

SATAN and DEMONS

Walking In The Light
Of The Gospel Of Christ

DICKSON

Satan and Demons

Roger E. Dickson

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rdickson@mweb.co.za

www.africainternational.org

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Facebook: Africa International.org

Philadelphia, Western Cape, South Africa

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Scripture quotations from *New King James Version*

Cover Theme: *DANGER* (Sutherland, South Africa, R.E.D.)

PREFACE

We believe there are only sixty-six books that compose the canon of Bible books. We believe that these books, or letters, came to us by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The hands of men were guided by the Holy Spirit in order to guarantee that they inscribe Bible books that were without error in the original autographs. In this way, the original authors revealed the truth without error, as well as documented accurately events that transpired in history. We thus believe in, and follow only these sixty-six books as the final authority upon which we base our faith.

But many of those to whom this book is directed have added more books to the canon of the sixty-six Bible books. They have done so either willingly, or without knowing what they have done. Thousands of books have been written by deceived authors throughout the last two centuries. These books contain a great deal of theology and commentary on the Bible itself. These are not the books about which we are concerned. What is our concern are those books that have been written by men who claim to have experienced some supernatural event in their personal lives. They have written of these events as if their books should be considered with the inspired testimony of miracles that are recorded in the Bible. As a result, thousands of their readers have accepted as truth that about which these deceived authors have written.

The readers have thus, either consciously, or unconsciously, added the testimony of these biographical books to the books of the Bible. Every book that has been written with the testimony of some resurrection from the dead, demon possession, or some other supposedly supernatural experience, have been accepted by gullible readers as if the events actually happened. In fact, these readers have accepted these books with

the same credibility as the Holy Spirit inspired books of the Bible. In this way deceived readers have added scores of books to the sixty-six books that compose the cannon of the Scriptures. It is as if these deceived readers are more excited about the accounts of some author's modern-day supposed experiences of a resurrection, or demon possession, than they are about the resurrection of Lazarus and Jesus.

We are not referring to those good books that teach great spiritual lessons, though we would caution readers that such books, as this one, are only the writings of man. We are discussing those books that describe supposed experiences of the supernatural. Any book of the personal experiences of supposed supernatural events should always be highly suspect. If one accepts the account of the supposed supernatural experiences of another that is written in a book, then that reader is not heeding the warning of Jesus that we are not be deceived. Even if we hear of supposed supernatural happenings by word of mouth, we should be very cautious.

We have found that those religious groups that do not focus on a study of the Bible are the most receptive to these experiential biographies about things beyond the physical world. It is as if the members of such groups vigorously digest the supposed supernatural experiences of men that are recorded in books. **When one has divorced himself from the restrictions of the Scriptures, he leaves himself open to believe anything.**

This is the problem with those religious groups who do not focus on allowing the Bible to be the final authority in defining any personal experience of any man. If the Bible is not our final dictionary, then deceived men can assume that their experiences can also be

added to the final dictionary of the Bible in defining spiritual occurrences. And when men do this, and write a book, then to some that book becomes the same authority in their faith in conjunction with the Bible. And thus, the reader who has forsaken the final author-

ity of the sixty-six books of the Bible, has subsequently added another book to the Bible.

It would do us well to read again the final warning that the Holy Spirit gave to all of us at the end of the Bible:

*“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to these things, **God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book**” (Rv 22:18).*

SATAN AND DEMONS

We live in a world that has been led astray by countless imaginations of men who have long forgotten the word of God. The world is filled with religions that have been created after the desires of men who have submitted to their own religious inclinations. Satan, therefore, is alive and doing well through the deception of men who have rebelled against God. Though the gospel has bound Satan in the lives of Christians, he is still roaming among those in the world through the power of deceptions that religious men use to promote and control the lives of the innocent. It is the responsibility of Christians, therefore, to arm themselves with the sword of the Spirit. This is the time for Christians to arise to the occasion of preaching the truth of God's word throughout the world in order to defeat the stranglehold that Satan has on the world. This is the time for boldness in standing for what the Bible says. It is not a time to relinquish to the influences and teachings of the cultures in which we live. It is a time to take a stand for truth in the midst of countless deceptions that exist throughout the world.

