (Genesis 6:11). Trusting fallen human beings to choose self-mastery rather than fight or flight was a total failure. Eventually Moses came along with the Law which pointed the way to what was right and wrong and gave very reasonable and agreeable limits for human conduct. The Law also failed. Finally God sent His Son and the laws of God were written on our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:16) that we might become spiritual overcomers (Revelation 21:7). This has worked but even so it has been no easy task. Only re-establishing the connection with God has brought any measure of control to the fight-or-flight response.

The problem with the fight-or-flight response in fallen humanity is that it eliminates choice and when you eliminate choice you eliminate all sorts of things like freedom, morality, love and decency. When the fight-or-flight response occurs blood flows to the hands and feet and away from the brain and huge shots of adrenalin and other hormones take over and the fast action control centers of the brain come into play and suddenly you are exploding at people, or running, or fighting. In common parlance your “buttons have been pressed” and you are just reacting at an entirely visceral and instinctual level. This is not a bad thing when you are running away from a charging rhinoceros. Speedy reactions may be a very good thing. However in modern life the provocation that sets off the response may be a cutting remark or a threat to our ego in the office. The feeling of threat is enough to set off the entire chemical cascade that is known as the fight-or-flight response. Road rage involves people reacting to rudeness as if it were the proverbial charging rhinoceros. A minor incident becomes a matter of life and death. The perception of threat and the impact of adrenalin cause us to react without choosing our reactions. Startled people have accidentally shot their family members thinking they were burglars and soldiers have fired on their own troops through the sheer speed and inaccuracy of this response. You cannot be Christ-like and filled with rage and gut-level fight or flight responses. Neither can you be a timid, always retreating wimp soaring into anxiety attacks like a frightened bird at every alarming news item. The fight or flight response removes our ability to make wise, free and balanced moral choices and is definitely not the stuff on which Christian character is built.

[Lest I be misunderstood its not wrong to fight under some circumstances if it is a chosen and wise moral act. At other times its Ok to retreat and avoid certain troublesome situations as long as it is thought through, wise and moral to do so. The great biblical warriors like King David fought battles and won victories but they did so out of deep character not out of flash-pan rage. The military heroes of Scripture like Gideon, David and Jehosaphat were people of mercy and thought and heart and balance. They were not just big bundles of anger walking around looking for a fight and they were not governed by the fight or flight response.]

Mastery

The alternative to the fight or flight response is to achieve mastery of the situation. Jesus always demonstrated mastery of any and every situation He was presented with. He neither fought the soldiers who arrested him or fled them but rather throughout His entire trial demonstrated an amazing degree of personal mastery. At no point in His life did Jesus give in to the adrenalin-filled panic of a fight or flight response. He could have gathered an army but He did not. Perhaps He could have fled hostile Israel and gone to Greece and been welcomed as a philosopher, but He did not. There were times when He avoided Jerusalem because of the hostility and because His time was not yet come yet at no point did He react from instinct alone.

His actions were masterful, strong, wise and spiritual. His Spirit-filled Mind had total mastery over His flesh and His instincts. This gave Him power, poise and a degree of personal authority that seems to have been the main aspect of His personality that people admired and commented on. The following verses are just some of the verses that show how other people saw Jesus as having authority and how Jesus saw His own authority being used to master situations. (Matthew 7:29, 8:9, 21:23-27, 28:18-20, Mark 1:27, Luke 4:32, Luke 9:1, 10:19, John 5:27, 7:17, 12:49, 14:10, 16:13, 17:2)

Jesus was not thrown even by encountering the Devil in person. During the temptation in the wilderness Jesus met the Devil in a face-to-face spiritual encounter that must have been of incredible intensity. The Devil was out to destroy Jesus, he was malice incarnate, and he was beguiling, tempting, and pushing Jesus into a wrong response. Jesus neither fled nor fought. Jesus mastered the situation, resisted the temptations and used His authority to deal with the problem. Jesus mastered the temptation to flee and preserve himself from spiritual harm; He faced the dangers of the Devil. He stood His ground against pure evil. On the other hand Jesus did not launch into an aggressive tirade against Satan. He defeated Satan not through a raw and red-necked stream of spiritual vitriol but through the calm use of God's authority based on God's Word.

This biblical example shows us that even if we think a situation is utterly evil and threatens our health, identity and success (as the wilderness temptations did for Jesus) that we do not need to get upset and become reactionary. Nor do we need to pack our bags and run. We just need to calmly and authoritatively expose that situation to the truth of Scripture and the authority of God. We want to end up moving through life as Jesus moved through Israel and cope with our pressures and threats as he coped with His.

When I speak of mastery I am not speaking of sinless perfection. Mastery is more like a combination of faith, courage, decisiveness and balance. It is having spiritual authority, poise and power in all situations. It asks questions such as: How can we tackle every situation in life as if it were the perfect golf shot? How can we master every threat and every frustration with grace, power and poise? How can we move through a grossly unjust trial without losing our cool? How can we forgive those that nail us to the cross? Of course these reactions are the supreme achievements of a Perfect Life. They are what made Jesus the spotless Lamb of God. While we may not achieve them we can aspire to them and discipline our minds toward them.

Lets move from the cosmic to the comical and consider my attempts at playing golf. As an under-funded missionary I do not own golf clubs or have a golf membership but once every few years I am dragged out onto a golf course by a friend. When the ball lands in the rough, as it often does, I have three possible responses – fight, flight or mastery. I can give up on the shot and pay the penalty – that is the flight response. I can hit wildly with all my might and try and blast it out of there – that is the fight response. Or I can call up my considerable golf prowess, concentrate carefully, keep my eye on the ball, visualize the wonderful trajectory it will take and get it out of there with just the right touch. This is the mastery response and as you may well guess it is the most difficult response and the hardest to perfect. I rarely get it right, but it is the one I wish to practice and reinforce. There is really no other possible choice since the other two responses just lead to failure. Mastery is the hardest choice but it is the only choice that goes anywhere

The Mind

I need to spend a few paragraphs defining what I mean by "Mind" before we go too far and get confused. By the Mind I do not mean various individual thoughts or a set of intellectual abstractions. I mean mind as the entire mental framework of the person. We use the word Mind this way in the phrases "single-minded" or "open-minded". Mind in this sense is an inner state of consciousness that has certain properties. The mind is controllable and can be focused by the believer. Paul asks us to set our mind on various things such as the Spirit, things above, and the pursuit of maturity so the mind is something we can focus on God. [*For those of you who enjoy Greek the phren word family phroneo, phronema and phronesis, phronimos is in view here.*] Thus it is that part of our total consciousness and awareness that we have some control over. It does not include dreams or the sub-conscious. The sub-conscious is part of our mind in a larger sense but not part of it in this narrow sense we are using it here because we have no real control over it and cannot discipline it or focus it. Neither is mind in this sense the scattered thoughts that drift in and out of a person who is daydreaming or watching TV. Of such people we sometimes say "their mind was switched off when they watched the movie". Their inner consciousness was inactive. The mind is what thinks when you do some real thinking. The mind is where you receive and mull over wisdom and where you make real choices about your actions. That's your mind. It is that part of your consciousness that you can control and exert and which bears a close relationship to the "real you".

The mind in the sense of the *phren* word family generally means the wisdom and understanding especially of the righteous (Luke 1:17, Ephesians 1:8). This mind be set on various things. When Jesus rebuked Peter he said he was "not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33), the legalistic Romans nit-picking about food and drink were literally "rules-minded" in the Greek (Romans 14:6). The mind can be set on the flesh or the Spirit (Romans 8:5,6) and things above (Colossians 3:2) or on earthly things (Philippians 2:19) which caused Paul to weep. Due to the renewing and infilling of the Holy Spirit we can even have "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:14-16) and when we are humble servants we have a mind like Christ's (Philippians 2:5). On the other hand we can have a childish mind (1 Corinthians 13:11, 14:20) Unity of mind is important and Christians are to be one-minded and like-minded. (Romans 12:16, 15:5, 2 Corinthians 13:11) This word family can also mean the careful, prudent mind, that which thinks of others, the mindful and thoughtful person (Philippians 1:7, 4:10) though the word "mind" is rarely used in English translations of this aspect.

Thus it is clear from the New Testament that the sort of mind we end up with is entirely our choice. We can focus or mind on God's interests or man's interests, the Spirit or the flesh, the things above or earthly things. We can choose to be humble, like-minded, unified and thoughtful of others or we can choose to be puffed up, childish, contentious, worldly and carnal.

Mastery and The Mind

Mastery is a product of the focused and disciplined mind bringing the whole person into submission to an over-riding ethic or ethos. Throughout history everyone from Zen monks to Spartan warriors and corporate traders have discovered this. People have become masterful human beings by disciplining themselves in all sorts of pursuits from archery to fencing to philosophy. That is why competitive sports, while trivial in themselves, have shaped many a person for the better. The somersaults of a champion gymnast are in themselves quite pointless. They don't feed the hungry or make any great philosophical point. Its not doing somersaults that makes the gymnast great but the discipline he or she puts in. The sport builds mastery and mental strength into the gymnast so that when the days of gymnastics are over the character remains. Another point, the focus must be external to self. The gymnast does not find self-mastery by focusing on self-mastery. He or she finds self-mastery by focusing on somersaults.