We live in an existence of the supernatural. It is necessary, therefore, to reap from the word of God the struggle that exists between good and evil. Most people are good students of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But when discussing the realm of the "underworld," it seems that there is a great dearth of knowledge concerning what the Bible teaches.

Most people who buy and read books on the subject of Satan and demons are looking for answers in a mystical world that has too often been the creation of fertile imaginations. If you are reading the misguided authors of mystical studies in order to justify the imaginations of those who have long ignored the Bible, then this book will not give you any peace of mind. It is not our purpose in this book to survey through the misguided religious inven-

tions of men in order to excite our curiosity, and stimulate through fear that one turn to God. It is our purpose to bring our attention again to God's word in order to discover a biblical definition of this subject that has challenged the thinking of men for centuries. Therefore, prepare to be challenged to study the Bible. We will repeat this challenge throughout the chapters that follow. We will repeat it because men are too quick and excited about dreaming up imaginations that are totally foreign to what the Scriptures teach on this subject.

In Matthew 24:4 Jesus warned, *"Take heed that no one deceives you."* No greater statement could have been made concerning an introduction to the subject of this book. We live in a world in which many in the "Christian" religious world have been deceived concerning

matters of Satan and his host of angels. Many have been deceived because they have given themselves over to leaders who know little or nothing about the Bible. It is for this reason that we must force ourselves to stay absolutely with what the Scriptures say on this subject.

Throughout the world today, nothing seems to captivate the imagination of men more than the supposed mysterious workings of supposed evil spirits roaming through rocks, trees and mystic incantations in order to inflict pain and fear on some unfortunate human being. Feelings are usually intense on this subject today in those world cultures where mysticism is commonly practiced. In fact, those cultures that commonly practice ritualistic ceremonies of the “under world” seem to “experience” a greater amount of “demon possession,” and other so called activities of the spirit world, than those cultures that have long given up such beliefs. In those cultures that are considered “the developed world,” the practices and beliefs of the occult appear to be less prevalent. One reason for this is certainly evident. Imaginations of men run wild when captivated by the deceitful workings of witch doctors, wizards and enchanters. In other words, supposed mysterious activities of the spirit world seem to be **prevalent where these things are practiced**. Our experience in traveling throughout the world has certainly proven this to be true. When men want to believe in the mysterious meanderings of spirits, they will invent for themselves a host of ghosts and suspicious beings to satisfy their misguided

desires for an exciting religiosity. But God’s people must **not be deceived**.

In studying this subject, we must first contend that the Bible will be our **only accepted authority** to approach the phenomenon of demon possession in the first century and the mystical claims of the occult today. Secular experiences outside the Bible must always be examined in view of biblical definitions. In other words, demon possession, or any other practice of the occult, must be examined and defined according to the Bible, God’s inspired “dictionary.” We cannot tag a biblical name or phrase on a phenomenon about which the Bible speaks nothing. In the course of this book, therefore, one of our tasks will be to develop a biblical definition of demon possession in order that we **not be deceived by the imaginations of religious speculators**.

Men have a tremendous ability to deceive men. We would also say that men have a tremendous ability to be deceived. This is Satan’s most powerful tool to lead men to destruction. But the careful student will not confuse Satan’s deceptions with biblical truth. Neither will he confuse the invention of deceived minds with that which is real. In other words, the modern-day psychological phenomenon of deceived men should not be confused with biblical demon possession. We cannot allow self-deceived men to justify a false belief by tagging on to it a biblical name. Because God knew that men would do such things in order to justify their wicked religious inventions, He warned us **not to be deceived**.

We do not presume to know every-

thing in the Bible concerning the first century phenomenon of demon possession. However, in our study here, we must limit ourselves to the best source of study we have on the subject, that is, the Bible. If our resources stray to secular history or the modern-day speculations of religious experientialists, we subject ourselves to the most powerful tool of Satan. That tool is deception. We must strive, therefore, to heed the warnings of the New Testament writers **not to be deceived**.

Occult practices have been with mankind since the time men gave up a knowledge of God. They will surely be with us until Jesus comes again. In recognizing man's vulnerability to such practices, God placed stern warnings in His word against involvement in occult practices. **Such warnings were not given because of the reality of the incantations produced by the occult, but because of man's ability to deceive himself into believing those things that would lead him away from divine direction.**

Therefore, we must not allow ourselves to believe something to be real when it is actually a production of crafty men who have exceptional abilities of deception. God's people should be skeptical concerning such workings simply because God has told us beforehand that Satan works through the minds of twisted religionists in order to deceive the hearts of the innocent and ignorant. Therefore, in recognizing the vulnerability of the innocent, God warns us **not to be deceived**.

It is the purpose of this book, there-

fore, to bring us out of the world of spooks and goblins, of spirits and hearsay about mysterious happenings that seem to have always occurred somewhere else. We have never ceased to be amazed in our travels by the number of people who come to us and say, "Did you hear" Or, "We have heard that" When we were children, hearsay of "magical happenings" flourished throughout that time of our lives. Such talk excited our imaginations. Stories of lights in haunted huts and creepy noises in cemeteries generated a childish fantasy in our minds to believe such things to be actual and the real meanderings of the spirit world. However, most of us have come to heed the words of the inspired Paul, "*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things*" (1 Co 13:11). It is time to use our Bibles in our investigation of so-called mysterious phenomenon that many claim to exist today. We must trust in the inspired word of God to be our only guide to direct us in any investigation of that which exists. In His word we discover numerous warnings **not to be deceived**.

Do not misunderstand, however, that we should believe that Satan is hidden off somewhere in the universe. He does not hide. He hinders. He is at work in the lives of those who have given themselves over to deception. He still goes about as a roaring lion in the world of unbelief, seeking those whom he may deceive into believing in nonexistent mysterious things. It is not that God has put into Satan's

realm of influence miraculous and subjective power in order to conquer according to his own will. His power lies in the willingness of men to reject God and follow after deception. And all who would reject God, subject themselves to the wildest imaginations that prevail throughout the world.

Satan needs no miraculous power to accomplish his program of capturing the world. He does not need to work through any demons today. There is enough unbelief in the world today to satisfy the rebellion of any who would refuse to serve God. And look at what prevails. Satan by far has in his grasp the vast majority of the world's population. With such an upper hand in the world, he needs no miraculous manifestations. He needs no legion of demons to go forth and recruit. He simply works through those whom he has now deceived.

What is important to understand,

therefore, is to know Satan's limits that have been put on him by God. We must know how he works. Once we understand this, then there is no room nor need for fear. We must realize that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. And because we are more than conquerors, there is nothing that we cannot conquer through Jesus. If there is still fear in us concerning those things we cannot understand, then we are still weak in our understanding of the power of God that works in us to give us victory over fear. With this objective we launch into an investigation of God's instructions and explanations concerning the work of Satan, knowing that in the Bible God has revealed to us all we need to know concerning those things that are beyond our experience. He has revealed to us all that we need to know in order to distinguish between the imaginations of men and that which is reality.

Chapter 1

BIBLICAL CONDEMNATION OF OCCULTISM

Occultism is a general term that refers to many practices and teachings. The word "occult" originates from a Latin word that means "to cover up," "to conceal," or "to cut off from view." The meaning of the word emphasizes that which is secret or mysterious. It is a general term that we apply to specific religious practices and beliefs as astrology, fortune telling, satanism, spiritism, witchcraft and many other similar beliefs that are too numerous to mention. Many of these practices or beliefs have teachings

that overlap. There are basic teachings that are characteristic of each group that identify the religion as a separate sect.

Astrologers teach that heavenly bodies control and determine the destinies of human events. Astrologers teach that the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets can be used to predict the future. They believe that one's destiny is set in the heavenly bodies.

Fortune telling, or divination, is the belief that one's future can be foretold by reading the "psychic waves" that ev-

ery person is supposed to emit. As astrology, it is **deterministic**, that is, the future fate of individuals and events are set and cannot be changed.