The mind is the only part of our consciousness that we can focus and direct therefore it is the only part of us that can give us mastery. A million dollars will not give you personal mastery. People who win the lottery often end up poor because of their lack of personal mastery. The money has not made them masterful. A strong body will not give you mastery except of certain physical skills. Athletes can be enslaved to alcohol or drugs.

Education will not give you personal mastery, there are many well educated people who are small-minded and weak-willed. Willpower won't give you mastery as the will can simply become stubborn and inflexible unable to adapt to changing situations and thus lead to inevitable defeat. Even religion won't give you mastery. Many people are enslaved by cults, caught up in bondage to religious guilt or overtaken by idolatry and superstition. Only the adaptable, flexible, trained, focused and disciplined mind can bring mastery.

Please be clear about this, I am not advocating mentalist philosophies, mind science, Christian Science, or think and grow rich kinds of mental mastery. They are half-truths. The mind is not a terribly significant force in itself. The mind does not have the ability to create heaven or hell as Blake thought. God creates Heaven and Hell. Reality is His creation, not ours. The mind does not create the world but it does enable us to move through it with poise and power. The mind is not God. The mind works best when it is set on God. In biblical terms personal and emotional mastery is a product of the mind set on God and imbued with His Word and authority. The unaided mind operating alone by itself cannot produce mastery of the kind we see in the life of Jesus Christ. For that kind of mastery we need more than positive thinking. We need a direct connection to God and the mind must be resolutely set on God, on the Spirit, on things above, on the Kingdom, and the righteousness thereof.

So we see that we are faced with three universal truths: Firstly that personal mastery is the only wise option. Secondly that such mastery is solely a product of the mind. Thirdly that the mind becomes masterful as it is disciplined and focused on something outside itself. This book maintains that the highest degree of mastery can only be attained when the 'something outside itself' is God. You can achieve a sense of mastery by focusing your mind on fencing or gymnastics or horse-riding but you won't end up like Jesus just by focusing on those things. The mind must be directed onto Christ. That is its proper place.

Directing The Christian Mind

This directing of the mind is a forceful and decisive activity. It is hard to put into words. It is not concentrating on Christ, neither is it speculating about Christ or studying or daydreaming about Christ. It is not even thinking about Jesus as such. It is not an internal, reflective or meditative process. It's similar to standing outside yourself and directing yourself onto Christ. Its like standing at the top of a high-dive tower and looking down and plunging in with total commitment. It's choosing where your life energies will be focused and your mental processes directed. It's like going outside yourself but towards Christ at the same time. I suppose you could call it faith, or at least faith is very much involved in it. I am stuck for an analogy. It's a little like those missiles that lock onto their target or a cat focused on a mouse. The whole of the mind is fixed on Christ and directs the total life energies of the believer in that direction. As this focus is attained everything else is entrained, the emotions, the will and the responses. Just as someone absorbed in a video game entrains all their concentration, emotions and will into the game so a Christian absorbed in Christ with their mind set on the Spirit inevitably brings their whole life into conformity with Jesus.

It may not be immediately obvious but when we direct our mind to a purpose it means that we commit ourselves to the rules and techniques that the particular purpose requires. For instance in writing this book I must follow the rules of the English language. I am hardly conscious of that because I have internalized many of the rules. Now and then the spell-checker or grammar checker on this computer alerts me to where I am going wrong. Then I correct it. That is part of writing, part of the project, and part of being focused on writing a book. Following the rules of English grammar is not bad or awful. It's not a restriction on my freedom or a legalism or a lack of grace. It's just required. Mastery means sticking to the rules. Similarly, following Jesus has rules. Submission to the commandments of Jesus Christ is not optional if we are to stay focused on Christ and know life and peace. Obeying these commandments is not the whole of the Christian life but they are part of the discipline of the Christian life. They make it flow and if you are to have mastery in the Christian life you must decide to obey the rules. You cannot just make up the spiritual life as you go along any more than you can decide to reinvent English grammar every time you write.

Deciding to totally set your mind on Christ and achieve total life mastery is the very hardest thing you will ever do. But what are the alternatives? To potter along lamely is not much of a life. To refuse it totally is to go into eternal darkness. But the effort seems tremendous, the focus too narrow and the rules too hard. The focus must be kept and we are unruly. We are prone to distraction. We are far too easy on ourselves. We don't want to get up and practice. We want heaven from our armchairs. So we make a commitment to Christ, then that fades, then another one, then a spiritual breakthrough, and then a slack patch. We are all over the place. Our minds are set on ourselves, or on our finances, or on the opinions of the Christian community or on the success of our ministry. We find easier goals and substitute foci. We become anxious, stressed, harried and spiritually weak. We need to come to a point of final decision where we look at the mess, pull ourselves together and decide with all that is within us to focus ourselves totally on Christ alone and pursue single-minded, focused, disciplined mastery.

I will tell a brief, but to my mind tragic, story. I went to a fairly large seminary in Australia of around 120 students and we would have chapel every morning where two or three students would testify. One day my testimony went like this "I used to get angry when people talked about having a personal relationship with God. I knew I was saved, I knew I loved God but He was distant from me, not at all close until just recently when I broke through. Now I can say I have a real and personal relationship with God." Because I went into seminary shortly after my conversion I thought I was the only person in the seminary with that particular problem. At morning tea I was besieged with people asking me how I had made that breakthrough. These students were pastors and preaching on having a personal relationship with God while they had not got one themselves. I said the same thing to every person "I just made God absolutely number one, more important than money, reputation, everything. I just decided to stake everything on Him". They went "Oh.." and the look on their faces said "That's too hard." People are drifting around in ministry without a real and solid connection to God because the cost of staking everything on God is too high. You must come to that decision. The Christian life is unlivable without it. You cannot dabble in the eternal. You must commit totally to it and direct your mind to it.

Prerequisites For Self-Mastery

The absolute prerequisites of spiritual progress are that you are born-again with a new nature from God, that you have the filling of the Holy Spirit and that you are single-mindedly devoted to God in obedience to His word. Without these three things you do not stand a chance. Unless you are born-again you do not have a new nature. Without the new nature it's an impossible job. If you are not Spirit-filled and led by the Spirit in your daily life then you will not have power over the flesh (see Galatians 5:16-18) and you will struggle continually and lose continually. If you are not single-minded you will be double-minded and double-minded people receive nothing from the Lord (James 1:5-8). You will be left wallowing in your doubt and indecision. These three things are the basics. Before I go on to talk about techniques in self-mastery you must have these three things in your life or be prepared to have these three things in your life as soon as possible.

Practical Techniques For Emotional Self-Mastery

Its fine to talk about the need for a personal relationship with God and having one's mind set on things above but how will that keep someone from exploding next time someone cuts them off on the highway?

There are thus two levels to emotional self-mastery. Firstly we must set up the foundations of the new self and the God-focused mind. That renews our connection with God and sets up some spiritual lines of control over the fight or flight response. Then we must learn the practical details of responding to life intelligently and wisely.

- Pay attention to your physical state. If you realize that your fists are clenched and your neck is rigid and you are physically tensed up and alerted for danger then try to undo those physical states. Unclench your fists, rub your neck, relax your posture. The fight or flight response is partly a physical response and as we undo its physical correlates it will lose much of its power. Perhaps try and relax or use deep breathing if you are tense, guarded or explosive.
- Be aware of the magnitude of your emotional responses and the quick "zoom" to anger or anxiety that the fight or flight response produces. Learn to recognize when you are zooming to disaster and practice keeping a lid on it.
- Take time to think. Use your God-given right to choose your response. Do not just respond on auto-pilot. Once you stop and think you are far more likely to choose a good and much more optimal solution.
- Disengage. If you have started to move into attack mode pull back the troops! Go for a walk, cool down. Have a pray about it.
- If you are going into a situation that you know aggravates you (such as dealing with an annoying person) try to make a conscious decision about how you are going to react in that situation. Then rehearse your balanced and biblical reaction over and over in your mind. Perhaps seven times or seventy times seven? (see Matthew 18) Train yourself mentally to react rightly just like professional golfers 'see the ball going in the hole' even before they make the shot. Use mental rehearsal to disarm potential conflict situations.
- In the converse of this - don't mentally rehearse the wrong response. Don't see in your mind's eye a picture of yourself strangling the boss of the phone company. It may be very satisfying but it is not helpful. It is educating yourself in the wrong direction.
- Use the 'what would Jesus do?' question as a quick reference.
- Question your perceptions of threat. Is this really a life or death issue? Am I getting tensed up over nothing? What does it say about me if I am so easily riled? Or on the flight response: Is it really that bad? Is the world going to end over this? Is this fear, anxiety and emotional reactivity helping me? Has running away from things helped or hindered my life?
- Learn correct responses by modeling mature Christians and by studying the heroes of the faith.
- Make a personal commitment to grow in this area.
- Have some friends keep you accountable for your reactions and encourage you to maturity.
- Enjoy the feeling of grace rather than the feeling of explosive emotional power.
- Learn to find your emotional center and to live from it and to know when it is in balance and out of balance. This is quite difficult for many people.
- Some people will push you wanting you to explode so they can take advantage of your immature reaction. Be alert to this and deliberately react the opposite way they are pushing you. (1 Corinthians 4:12) For instance when they revile you greet them with a blessing. (1 Peter 2:23 NKJV) who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;
- Remember that when you react rightly to unjust treatment that "great is your reward in heaven". So rejoice and give yourself a pat on the back when you keep your cool. Positive reinforcement for good behavior. (Matthew 5:11)