Satanism teaches that God is an impersonal force and equal in power with Satan. Satanists contend that sin and prayer are meaningless in reference to the individual's life and destiny. They often teach that there is no existence beyond this life and that man should abandon morality and give himself over to satisfying the lust of the flesh. The beliefs and practices of those who adhere to satanism are represented in the following statement that is taken from the *Satanic Bible*:

Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all fours Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, emotional gratification.

Spiritism, or spiritualism, is primarily centered around the practice of supposedly communicating with the dead. (This is called "necromancy" in the *King James Version*.) Some spiritists do not believe in the deity of Christ and some do not believe in the existence of hell. Spiritists believe that the wandering spirits of the dead can be called upon to acquire knowledge and guidance.

Witchcraft is basically the practice of trying to acquire knowledge from ex-

traterrestrial sources. Witches, or sorcerers, contend that there are many gods and many spirits. By controlling these gods and spirits, knowledge can be acquired.

Astrology, fortune telling, satanism, spiritism and witchcraft have many teachings that are similar. However, other forms of occult practices are expressed through Black Mass, Ouija Boards, Table Tipping, Levitation, Tarot Cards, Dream Analysis, Scientology, Numerology, Horoscopes, Kabala, Seances, Fetishes, Palmistry, Phrenology, Extra Sensory Perception, Transcendental Meditation and Tea Leaf Reading. This list could go on as men unceasingly invent for themselves an unending assortment of imaginations in order to satisfy the minds of those who have either given up a knowledge of God or sought to subsidize the word of God.

An umbrella movement in recent years, that includes many of the above beliefs, is the **New Age Movement**. This is a diverse movement because of the desire on the part of the adherents to bring together or regenerate a host of spiritistic beliefs that come from the mystical archives of human imaginations. However, all of the various beliefs of the movement are simply a neospiritism of the developed world's effort to find answers through a humanistic approach to life. The primary emphasis of this movement is to concentrate on the individual's ability to heal himself or herself both spiritually and physically.

The best way the Bible student can deal with the above teachings is to understand basic Bible principles that con-

tradict the concepts of these occult beliefs. In the points of this chapter, therefore, our task will be to concentrate on those teachings of the Bible that refute the central teachings of the above beliefs.

There seems to be a continuous stroke of condemnation that runs throughout the entire Bible against the beliefs and practices of occultism. This condemnation begins in the Old Testament and continues throughout the New Testament. The reason for these condemnations was that God sought to warn believers to avoid the crafty deceptions of wicked men. We must remember that it is not that the Devil actually produces miraculous activity through wicked people. The point is that God knows how crafty men can produce those things that appear to be supernatural. Since God created the mind of man, then we can understand how He knows how easy it for one to be led astray who has given up a knowledge of the word of God.

A. Old Testament condemnation of religious imaginations:

The Old Testament strictly condemned occult practices among the Jews. Fortune telling was considered to be **foolishness** by God's prophets because the imaginations of such was only of human origin. Isaiah mocked the sorcerers and wizards of Israel. In the time of Israel's calamity, these false prophets did not help Israel. Isaiah chided both the false prophets and those who gave heed to their prognostications. Isaiah wrote,

Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth. Perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from these things that shall come upon you (Is 47:12,13; see vs 14,15).

Hosea accused Israel,

My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, and their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God (Hs 4:12).

Astrology is a form of idolatry. It is idolatry because it is a worship of heavenly bodies. In the early beginning of the nation of Israel, God warned Israel about going astray in considering that the movements of the heavenly bodies affected the affairs of man.

You shall not make for yourselves any 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; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them ... (Ex 20:4,5).

Moses warned,

And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to

heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them ... (Dt. 4:19).

God considers foolish all imaginations that the heavenly bodies affect the affairs of man. Isaiah wrote that God “*frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad ... turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness*” (Is 44:25). Of this idolatrous spirit, Zechariah said, “*For the idols speak delusion; the diviners envision lies and tell false dreams. They comfort in vain*” (Zc 10:2).

The desire of Israel to create a god after her own image in order to justify idolatrous religious behavior that condoned the satisfaction of the lusts of the flesh, led her into idolatry. Israel’s thirst for that which would please her lusts led them from the will of God.

So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 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 Kg 17:16,17; see 2 Ch 33:6).

When God brought judgment on Israel, He “*cut off sorceries from*” their land (Mc 5:12,13). He executed swift judgment against sorcerers (MI 3:5). This

judgment reveals God’s opinion of diviners and sorcerers. Those who involve themselves in such things are leading both themselves, and those who follow them, away from God.

God knew that the above practices would lead Israel away from the truth. Therefore, He gave a stern warning against anyone who would give themselves over to occult practices. In Deuteronomy 18:9-14 Moses pronounced the warning:

There shall not be found among you anyone who ... practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord.

God frankly told Israel, “*You shall not ... practice divination or soothsaying*” (Lv 19:26). Israel was to “*give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them*” (Lv 19:31; see also Dt 4:15-19; 18:9-14).

God knew that the ability of men was strong to deceive themselves into believing that which was false. Therefore, Israel was to give no audience to those who would deceive themselves into believing that they had special powers.

The Jews were divinely instructed that sorcerers, witches and astrologers were to be stoned (Ex 22:18; see Lv 20:6,27; Is 47:9). After many years of history, however, Israel did fall away to these practices. But at one time during

their history, the righteous King Josiah banished witchcraft from the nation during his righteous reign in an effort to turn the Jews back to God (2 Kg 23:24,25). He did this because he knew that the law of God firmly taught against the existence of occultism among the people of God. The purpose for the warnings against these practices is seen in the result of Israel's apostasy to such. **They were led away from God.**

The Old Testament also teaches that fortune tellers, enchanters, sorcerers, soothsayers, or any one that practiced augury (the use of omens in divination), **were not to be found in Israel** (Dt 18:10,11; Mc 5:12). It must be noted that **the people of Israel were judged for sacrificing to demons** (Ps 106:37; Dt 32:17). They wrongfully served and worshiped the stars of heaven (See 2 Kg 17:16-18; 21:1-3; 23:5). But prophets as Isaiah prophesied against astrology and those who practiced such things (Is 47:12-15). The Israelites were warned not to turn to mediums and wizards (Lv 19:31; 20:6,7; Dt 18:10,11). Obedience was to be given to God and not to those who would lead them into all sorts of hideous practices.

One often wonders why Israel was so eager to accept the practices of occult belief. The answer lies in **man's willingness or eagerness to form a religion after his own desires and create a god after his own image.** We must keep in mind that Israel remained religious in her apostasy. She simply accepted those religious practices that allowed her to do what she wanted to practice. This

was particularly true concerning the lusts of the flesh. One wonders why ancient religions developed the practice of fornication as a part of their religion. When we understand the tremendous urge of man to do as he pleases, we can understand that men will always digress to the place in their religious practices to do those things that satisfy even their most base desires. Israel even digressed to sacrificing her own children (See 2 Kg 23:10; Jr 7:31; 19:5).

Because God created man a free-moral agent, He knew that within the makeup of free-moral agency there had to be a wide berth of freedom. The part of man that would go away from God toward evil had to be measured by the side of man that would move him toward God and righteousness. And since man can draw nigh unto God, so can he draw nigh unto that which is contrary to all that God would have us be and do. Therefore, God knew the limits to which men could and would deceive themselves.

Before the flood of Noah, the extent of the wickedness to which mankind had drifted was expressed in Genesis 6:5: *"Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* After their deliverance from Egyptian captivity, God was sending Israel into a land wherein a culture dwelt in Canaan that had digressed into wickedness as the wicked culture that existed before the flood of Noah's day. Therefore, God commanded Israel to destroy all the inhabitants of the land because they had digressed beyond spiritual repair. But in her disobedience, Israel did not destroy

all the inhabitants of the land. As a result, the hideous beliefs of the diabolical religions of the Canaanites infected Israel throughout her history. God knew all this would happen, and thus, placed in the Sinai law injunctions against becoming involved in such religious imaginations. Of course, Israel did not give heed to such warnings. The nation was thus destroyed because they gave up a knowledge of God and ran after the religious imaginations of the culture they did not destroy (Hs 4:6).