- Do not return evil for evil. (Romans 12:17) Keep a lid on your desire to retaliate. Leave retaliation to the Lord. (Romans 12:19) If we return a blessing instead we will inherit blessing. . (1 Peter 3:9).
- If people rip you off and insult you don't escalate it into a life or death struggle over honor and pride. This is what Jesus means when He says "do not resist him who is evil". (He does not mean that the police should not arrest robbers!) Rather it means "don't let the evil person push you into a full-scale, adrenalin packed, fight or flight response". Deny the natural man's urge to strike back. If he slaps you, turn the other cheek, if he takes your cloak, let him, if he makes you walk a mile, go two. If he says "give me money" let him have some. (Matthew 5:38-42). Deny your reactivity and show you are made of different stuff.
- Don't let unkind, ungrateful, stingy, mean or small-minded people get to you. God is merciful to the unkind and ungrateful and we have a great reward in heaven when we do likewise. (Luke 6:35) Brush their meanness to one side without taking it too personally and treat them as well as you can with reasonable safety (because some are quite toxic).
- Do not get your ego hooked into the game of "Christian comparisons", my church is bigger than your church etc. This only leads to fuming and fighting.
- Do not let theology push you into fight or flight mode. For instance "I won't study the Second Coming its too contentious" (flight response) or "You are a heretic and I will torch you verbally since the law won't allow me to burn you at the stake" (fight response). The mastery response is to learn about the Second Coming and other aspects of theology and grow in God and only debate under circumstances that are harmless to the hearers (such as with good friends in the ministry) unless of course there is an urgent apologetic reason. Even then your speech should be seasoned with salt.

Reacting To New And Powerful Spiritual Experiences

New and powerful spiritual experiences often activate the fight or flight response. The result is over-reaction, division, fear and anxiety. I hope you can see that there is no place for angry, reactionary responses or panic stricken flight from strong emotions or unusual spiritual experiences. Flapping around wildly is not the correct response. Rather we need to analyze that emotion or experience in the light of Scripture holding to what is good and rebuking that which is evil. Discernment is a mastery response not a fight or flight response.

Because we are creatures and not the Creator we have a certain inbuilt dread and fear of the numinous. The old writers talk of "the dread of God". The powerful and the spiritual evoke emotional reactions within us and those reactions are often immature. We become reactive and fearful unable to cope with emotions and experiences that are unfamiliar to us. Instead, when evaluating a new teaching or experience we should say "I'm a mature person with a good brain and I know the Scriptures fairly well, I'll just sit back and watch, I'll hold to the good bits I find here and reject the junk, I don't have to fear what's going on. I'll pray for protection and discernment, stay within my boundaries and work it out as I go along."

We can need to accept that we are complex creatures with complex emotions in a complex world created by a God far beyond our comprehension and that sometimes we will encounter things that rattle and disturb us. We need to accept the experience "as is" then evaluate it in the light of Scripture, holding to the good and discarding what is of evil.

Avoiding a black and white stance where its got to be "all of God" or "all of the Devil" is important. People who take black and white stances lump people into one category or the other and thus have very blunted discernment. This leads often to damaging evaluations and serious mistakes in judgment. Jesus never named an opponent or launched a personal attack against an individual Rather in every debate He found the good (*do what the Pharisees tell you*) and dismissed the evil (*but do not do as they do*). See Matthew 23:2,3

Lets apply this. Suppose you hear a sermon that is in major error what should you do? Leave the church and never return (flight) or talk to everyone indignantly and start a church split (fight) or seek a peaceful but

powerful solution (mastery)? The person with a good biblical EQ would work out carefully what was incorrect and then talk it over with their pastor and if he or she did not respond would take the matter to other responsible leaders in the church in a peaceful and caring fashion.

To give a further teaching example how should we react to a false teacher like Bishop John Spong? A wise approach is to write against the wrong doctrine without attacking the person. We can defend the truth and expose the error without engaging in personal attacks or feeling overwhelmed by heresy. The emotionally competent Christian should never fight (do not resist him who is evil) nor should we flee (when you have done all, stand) rather we should demonstrate courage, self-mastery, integrity, power and competence when various challenging doctrinal situations arise.

The Problem Or The Solution

Fear looks for the problem but faith looks for the solution. Fear generates the fight or flight response but faith generates intelligent thinking and personal mastery. In this section I want to talk about being “solution-focused” as an alternative to being “problem-focused” and as a way out of the fight or flight spiral and as a huge step towards personal mastery.

I first came across this concept in the work of William Hudson O’Hanlon and Michele Weiner-Davis in their book “In Search of Solutions” which looks at a new approach to brief family therapy. It’s a brilliant book and I highly recommend it. It has revolutionized my clinical practice. However I have as usual sought to go a ‘bit deeper” and seek its application to the Christian life and it is my conclusions, based on reflecting on their work, that I will present here.

Their concept is that instead of trying to analyze the problem down to its last detail, we should instead search for the solution. A youth in trouble with the police was brought to one of them for counseling. So instead of asking “why do you break the law” they asked “when don’t you get into trouble?”. The youth replied “when I play football”. How often can you possibly play football the counselor replied? Soon the youth was playing football and other sports in his every spare moment. He was not getting into trouble any more because the time that has been given to doing bad things was now given to doing harmless things. They found a solution. In just two sessions of counseling his delinquent behavior was reversed. But if the therapists had taken the “find the problem” route they would still be analyzing his childhood and he would still be in trouble with the police. The basic concepts are:

- Just find a solution. Don’t ask why the stream is flooding or sit around analyzing the water quality – just find the bridge and walk across.
- Avoid the paralysis of analysis. If you puncture the tire on your car with a nail don’t analyze the nail, change the tire.
- Don’t see problems everywhere. Learn to see solutions everywhere.
- Big problems sometimes have really simple solutions. Scurvy was a huge problem among sailors for centuries and the British Admiralty refused to believe that fresh fruit was the solution saying “such a large problem cannot have such a simple solution”. It took the death of one third of the British navy from scurvy in one year and the urging of Captain James Cook to get the Admiralty to see that big problems sometimes have easy solutions.
- If you do what you have always done you will get what you have always got.
- Ask what is working and do more of it. Discover the positive and reinforce it.
- If it’s not working stop doing it. If its futile, its futile.
- Don’t fix the blame – fix the problem.
- Forget about reacting to the problem and just start searching for the solution.

The person who is chronically poor and unable to pay their bills does not need to ask: “Why am I poor and unable to pay my bills”. That will just lead to them blaming themselves, their wife, their parents, the government, their employer and God. They do need to find a solution and ask the questions: “How can I best

bring my finances under control? How can I make myself wealthier? How can I solve this financial mess?" The solution focused approach will work better and faster than all problem-focused analysis of their poverty.

When we become problem-focused we start finding people to blame and enemies to accuse or we get wound up over the size of the problem. Basically we soon end up in fight or flight mode. When we start searching for solutions we start thinking, we start using our mind, we start praying, we start digging into the Scriptures, we ask for wisdom, we tally our resources and we move forward step by step in faith believing that God has a solution. In other words we start marshalling our resources towards mastery.

Jesus had an amazingly solution-focused approach to life. There was always a solution. There were no "problems" for God. In the gospels Jesus says "nothing is impossible with God" or "all things are possible with God" a total of nine times. Jesus finds solutions for blind people, lepers, demon-possessed Legion, Lazarus in the grave, five thousand hungry listeners and a boat full of disciples on a stormy sea. Whatever the problem there was always a solution and the solution always gave glory to God. The faith of Jesus searched for, found and activated solutions.

Jesus never gave a long-winded analysis of things when the disciples asked "Why". In John chapter nine when they asked "why was this man born blind, who sinned, him or his parents" He cut them short. The analysis was not needed and not helpful. What was needed was a solution that would give glory to God. So Jesus healed the blind man. Jesus did not teach His disciples to analyze problems and write treatises on them. He taught them how to provide solutions by healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers and preaching the Kingdom of God. (See Luke chapters 9 & 10).