At least one lesson is learned from Israel's history. Men have an unceasing desire to invent their own religions. God warned Israel against doing such. However, the urge was so strong in Israel, that they ignored the commandments of God in order to invent religions that would soothe their consciences in practicing the most hideous sins against God. Therefore, because they failed to heed the warnings of God, they paid the price. So will we if we fail to heed the same warnings.

B. New Testament condemnation of religious imaginations:

The New Testament warnings against occult imaginations is based on the foundation of Old Testament warnings. Warnings against occult practices in the Old Testament must be carried over into this era. God has not changed His mind about people creating religious beliefs after their own imaginations. Therefore, we do not forget what happened to Israel. We do not forget the influence the culture of the unbelieving world can

have on God's people at any time in history.

Paul labeled **sorcery** as a "**work of the flesh**" (Gl 5:19,20). He said that they "**who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**" (Gl 5:21). John said that in eternity the sorcerers "**shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death**" (Rv 21:8; see 22:15). In Acts 13 the apostle Paul told the sorcerer Bar-jesus—remember that sorcery is a form of astrology and witchcraft—that he was "**full of all deceit and all fraud;**" that he was "**a son of the devil,**" an "**enemy of all righteousness,**" and that he was perverting "**the straight ways of the Lord**" (At 13:6-12). This should leave no question in our minds concerning what God thinks of those practices in which Bar-jesus involved himself.

In 1 Corinthians 10:19-22 Paul equates idolatry with demon worship. He asked the Corinthians a rhetorical question: "**What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?**" (1 Co 10:19). The answer is that there is nothing in the idol, nor is that which is offered to the idol of any value. Here is Paul's answer. "**But I say 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**" (1 Cor 10:20). There can be no harmony and fellowship between believing and trusting in God and union with what demons represent. "**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" (1 Co 10:21). The citizens of Corinth had created idolatrous religions. The Corinthian Christians had been converted out of such religions. However, it seems that some of the disciples in Corinth were still lingering in fellowship with some of the ceremonies surrounding the pagan idol temples of Corinth. Paul commanded that they must disassociate themselves from such.

It is important to notice also that when the Ephesians obeyed the gospel **they gave up their occult practices.** They ceased their magical arts and burned their magical books, having realized that such practices were false and superstitious deceptions of Satan. Luke recorded the following concerning the incident:

And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed (At 19:18-20).

There are three important cases in the New Testament where the truth of the gospel confronted the occult world of imaginations. One is the previously mentioned case of the Ephesians. Others are in reference to Simon, the sorcerer and Bar-jesus. These three cases are recorded in the book of Acts.

In order to understand why Luke mentioned these cases, it is necessary to understand why he wrote the two docu-

ments of Luke and Acts. Both documents were directed to the Most Excellent Theophilus (Lk 1:3; At 1:1). These two documents were written as defense documents on behalf of Paul who was on trial for his life before a Roman court. The information Luke provides is evidence to prove that what Paul believed and preached was the result of a personal encounter with God. He was not preaching myths, fables or legends. The teaching he proclaimed was from God, not man. In this context, Luke provided Theophilus with information to contrast the truth of the gospel that Paul preached with those religions of the Roman Empire that were the superstitious inventions of men with great imaginations. In the document of Acts, therefore, Luke presents three cases where there is a confrontation between the falsehoods of the religionists of the Roman Empire and the truth of the gospel.

1. The case of Simon (At 8:9-25): Luke's statements concerning the work of Simon, and his subsequent "conversion," constitute a Holy Spirit inspired dictionary of what Simon was doing. It was the intention of the Holy Spirit to guide Luke into giving us a dictionary by which we can identify true miraculous works in the context of those who seek to perform tricks to make us believe that they have control of the supernatural.