Obviously a fairly basic level of analysis is needed. You do need to identify if the person is blind or lame or demon-possessed so you can know what to do. But you don't stop right there with the analysis. You move from the analysis, by faith, to the solution. This is where mastery comes in. To move through life with mastery is to be able to see the solutions in every situation and to implement them to the glory of God. This requires a changed mindset. Instead of a fearful, helpless, analyzing, quarreling and useless mind we need one that is bold, and confident and faith-filled and solution-seeking and this can only come through the power of the Holy Spirit as the mind is fixed on God.

Conclusion

We are to move away from the visceral and self-defeating reactions of the fight or flight response to the noble, practical, solution-focused and faith-filled responses of the sanctified believer. The instrument for doing this is the mind. The mind is the only part of our consciousness that we can focus and deploy. We can use it to stop automatic responses and to master our emotions. We can focus it on God and things above and be connected to His eternal power. We can use it to search for positive faith-filled solutions to pressing needs so as to give glory to God. The disciplined, focused mind is the only instrument we have to bring us out of our messy emotions and into life and peace. Mastery is the only wise alternative and mastery comes from the mind and the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

What You Believe Is What You Receive

(Matthew 9:29 NKJV) Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

(Matthew 15:28 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

(Mark 5:34 NKJV) And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

(Mark 10:52 NKJV) Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

(Matthew 21:22 NKJV) "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

(Mark 11:24 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Faith is more than doctrine or emotion and slightly more than just a rather general "trust". Generally biblical faith envisages a specific outcome. A woman wants her daughter healed, a blind man wants to receive his sight, a father wants his epileptic son delivered. Jesus did not rebuke His disciples with "O ye of little faith" for a general lack of trust or affection towards Him or for disbelieving in His rather obvious existence! He rebuked them for not believing in His ability in real concrete situations such as providing daily needs or walking on water. (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8 Luke 12:28)

Faith is your personal ability to trust yourself to God as Creator and trust His ordering of the Universe and his ability to deliver specific results in crisis situations. People who lack this kind of faith in God's ability often end up with two "gods". One, the "high god" is a god of theology, remote, grand, doctrinal, perfect. The other is the practical god of daily life that is turned to for luck in business and for healing. In the West we have a highly theological Christian God and a reliance on technology and science in daily life. In the Philippines there is the high God of the Church and the practical gods of the shrines and good luck charms.

Thus true Christian faith trusts Jesus for healing, deliverance, blessing and success as well as believing in Him as the one "through whom all things were made" (Colossians 1:15-20, John 1:1-3). True faith is giving up reliance on charms luck, or ourselves and casting our trust on Jesus Christ and His power to help us.

This sort of faith has a definite specific end in view expressed as "whatever things" – a concrete list of real items. And we are to believe that we have received them. We are to be so sure of our personal covenant with Jesus Christ, and so sure of His capacity, that we know we will receive our request.

This is illustrated in the faith of the centurion... (Matthew 8:7-10 NKJV) {7} And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." {8} The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. {9} "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." {10} When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

If we doubt, we receive nothing (James 1:5-8 NKJV) but for the person of faith "nothing is impossible" (Matthew 17:20) and indeed for those who believe all things become possible (Mark 9:23). Thus a key part of our spiritual warfare is maintaining our faith in God's capacity to provide, protect and bless and to remain free from doubt concerning His promises. Doubt makes us easy prey for the Devil but the development of a resounding and practical faith in God in all the situations of life makes us movers of mountains and "more than conquerors".

Standing On The Promises Of God

Our sure spiritual footing is “the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:10-18) and it is our confidence in the good news that God has announced in Christ that makes us strong and stable Christians. When we can say “*That is God’s wonderful promise in Christ and I believe it and personally appropriate it*” then we become strong spiritual warriors. For instance I might read:

(Romans 8:31-32 NKJV) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? {32} He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

From this I can directly conclude that: a) God is for me b) He stops all opposition so none can be against me. c) God has delivered up His Son “for us all” which includes me. d) With His Son, He will give me all things. e) He will give these things freely.

So when faced with difficulties in life I can know that those difficulties have not come because God is against me. Rather He is for me and will freely give me the solution to the difficulty so that His Son may be glorified. I can also know that God is not stingy and is not at all interested in denying me good things. He is loving, generous and kind beyond all my human definitions of love, generosity and kindness.

When we grasp these truths we then need to say to ourselves “*That is God’s wonderful promise in Christ and I believe it and personally appropriate it*”. We need to underline it in our bibles write it down, say it out loud and make it part of what we believe about God in the practical details of Christian life.

True Christian faith is the certain and direct believing of what God has said in Christ.

Unbelief is to directly deny what God has said in Christ.

Doubt is when we are uncertain about what God has said or whether it applies to us.

Ignorance is when we have no knowledge or understanding of what God has said.

Presumption and folly are when we believe God has promised something, when in fact God has not said it at all.

In his Revival Lectures the great revivalist Charles Finney said the promises of God can be apprehended and applied by faith in five ways:

1. As direct clear **promises** in Scripture to us e.g. Romans 8:28
2. As **general principles** of Scripture gained from studying a number of verses. These often have conditions. If X then Y. You must fulfill X to see Y happen (Psalm 103:17,18)
3. As **particular blessings** whose time has arrived and which God stirs us up to ask for and what Jesus calls “signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3)
4. As Holy Spirit **promptings** and leadings. (Matthew 4;1, Acts 13:2, 15:28 Romans 8:14)
5. As **prophetic declarations** about a certain matter e.g. Daniel seeing the prophecy of Jeremiah was about to be fulfilled so he went into prayer and fasting in faith for it to come about (Daniel 9:1,2)

The Korean pastor Paul Yonggi-Cho has a wonderful book called *The Fourth Dimension*, where he says the spiritual realm is like a fourth dimension that encompasses and is greater than the physical three dimensions. He tells many stories about answers to believing prayer. At the end of the book Pastor Cho says that he knows when he has the required faith when the problem that seemed as “big as a mountain” suddenly shrinks so it is like a small peanut in the palm of his hand and he “knows he has the thing he has asked for”. This is a good illustration of how faith works in real life. We see the problem “as big as a mountain” and we go to God’s word and find a promise that applies to it. We then claim this promise, praying it through and studying it until it slowly sinks into our minds and hearts, praying over it until it becomes crystal clear and the anxiety vanishes and we know in our spirit that God has heard us.

(1 John 5:14-15 NKJV) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

So when we enter into spiritual warfare remember the four P’s – problem, promise, prayer, peanuts!
(When the problem becomes as small as a peanut!).

Deliverance Ministry

Deliverance ministry includes the exorcism of personal demons, and the cleansing of houses and well as the breaking of curses, hexes and spells covered earlier.

The person entering into deliverance ministry on an on-going basis must be a born-again Christian who has experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and who has a good understanding of the nature of the spiritual realms. They should also be free from major personal sin and anything that grieves the Holy Spirit. Much of what is needed (such as authority) is covered in earlier sections of this manual.

1. Deliverance cannot be done against the will of the person. In the gospels deliverance of adults was only done on those who came to Jesus requesting it. Children were delivered at the request of their parents.
2. The foundation of deliverance is legal authority. Knowledge and use of the legal authority we have in Christ, combined with authority given to us in by consent in the life of the person combined with authority gained through repentance and confession and breaking with sin which remove the demon's right to stay.
3. Along with legal authority there needs to be faith that the deliverance is possible and there also may need to be prayer and fasting beforehand. (Matthew 15:17-21)
4. Things that bring curses and help the habitation of demons must be dealt with. Things associated with that person's sin such as: Magic items, Charms, "anting-anting", pornography, illicit sex, drugs, weapons (if used for crime), astrology books, books of cults or Satanic religions, potions, magic necklaces and handkerchiefs, sacrificial tables, and knives, totem poles, instruments used in demon worship and idolatry, images of saints, pictures used in worship of foreign gods, idols, etc must be destroyed and preferably burned (Deut 7:25,26 Acts 19;19).
5. It is often useful to have a period of personal repentance and cleansing. I give people a card with the following prayer of cleansing and deliverance written on it with instructions to pray it twice a day for maybe a fortnight before the deliverance session. Some people become delivered by themselves, just using this prayer.
6. A deliverance session should generally involve at least two prayer warriors as well as the person being delivered and all involved should be in personal unity. (Matthew 18:19,20)
7. The sin that gives authority to the demons presence can be dealt with by breaking with sin, confession and forgiveness of sin, forgiveness of others and restitution and blessing of others.
8. There needs to be a complete renunciation of all association with Satan, magic and idolatry including Catholic saints and icons.
9. Unforgiveness, inner cursing, lying, deceitfulness, treachery, bitterness, violence and rage are attitudes that grieve the Spirit and create demonic strongholds. (Ephesians 4:25-32)
10. Deviant and illicit sex, homosexuality and effeminacy along with theft, dishonesty and corruption also need to be confessed and renounced.
11. Demons need to be firmly and authoritatively rebuked in the name of Jesus and told to leave. They should be banned from speaking, and from being a nuisance or causing harm.
12. Curses and afflictions should be broken and the person restored and blessed in the name of the Lord. Their body, where the demons dwelt, should be consecrated to the Lord Jesus Christ as a living sacrifice and there should be prayer for the mind to be renewed and enlightened and the banishing of all confusion, doubt and despair.
13. The blessings in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3) and of Abraham (Galatians 3:6,9, 14,29) should be claimed according to the precious and powerful promises of God.(2 Peter 1:2-11)
14. The person should claim any needed healing of body, mind and spirit and "destroy the works of the Devil" (1 John 3:8) – such as illness, poverty, afflictions, mental illness, curses etc in their life.
15. There should be praise and thanksgiving after the deliverance as is appropriate and honoring to God. (Philippians 4:6,7)

A Prayer For Spiritual Cleansing And Deliverance

I confess and renounce the sins of my parents and ancestors (list them)

I renounce all the works of the Devil (including magic, drugs, pornography and major sin)

I ask God to forgive me for all these things from God and I claim the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I also forgive all those who have sinned against me and I bless them in the name of the Lord.

I claim the authority I have in Christ over the powers and principalities in the heavenly realms and all the forces of darkness.

I agree that Christ has become a curse for me on the cross, that all my curses are taken by Him and under His blood and that He has chosen to bless me with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. Therefore I break all curses over my life in Jesus name.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God, I command Satan and all his demons to leave me now, without speaking and without disturbance or causing harm and to go to the place appointed for them by God.

I bind the demons from entering any other person.

I give all the ground in my life that was given to Satan and his demons to be under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I consecrate my body as a living sacrifice to God.

I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me completely with his love and power and to renew my mind.

I claim all the blessings I have in Christ including the blessings of Abraham and ask for blessings to overcome the damage done by the demons in my life and to recover the years the locusts have eaten.

I claim healing of body, mind, soul and spirit and full recovery from any illnesses, torments, afflictions or poverty caused by Satan.

I put on the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18 and claim the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I thank and praise the Lord Jesus Christ for His mighty work in my life.

In Jesus name Amen.

(Exodus 20:5, 34:7,, 2 Corinthians 4:2, Matthew 6:12-15, Luke 6:28, Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:7-10, Ephesians 2:6, 1:20, Galatians 3:10—14, Ephesians 1:3, Mark 5, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 3:6,9,14,29, Joel 2:25, James 5:14-16, Ephesians 6:10-18, Mark 11:20-24, Philippians 4:6,7)

The above prayer undermines the authority of the demons to have any ground in the person, casts them out, binds them, and then fixes the damage they may have caused.

It only takes about five minutes to pray and should be prayed twice a day for about a fortnight or until the person senses that they have come clear. It is wise to pray it with a pastor or elder present for the first couple of times.

It should be accompanied by the destruction of all items associated with the occult, magic drugs, false doctrine, pornography or other gross sin.

Confession should be specific and detailed but not overly repeated. Sometimes acts of restitution may be necessary.

The two weeks is just how long it takes most people to remember things and deal with them one by one.

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON MENTAL ILLNESS- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEMONS, EXORCISM, AND RELIGIOUS IDEATION

By John Edmiston (given as an in-service to psychiatrists at Townsville General hospital)

The idea of mental illness as demon possession is still very common among certain Christian circles, on the other hand man's spiritual nature and the power of occult forces are often taboo in "serious" medical discussion. This address is a pastoral perspective to a medical community - I hope we can understand one another's language and tolerate one another's idiosyncrasies.

GOOD WRITERS that may help with an understanding of spiritual perspectives - Rev. Dr. Martin Israel (Lecturer in Pathology, Royal College of Surgeons) and author of *Summons to Life, Precarious Living, The Pain That Heals, Smouldering Fire and The Spirit of Counsel*. Dr. Paul Tournier Swiss-based physician and counsellor author of *The Meaning of Persons, The Strong and The Weak, Guilt and Grace, A Place for You, Marriage Difficulties*, et. al. and a leading exponent of the "medicine of the person" movement. In North America Dr. John White -Christian Psychiatrist -author of *The Fight, Eros Defiled, The Shattered Mirror* et.al. On the Australian scene Dr. William Wilkie - Christian psychiatrist author of *Understanding Psychiatry, Understanding Stress Breakdown* and Dr. Kath Donovan *Growing Through Stress* present credible combinations of Christian insight and medical practice.

My aim is not to get you all believing in God but for you to commit yourself to becoming familiar with the basic Biblical narratives so that you can speak to a person with religious delusions in meaningful terms. It is by entering their world that healing can most compassionately be effected.

There are 4. CATEGORIES (according to the Rev. Dr. Martin Israel). These categories represent a reasonable synthesis of the medical and Christian models and acknowledge the discoveries of psychoanalysis.

(i) God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) - effect on life beneficial, guidance integrates the personality and restores harmony to relationships.

(ii) Discarnate Entities - guidance via automatic handwriting and precognitive shafts of information. Guidance is generally of an indifferent nature. Tends towards obsessiveness. Discarnate entities use split-off portions of the person's psyche. According to Israel such entities are not so much evil as misdirected. Of no spiritual profit. Do not lead to a true faith in God but are moralistic.

(iii) Split-off portions of the personality. Often malicious. Dictatorial. tries to govern the person with threats. May claim a god-like authority. The person feels impelled to follow the message received. Destructive of relationships and personal integration. Do not have separate personalities or their own voice/languages.

(iv) Demons. Dictatorial, cruel, frankly malicious, invade from the psychic realm (this realm is perhaps akin to the collective unconscious described by Jung). chiefly enter as the result of overt occult activity or gross sexual promiscuity. extremely destructive to the personality and relationships. Do not respond to normal counselling.

HELPFUL BIBLE PASSAGES

The Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness - Mark 1:12,13, Matthew 4:1ff, Luke 4:1 ff
 Jesus and the Gadarene Demoniac - Mark 5:1-20
 The 144,000 - Revelation 7:1-8, 14:1-5
 The Two Witnesses (Prophets) of Revelation - Revelation 11:1-14
 The Psychic Servant Girl - Acts 16:16-21
 The Unpardonable Sin - Matthew 12:30-32, Mark 3:29,30 , Luke 12:8-10
 The Ill and the Demonised - Matthew 4:24
 Exorcism : Matthew 8:16, 12:22 ff. , Acts 19:13ff, Mark 9:17-27
 Authority : Luke 9:16ff, Matthew 10:17
 Not just mental illnesses: Luke 13:11
 Results of demonic influence (Obsessiveness etc.) : I Timothy 4:1ff
 Tests for demonic influence: Matthew 7:16-23, 1 Corinthians 12:3, 1 John 4:1-6

Differentiating the possibilities

- (A) If the person has been involved: in the occult or an extreme sect
or in gross sexual promiscuity
or in drugs or alcoholism
- (B) And can speak in a voice other than their own or know a language they have not been exposed to.
- (C) And find great difficulty in prayer or Bible-reading and react strongly against Christianity.

Then classical demonisation is a possibility. Seldom are healthy, normal people obsessed or possessed by the demonic. As a rule of thumb there must be some pre-existing instability.

Bizarre conduct is insufficient evidence.

Voices and visions are insufficient evidence.

Violent fits are insufficient evidence.

Intractable guilt is insufficient evidence but frequently accompanies it.

Absence or presence of reaction to treatment/medication is inconclusive.

Real guilt disguised as demonisation

The person comes from a religious background

They have not been involved in the occult, speak in voices other than their own, can still pray and read the Bible. However they hear voices and claim demonisation.

Generally it is sexual sin, either pre-marital sex, adultery or masturbation that haunts them and which they cannot resolve. Often they are upper middle-class and cannot admit to themselves their character flaw.

Depression and religious ideation

Those from a Christian background can, during bouts of depression, turn to Scriptural passages on judgement, Old Testament prophecies and the book of Revelation being favourites along with "the unpardonable sin". It is generally not serious and will pass with the depression. A modified form of cognitive psycho-therapy can be used. With people from a Christian background it can be very acceptable to guide them to new beliefs consistent with their faith e.g. if a person with depression has the belief "I am utterly worthless..' the it is quite acceptable to guide them to "for you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...(1 Peter 2:9). Countless other examples are possible.

Schizophrenia

Wilkie sees schizophrenia as a form of minimal brain dysfunction and in the majority of cases I find this argument convincing. Most people with schizophrenia do not speak in other voices, neither are they hostile towards the things of God though they may be confused, sometimes terribly confused in this area. The differentiation is not easy as some seem to be especially sensitive to negative psychic entities and preyed upon by them though not actually possessed.

What the cure has to say about the disease

If a patient hearing voices is cured by normal treatments then we can say that no occult subjection was involved. If however a pastoral interview, with thorough confession, renunciation and a trusting appropriation of salvation, leads to a wonderful liberation then we can say occult subjection was involved. (procedure from Dr. Lechler)

When is it God?

Jesus was often accused of being demon possessed (e.g. Matthew 12:30, Mark 3:29) and many great men of God -the prophets and mystics have seen visions and had special revelations, hearing voices. The following are indicators of whether a person's experiences are from God or from an inferior source. As a preliminary note it is best to make these observations over time.