Luke first stated that Simon **practiced** sorcery (At 8:9). One does not practice miracles. The Holy Spirit, therefore, wants us to first know that what Simon was doing was a practiced trade.

As a sorcerer, he was commanding no miraculous power. However, the deceptive power of Simon's work was strong. All the people of Samaria were astonished at his workings, "*claiming that he was someone great*" (At 8:9). To him, "*they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'*" (At 8:10). Simon's deceptive abilities were good. For a long time, the Holy Spirit says, "*he had astonished them with his sorceries*" (At 8:11).

Then there was a change in the city of Samaria. Luke changes the subject in his record of the events by using the word "but." He now records that the man of God, Philip, exposed all the deceptive work that Simon had been doing in the city. Philip manifested the deception of Simon by working true miracles in the presence of those who had been deceived by the tricks of Simon. When Philip came to town, they believed him for he preached "*the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*" (At 8:12). But why did they believe Philip? Verse 13 says, "*Then Simon himself **also believed.***" Luke points out that even Simon "*was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done*" (At 8:13). Luke wanted us to know that Simon himself is a witness to the true occurrence of a real miraculous work.

The Samaritans and Simon believed because they **saw and heard** the miracles that were worked before their eyes by the hand of Philip. Now herein is the power of Luke's proof that Simon worked no miracles. Simon, a master of occult

trickery, was amazed when he saw real miraculous work. His amazement was a testimony to the falsehood of the sorcery he had practiced. The reaction of the Samaritans is a testimony that the whole city was able to distinguish true miraculous workings from the trickery of a sorcerer.

When Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, the Samaritans "*saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given*" (At 8:18). When Simon saw what the apostles did, he saw an opportunity to work real power because he also saw a source of miraculous power in Peter and John. In his zeal for recognition, he asked, "*Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit*" (At 8:19).

Luke's argument is sound. Simon had previously never worked any miraculous power. The case of Simon is a defense of Christianity in that all supposed miraculous power that is to have been worked through other religious leaders is false. Luke's defense is based on the fact that what Simon and others like him were doing, were deceiving the people through magic and trickery. They were working no miracles. They were simply deceiving the people. On the other hand, Luke's defense is that what Paul, and other New Testament evangelists were both teaching and doing, was real. Paul and Philip's work was from God, and not the invention of men.

There are many Simons at work today throughout the world. They are doing their magical tricks in order to deceive

people into believing that they have miraculous power. Unfortunately, there are a number of Christians out there who have been deceived by such men. They have been deceived into believing that these sorcerers and witches are actually working miraculous wonders by the power of either God or Satan. They are as the Samaritans who for a long time had been convinced that Simon was working miracles. We have often wondered that if some today lived in Samaria when Philip came to town, that they would refuse to believe Philip because they wanted to continue to believe Simon because of his so-called “miraculous” wonders.

Keep in mind that if Simon were actually working miraculous wonders, then the miracles of Philip would have had no impact on the Samaritans. Since both Simon and Philip would have been working miracles, then there would have been no reason for the Samaritans to believe the message of Philip. Neither would there have been a reason for Simon to believe. Therefore, one should be very cautious about believing those things today that are claimed to be miraculous. Lest one be deceived, he or she should consult the Bible for all definitions concerning what is a confirming miracle. There are many religious workers today who are very clever in their art of doing wondrous things. If one approaches such deceivers with an innocent heart and ignorance of the word of God, then certainly he or she will be led astray by the craftiness of men.

2. *The case of Elymas (At 13:4-*

12): On the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, the two evangelists came to the island of Cyprus. There they found “*a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-jesus*” (At 13:6). When Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, sought to hear the word of God, Bar-jesus withstood Paul and Barnabas (At 13:8). However, listen to what Paul said of Bar-jesus: “*O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of the Lord?*” (At 13:10). This is the Holy Spirit saying that this sorcerer was full of deceit and fraud. Bar-jesus, therefore, was not working miracles. The Spirit of God labeled his work as fraudulent. When Paul struck Bar-jesus blind, the proconsul believed “*when he saw what had been done ...*” (At 13:12). The power of the miracle that Paul worked, therefore, confirmed to the proconsul that Bar-jesus was a fraud. If Bar-jesus had been working miracles in the presence of the proconsul, then we would certainly not expect the proconsul to turn so suddenly to what Paul was saying and doing.