Area	From God	From Inferior Source
Freedom	Increases	Decreases, becomes obsessive
Need for control	Gradually lessens	Increases dramatically
Quality of work	High – benefits society	Low – often socially deleterious
Personality	Integrates, peaceful	Coarse, clamant
Social	Increasingly loving	Increasingly divisive
State between visions	Healthy, disciplined	Desperate, addicted to visions
Grandiosity	No	Often
Predictions	Fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Selfishness	Lessens	Distressingly ego-centered
Nature of rebuke	Specific, brings growth & healing	General, vague, condemning
Integration	Increases	Decreases
Creativity	Often very creative	Exacts conformity
Money	Unimportant	Often demanded
Food	To be enjoyed	Lists of forbidden foods
Sexuality	Enjoyed in marriage	Seen as sinful or central
Salvation	Of all who believe	Of the leader and his chosen few
Dependency	Decreases, discouraged	Increases and encouraged
Fear	Lessens	Central to the faith
Magic & superstition	Renounced	Often included

Conclusion

Not all mental illness is demonic, nor is it all purely organic or even psychological in nature. Neither are all voices, dreams and visions a sign of mental illness. They may be a hallucination, but they also may be from a spiritual source and a vast quantity of religious literature in many cultures attests to this. The themes of religion can intrude into mental illness and psychiatrists should be aware of common religious metaphors and ideation and be able to enter into the world-view of their more religious patients. Furthermore pastors and religious professionals may at times be called into help those whose problems may stem from spiritual factors. Similarly pastors should respect the professional diagnosis and treatment regimes of the medical community.

Cleansing of Houses, Lands and Property

- Destroy all objects that bring a curse on the house. (Deut 7:25,26)
- Get rid of all idols and wicked images (Psalm 101.1,2)
- Renounce all wickedness and violence for the house of the wicked is cursed. (Proverbs 3:33, 12:7, 21:12) This may have happened in past generations – but it still needs to be dealt with. (2 Samuel 21:1-14)
- Make restitution for any property crimes against the helpless and the poor. (Proverbs 15:25)
- If you have treated people unjustly and rewarded evil for good, then evil cannot depart from your house, (Proverbs 17:3) and this must be fixed first.
- Be wise and diligent, fear the Lord and be righteous and your house will prosper. (Psalm 112:1-3; Proverbs 12:7, 14:1, 15:6, 24:3, Eccl 10:18)
- Once you have done the above take olive oil and go through every room of the house prayerfully anointing the doors and the windows, (Exodus 12:27-33) rebuking casting out all demons and creatures of darkness in the name of the Lord.
- Then bless the house with protection, peace and prosperity.

Catholic Saints In The Philippines & The Veneration Of Images

Idols and graven images are clearly forbidden by the Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4,5, Lev 26:1). The logic of this is given in Deuteronomy:

(Deuteronomy 4:15-24 NKJV) "Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, {16} "lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, {17} "the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, {18} "the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. {19} "And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. {20} "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. {21} "Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. {22} "But I must die in this land, I must not cross over the Jordan; but you shall cross over and possess that good land. {23} "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. {24} "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Paul continues this line of thought in the New Testament:

(1 Corinthians 10:19-22 NKJV) What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? {20} Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. {21} You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. {22} Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

And the apostle John writes:

(1 John 5:21 NKJV) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Some Catholic churches actually omit the second commandment when they list the Ten Commandments and divide the tenth commandment on coveting into two to keep a list with ten items as commandments.

The veneration of relics or of saints is not a doctrine found in the New Testament, in fact “building the tombs of the prophets” is seen as bringing judgment.

(Matthew 23:29-32 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, {30} "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' {31} "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. {32} "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. (see also Luke 11:47,48)

Prayer in Scripture is NEVER to a saint or to Mary. Christian prayer in the Bible is to the Father, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. (e.g. Ephesians 3:14:21)

The Patron Saint of a barangay or city is in fact the dominating territorial spirit. A vast list of these and their festivals (which are pacts with these spirits) can be found at <http://www.halabira.com>

Many of the most well known saints are in direct contradiction to the Bible. For example Santo Nino – the child Jesus. Jesus is no longer a child and in fact we no longer “recognize Him according to the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16) but as the resurrected Lord at the right hand of the majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:15-20). Mary is celebrated for her having a special place in Heaven and for her “perpetual virginity” whereas Jesus clearly has brothers who travel with Him and Mary and are thus more naturally taken as blood brothers than half-brothers or cousins (Matthew 12:46, 13:55,56, Mark 3:31-35, Luke 8:19, John 2:12, 7:3-10) These brothers came to have a special place in the early church because of this relationship Acts 1:14, 1 Corinthians 9:5). Also His mother Mary is clearly not any more special than anyone else who does the will of God. (Matthew 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35, Luke 8:19-21). For more on this see the following web page: <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/mary1.htm>

Holy Relics - Some objects can indeed carry spiritual power such as Moses rod (Exodus 4:1-5, 20 17:5,6,) the bronze serpent (Numbers 21:9) anointing oil (Mark 6:13, James 5:14-16), Paul’s handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11,12), Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15,16) and the bones of Elisha (1 Kings 13:21). But when they are worshiped as relics they must be destroyed even in their origin was holy and good. (2 Kings 18:4) Thus “power objects’ are NEVER to be venerated and the Catholic doctrine of the veneration of images is wrong.

Shrines: Shrines are local sites where an idol is venerated. They are a place where spiritual transactions take place, the ATM’s of the spiritual world – in this case the demonic world. In the Old Testament shrines are always viewed negatively : *(Ezekiel 16:23-24 NKJV) "Then it was so, after all your wickedness; 'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD; {24} "that you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. Since the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Pentecost Christians have become the true shrines of the living God and our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16). It is Christians, not shrines, that have the power to bring blessing to the world (1 Peter 3:9) and none of the apostles went to a shrine to be blessed or to honor God. Stephen referring to the Jewish temple said: (Acts 7:48-49 NKJV) "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: {49} 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest?. Paul demolished the Greek notion of temples when he spoke to the philosophers on Mar’s Hill: (Acts 17:24-25 NKJV) "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. {25} "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. Thus Christians are not to build shrines or temples or any physical “sacred house” for God to dwell in or seek blessing at. We should tear down shrines, particularly those that contain idols. (Exodus 34:12,13 Judges 6:25, 2 Kings 10:27 23:19).*

Sacrificing To Spirits Is Demonic

Christ has ended the sacrificial system. No more sacrifices are to be made except the sacrifices of praise, of doing good and sharing. (Hebrews 13:15,16) The sacrifices for blessing and for spiritual power and for approval with God and for forgiveness of sins have been completely fulfilled in Christ. Hebrews chapters 8 to 10 set this doctrine of fulfillment out in great detail.

What then is God's opinion of common Filipino spiritual practices such as sacrificing chickens or goats to gain magic powers or leaving food at the shrines of saints in order to gain luck, blessing and good fortune. The answer is that God views such practices as demonic and abominable.

(Leviticus 17:7 NKJV) "They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations."

(Deuteronomy 32:16-17, 32,33 KJV) They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. {17} They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.{32}For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: {33} Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.

(1 Corinthians 10:20-22 NKJV) Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. {21} You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. {22} Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

These verses clearly indicate that the sacrifices of idolatrous religions are not offered to God, but to demons (Lev 17:17, Deut 32:17, 1 Cor 10:20) and that these sacrifices are not helpful but harmful. In fact they are "the poison of dragons" a "cruel venom" that bitterly afflicts the worshippers (Deut 32:32-33). Such sacrifices are abominations that arouse God's anger (Deut 32:16) and provoke Him to jealousy (1 Cor 10:20-2). Thus idol worship is not a valid "alternative religion" but rather is an evil and poisonous demonic sacrifice

In the book "Cuenca" about Filipino spiritual warfare the missionary sees a dragon spitting poison into the ground, as if Satan was poisoning and cursing the area through the practice of witchcraft. Idol worship "poisons" and curses whole areas and cultures and those places that most engage in it such as African nation and Haiti are very poor and struggling, have an high level of violence and are difficult to help because the curse continually frustrates all efforts at improvement. Similarly the most poverty stricken areas of the Philippines are often the areas that have the most extensive use of magic and witchcraft and sacrifice to spirits.

Feng-Shui and the Search For Luck and Fortune

Feng-Shui is a Chinese practice that involves arranging one's house or office so as to attract "good spirits" and to repel "bad spirits" and especially to attract money and good fortune. It is extremely displeasing to God because it is deeply idolatrous in nature making no reference to the God who created the heavens and the earth but rather to a whole panoply of spirits and hobgoblins. Feng-Shui is part of what the bible calls divination or fortune-telling and is forbidden and is of demonic origins frequently involving personal possession by spirits.

(Leviticus 19:26 NKJV) *...nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying.*

(Deuteronomy 18:14 NKJV) *"For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.*

(Acts 16:16 NKJV) *Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.*

Christians do not need "luck" because they "have all the luck they need" in the favor with God through Christ. We should rely on the love and goodness and faithfulness of God, not on "luck". For our guidance we should rely on the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit not on diviners, and spiritists. And for the blessing and protection of our premises we should use prayer in the name of Jesus and the covering of the blood of Christ not Feng-Shui practitioners.

Contacting The Dead Is Abominable To God

(Deuteronomy 18:9-12 NKJV) "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. {10} "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, {11} "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. {12} "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. (see also 2 Kings 21:6, 23:24, 2 Chronicles 33:6)

Contacting the dead is putting your trust in a spirit (the dead person's spirit) other than the Spirit of God and breaks the first commandment. It violates the natural order of the Creation and "twists" and distorts the true nature of things and is thus classified as an "abomination". No only is the activity abominable but this is passed on to the practitioner so that "*all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD*". King Saul contact the Witch of Endor to summon up Samuel's spirit from the grave just before his final battle with the Amalekites.

(1 Samuel 28:5-19 NKJV) When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. {6} And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. {7} Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor." {8} So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you." {9} Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" {10} And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." {11} Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." {12} When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" {13} And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." {14} So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. {15} Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." {16} Then Samuel said: "Why then do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? {17} "And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. {18} "Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. {19} "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

This passage tells us that contacting the dead is possible, but evil and is a final resort of someone utterly abandoned by God.

Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, Horsemen and Living Creatures

Only one is named as an **archangel** and that is Michael the chief prince of Israel and commander of the army of God. Here are the two Scripture references where the term "archangel" is used:

(1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

(Jude 1:9 NKJV) Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Michael is referred to as the Prince of the Jewish people (*Daniel 12:1 NKJV*) *"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. (see also Daniel 10:13,21).*

Michael goes to war with Satan and prevails: (*Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV*) *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, {8} but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. {9} So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Gabriel seems to be a messenger angel with human form, and capable of flight with the task of helping first Daniel then Zacharias, then Mary at times of perplexity. (Daniel 8:16, 9:21 Luke 1:19,26 NKJV)

The **cherubim** guard the throne of God and the gateway to Eden (Genesis 3:24, Ezekiel 10:10, 28:14-16), Satan was once one of these "guardian cherubs" (Ezekiel 28:14-16) and was the "covering" cherubim perhaps the chief cherubim with "covering authority" over the other cherubim. . In Ezekiel the cherubim carry the chariot of God (Ezekiel 10:1-10) and in Psalms He rides upon them (*Psalms 18:10 NKJV*) *And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind.* Two carved cherubs covered the Ark of the Covenant and YHWH was described as Him who dwells between the cherubim. (2 Samuel 6:2, 2 Kings 19:15, Psalm 80:1)

Cherubim are often depicted as winged bulls in ancient carvings. The fact that cherubs normally looked like bulls can be deduced by comparing the verses below where "the face of a cherub" and "the face of an ox" are used interchangeably. So a "cherubic face" – actually looks like the face of a cow!

(Ezekiel 10:14 NKJV) Each one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

(Ezekiel 1:10 NKJV) As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

The "cherubim" of Ezekiel and the "**four living creatures**" of Revelation seem to be identical and the explanation may be that the apostle John was using a Greek term rather than a technical Hebrew term for his audience in Asia Minor. They have six wings each and the same animal faces.

(Revelation 4:7-8 NKJV) The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. {8} The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

The only appearance of the **seraphim** is in Isaiah 6 where they are winged, holy creatures that praise God. By tradition they look like flames of fire, perhaps based on (Psalms 104:4 NKJV) Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire. (see also Hebrews 1:7, Exodus 3:2, Judges 17:20)

(Isaiah 6:1-6 NKJV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. {2} Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. {3} And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" {4} And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. {5} So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." {6} Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

The **horsemen of the apocalypse** of Zechariah and Revelation are spirit beings that patrol the earth (Zechariah 1:8-10), go on assignments from God (Zech 6:1-18) and are also sent out with various judgments. (Revelation 6:1-8). Horsemen are also associated with chariots of fire that transported Elijah to heaven. (2 Kings 2:11ff)

These various creatures indicate that Heaven is a complex place of great authority and diversity.

Personal Guardian Angels

(Matthew 18:10 NKJV) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

(Acts 12:14-15 NKJV) When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. {15} But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Angels seem to have the role of guarding and protecting people, particularly, the innocent, the holy and the servants of the Lord and those involved in the direct line of God's redemptive purposes. The book of Genesis gives us a snapshot of guardian angels acting to help the family of Abraham. In fact the first mention on an angel in Scripture involves reassuring the fleeing Hagar in Genesis 16:6-15 and later in Genesis 21 when Hagar is finally expelled the angel provides water in the wilderness. Angels rescue Lot from Sodom (Genesis 19:15ff), intervene to rescue Isaac from the altar (Genesis 22:11), go before Abraham's servant to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:7,40), appeared to Jacob as he fled from Esau (Genesis 28:12), gave Jacob the plan for the herds to defeat Laban (Genesis 31:11-13) and were credited by Joseph with "redeeming me from all evil" (Genesis 48:16). Thus guardian angels seem to appear at times of crisis to rescue the elect from some disaster and to "redeem them from all evil". This fits with their description in Hebrews as "servants of those who will inherit salvation".

Angels - In the Last Judgment

(Matthew 16:27 NKJV) "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

(Matthew 13:39-42, 49,50 NKJV) "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. {40} "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. {41} "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, {42} "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth...(Matthew 13:49-50 NKJV) "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, {50} "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

(Matthew 24:31 NKJV) "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

(Matthew 25:31-33 NKJV) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. {32} "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. {33} "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

(Luke 16:22 NKJV) "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

(2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 NKJV) and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, {8} in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Angels take care of the souls of the righteous dead as they did with the beggar Lazarus. They also gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. At no stage to angels judge the elect, they merely preserve them and usher them to their reward, which is given by Christ. The elect have passed out of judgment (John 5:24,25, Romans 8:1,2)

On the other hand the angels have a direct role in the punishment of the wicked. They come with Christ at his return "in flaming fire taking vengeance", and casting the wicked into the lake of fire. The angels purify the kingdom of God taking out of it all that offends, "burning the tares", the wicked and all who practice lawlessness. They thus ensure the final holiness and purity of God's eternal kingdom. This fits with their role as guardians of the holiness and honor of God. (Isaiah 6:2,3)

The angels also carry out the final judgments of God in Revelation. Angels are responsible for the 21 final judgments – the seven seals, seven bowls and seven trumpets as well as for proclaiming the "eternal gospel" and for doing the "routine tasks" of Heaven such as measurement and communication. Throughout the Old Testament angels carried out judgments against invading armies such as the Assyrians and inflicted plagues such as that on Egypt and later on Israel. A holy angel maintained purity and order in "the camp" of Israel. Thus angels are enforcers of the law of God, carrying out His will. But God alone is the judge.

The wicked should fear angels, but believers walking in holiness should entertain no such fear. "Fear not" is the angelic announcement to the elect. The angels are on our side as "servants of those who will inherit salvation". They are greater in might and power than Christians but not in heavenly status. (As an analogy" Think of Napoleon's army, many privates would have been much stronger and more physically powerful than Napoleon but he was the general and had the authority.) For us angels are guardians, and will ensure that we do not meet the fate of the wicked on the day of judgment.

National Angels and Watchers, Principalities and Powers

(Daniel 4:13-17 NKJV) "I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. {14} He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. {15} Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, Bound with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And let him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth. {16} Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him. {17} 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'

(Daniel 10:12-14 NKJV) Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. {13} "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. {14} "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

(Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV) And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, {8} but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. {9} So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The fate of political kingdoms is decided not by men, but by God who decrees it through angelic "watchers" that observe the sons of men. The angels also fight evil powers in the heavens and are obstructed by evil powers set on dominating certain nations.

These evil principalities and powers have been defeated by Christ (Ephesians 1:21, Colossians 1:16, 2:10, 13-15, 1 Peter 3:22). The Church is to be a witness to God's wisdom in the sight of the principalities and powers (Ephesians 3:10) wrestling with and overcoming those that are evil (Ephesians 6:12) for which we have the advantage since Christ has disarmed them through the cross (Colossians 2:13-15), given us the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) and great authority in the heavenly realms (see section on Spiritual Authority).

If the destiny of nations is decided by God through the angelic watchers, and resisted by evil forces in the heavenly realms, over which the Church has been given power, then the logical conclusion is that the Church can exert decisive political power over the fate of nations through prayer, intercession and spiritual warfare.

We can break national curses and compacts made by national leaders with the forces of darkness. One well-known example of such a demonic pact is the island of Haiti, which made an agreement with the Devil to be his nation for 100 years and has suffered terribly from its voodoo practices as a result.

Nations can be dedicated to Christ, as in Britain and the USA, or to Islam as in Saudi Arabia or to Buddhism as in Tibet or to various tribal deities in Africa. This dedication occurs through covenants such as the one Israel made with YHWH at Mt. Sinai and are renewed through ceremonies such as the Passover and dedicatory rituals such as circumcision and through the construction of artifacts and buildings that reflect the national spirituality such as Solomon's Temple, St. Paul's Cathedral or the Grand Mosque. Some of these pacts, such as the formal baptism of the city of Manila into the Catholic Church, are only known to historians and are virtually unknown to the local population.

Many times it is a time of crisis e.g. a war, famine, earthquake or plague, that causes a city or nation to reach an agreement with a governing spiritual power. The principality is contracted to provide protection from

disaster and prosperity and fertility in return for worship and obedience to its “laws” and adherence to its rituals and taboos. Thus, during the water shortages that came upon the Mayans, maidens were offered to fertility gods in order for rain to be provided.

These local deities can be as small as a spirit occupying a “billabong” or waterhole in the Australian outback, or a nymph or naiad in a Greek grove through to the more mobile deities such as Thor or Zeus, which ranged through entire regions. The true God, Yahweh is of course associated with the entire Universe.

Here in the Philippines “duwende” are small local spirits, while cities have “patron saints”, often old pagan deities now transmuted into a Catholic saint or idol but still retain much of their pre-Christian flavor. Muslim areas in Mindanao are a mixture of compacts with “Allah” and various “jinn” or local spirits. People can make personal compacts with spirits through secret writing, blood-brotherhoods, charms, vows, the purchase of idols or “anting-anting”, magic handkerchiefs and the like. Such vows and associations must be revoked and idols and “anting-anting” destroyed. (Deuteronomy 7:25,26 Acts 19:19)

The principalities and powers that govern places, cities and nations are best dealt with by the spiritual owners of that area or the entire church, or its representatives. A house can be cleansed by the prayers of its owners, a city by the mayor in combination with local pastors, and a nation by its national political and spiritual leaders in unity. Rarely can non-apostolic individuals, who are not part of the political or spiritual leadership affect such changes. Even the prophets of Israel were often limited in their ability to bring national revival by the resistance of wicked kings and those in authority. Thus Paul reminds us to pray for our leaders as a first step in evangelism – the spiritual cleansing of the heavenlies - so Christians can live in peace and witness freely. (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Thus a united church, which prays faithfully for the leaders in the city and which wrestles with the principalities and powers and deals with the forces of witchcraft can eventually bring about spiritual transformation over a wide geographical area. See Acts 19 and Paul’s ministry in Ephesus for an example of this. In the Filipino context prayer ministry to and evangelism of the albularyos and other magic practitioners may bring a major spiritual breakthrough at the local level.

Spirit Beings

Myth and legend and religious folklore describe a wide range of spirit-beings such as faeries, dwende, aswang, elves, dwarves, incubus, succubus, vampires, werewolves etc. There are numerous stories of shape-shifting, levitation, invisibility and various occult powers. From the X-Files to the Lord of The Rings these creatures have become the popular stuff of Hollywood. Some people claim to have seen them in real life and many Filipinos have seen dwende, especially during their childhood.

The Scriptures have very little to say about such creatures and even the words themselves are of disputed meaning however a) such creatures are always viewed in a negative light. B) they seem to generally have demonic origins. C) they are not to be worshipped.

Aluwqah – possibly “vampire” but more probably leech/horse-leech – blood sucking creature. (Proverbs 30:15-16 NKJV) The leech has two daughters; Give and Give! There are three things that are never satisfied, Four never say, "Enough!": {16} The grave, The barren womb, The earth that is not satisfied with water; And the fire never says, "Enough!"

Azazel – Leviticus 16. During the day of atonement the goat “for Azazel” was let loose with the sins of Israel upon its head. in the apocryphal Book of Enoch 6:6; 8:1 ff.; 9:6; 10:4 ff.; 13:1 ff.; 69:2 one of the most prominent of the fallen angels who taught mankind the arts of war and luxury, revealed secrets to them, and is now bound in the wilderness, and is there preserved for the final judgment, because he was mainly responsible for the presence of evil in the world, is called Azael (also Azazel, or Azazel)

Ghosts: The disciples seem to have believed in ghosts but that is about the only mention of them. (Matthew 14:26 NKJV, Mark 6:49) And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

Giants: Are mentioned in quite a few places and are seen as offspring of fallen "sons of God" and women. (Genesis 6:4), they are seen as "of old" by Moses time and dying out. (Numbers 13:33, Deuteronomy 2:20, 3:11, Joshua 12:4). Goliath was one of the last of a family of giants in Gath. (1Samuel 17:4, 2 Samuel 21:16-22)

Leviathan: The great sea monsters and chaos monsters of Scripture created in Genesis 1:21 and made to play in the seas (Psalm 140:26) they were powerful creations of God (Job 41). Something seems to have wrong for in Isaiah 27:1 sees Leviathan the same as Satan or at least as a wicked Satanic being. Satan is consistently portrayed as a dragon (Revelation 12:3-17)

Lilith/Liylyth: the night spectre or ghost. (Isaiah 34:14) Professor Rogers has this to say: "The lil, or ghost, was a night-demon of terrible and baleful influence upon men, and only to be cast out with many incantations. The lil was attended by a serving maid, the ardat lili ("maid of night"), which in the Semitic development was transferred into the feminine lilitu. It is most curious and interesting to observe that this ghost-demon lived on through the history of the Babylonian religion, and was carried out into the Hebrew religion, there to find one single mention in the words of one of the Hebrew prophets" (Religions of Assyria and Babylonia, 76, 77).

Rahab: (3) (rahabh, literally, "storm," "arrogance"): A mythical sea-monster, probably referred to in several passages where the word is translated as a common noun "pride" ([Job 9:13](#)), "the proud" ([Job 26:12](#); compare [Psa 89:10](#)). It is used in parallelism with tannin, "the dragon" ([Isa 51:9](#)). It is most familiar as an emblem of Egypt, ([Isa 30:7](#); [Psa 87:4](#); compare [Psa 89:10](#)). The Talmud in Babha' Bathra' speaks of rahabh as sar ha-yam, "master of the sea."

Satyr: half-goat half human are briefly referred to in Isaiah 13:21, 34:14 (8163. sa'iy'r, saw-ee'r'; or sa'ir, saw-ee'r'; from H8175; shaggy; as noun, a he-goat; by anal. a faun:--devil, goat, hairy, kid, rough, satyr.). These are wild, isolated demonic beings that seem to haunt places judged by God.

Tannin: Were a class of dragon like/serpent monsters of terrifying power. The word is also used of hideous creatures such as a jackal. (Job 30:29, Psalm 44:19, 74:13, 91:13, 148:7 Isaiah 13:22, 27:1)

Demons, Unclean Spirits And Fallen Angels

Demons and unclean spirits inhabit people. Unclean spirits seem to be a class of demons with a particularly odious nature.

Unclean spirits search for a body to inhabit:

(Matthew 12:43-45 NKJV) "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. {44} "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. {45} "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

(Mark 5:10-12 NKJV) Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. {11} Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. {12} So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them."

They seem to have a territory and are afraid of leaving it:

(Mark 5:10 NKJV) Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

The effect on unclean spirits is bizarre behavior:

(Mark 5:1-4 NKJV) Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. {2} And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, {3} who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, {4} because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

They seem to cause great inner torment:

(Luke 6:18 NKJV) as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed.

(Acts 5:16 NKJV) Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

They are indwell the wicked and are involved in deceiving the nations:

(Revelation 16:13-14 NKJV) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. {14} For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Fallen angels on the other hand seem to inhabit places and realms.

(2 Peter 2:4 NKJV) For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

(Jude 1:6 NKJV) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

There is no Scriptural record of anyone being possessed or inhabited by a fallen angel although Satan temporarily "entered into" Judas and will finally incarnate as the Anti-Christ. (Rev 13). Satan and other fallen angels (such as the prince of Persia) are generally portrayed as animals such as goats or dragons or spirit-beings operating outside human bodies.

One possible explanation is that Satan controls the "kingdoms of the world" (1 John 5:18,19) which are then individually assigned to fallen angels or principalities and powers, (Daniel 10) who then control the less powerful individual demons and unclean spirits and other spirit beings in that territory. Thus demons moving out of their territory into the area of another "spiritual warlord" are terrified. (see Mark 5:10). Some theologians describe demons as fallen angels. That is probably not strictly correct. It would possible be better to say that spirit beings, demons, unclean spirits, territorial spirits and fallen angels are all different parts of Satan's fallen kingdom.

Attitude To The Supernatural

The main supernatural being who we should seek to know more about is God. He is to be the one we know, love and believe in. Satan and his cohorts are mentioned just enough for us to recognize them and to take our warfare seriously. We are not to be overly fascinated with them as some were: The church in Thyatira was rebuked for "knowing the deep things of Satan" (Revelation 2:24). Nor should we become preoccupied with secret things and mysteries, but rather with Scripture (Deuteronomy 29:29 NKJV) "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. Finally we are not to become fearful and see demonic conspiracies everywhere: (Isaiah 8:11-13 NKJV) For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying: {12} "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. {13} The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread.

So to conclude our study on spiritual warfare – be aware of the schemes of Satan but give glory to God.

Neither be so unaware that you become a victim or so engrossed that you lose sight of God and his power.

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