3. *The case of Ephesus (At 19:11-20):* In Ephesus “*God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul 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*” (At 19:11,12).

There were some false exorcists in the city of Ephesus who had not been able to cast out demons, so they tried to do such by calling on the name of Jesus (At

19:13). However, “*the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them*” (At 19:16). When all of this activity became known to the residents of Ephesus, “*fear fell on them, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*” (At 19:17). The fear came upon the residents because they had never before experienced such events as that which took place at this time in the history of Ephesus. If miraculous works were a common thing in Ephesus, and had occurred by the hands of the sorcerers in the city, then certainly the impact of the true miracles of Paul would have had little impact on the residents.

Acts 19:18 is significant: “*And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.*” What they confessed was the falsehood of their deceptive deeds. “*Also, many of those who had **practiced magic** brought their books together and burned them ...*” (At 19:19). When they realized the great power of God that was manifested through Paul, their deceptive magic was exposed. They realized that their practice of sorcery was useless against what they witnessed through Paul. There is only one conclusion one can make from this incident. Those in Ephesus who claimed to work miracles were actually practicing trickery. Thus the Ephesus case teaches that false religion is exposed as such in the presence of the true miraculous work of God.

Luke’s defense of Christianity on behalf of Paul in the document of Acts is without question one of the most power-

ful arguments in the New Testament against those who profess to be working confirming miracles today. False religions of men stand no chance against the miraculous witness that God gave to the early Christians to confirm the preached word (See Mk 16:20; Hb 2:3,4). Such confirmation is a forceful denial of the practice of those men who lead others to believe that the supposed existence of supernatural powers is worked through their hands.

God’s warning to believers against occult practices in both the Old and New Testaments was not given or recorded in order to affirm that such practices are the manifestation of real miraculous power. He gave the warnings because He knew the great imagination of men. He knew the willingness of men to forsake a knowledge of the truth in order to scurry after their own desires. The warnings, therefore, were in reference to men conjuring up deception or believing the deceptions of those who had given themselves over to falsehood.

We live in a world today where many have invented similar false religious beliefs as in the days of the Old Testament. Thus the warnings of God in the Bible are still valid today. Once one denies the reality of God and the authenticity of His word, then there is nothing left to guide his religiosity. He will simply develop some religion after the fantasies of his misguided mind. For this reason, Christians should heed the warnings of God’s word not to believe in or become involved in such religions. Neither should they believe the deceptive practices of

such religionists who claim that they are commanding the power of the supernatural. When one believes that false religionists as Simon are working miracles, then he is being deceived as those in Sa-

maria and Ephesus. If Christians do not take a stand against false religionists, then we are no better than those in Samaria and Ephesus who for a long time were deceived by the religious practitioners.

Chapter 2

OCCULTISM VERSUS TRUTH

God knows that man is religious. He created man to be a religious being. He knows, therefore, that we have **a desire to create a religion after our own desires**. In Exodus 20:1-5 God warned Israel against the practices of idolatry, which in our terms would be false religion. Idolatry is not simply the practice of making images or idols out of wood and stone. The images and idols are only the manifestation of religion that has been created after the desires of a misguided worshiper. Because of man's desire to seek his own will, and not the will of God, God warned that Israel not create a religion that catered to their sensual desires and false ideas. For this reason, there are numerous warnings in the Old Testament against the practice of idolatry.

God also knows the vulnerability of people. He knows that people are susceptible to believe almost anything. Therefore, He warned against those who would deceive innocent people into believing that they possessed great magical powers. However, many of God's people have in the past been led to believe that certain men have control over supernatural powers. They have been led astray by these men who are crafty in their efforts to deceive others.

The fact that the Bible says that people were deceived is evidence to the fact that what deceived them was false. If the supposed "supernatural powers" were real, then those who believed them could not be accused by the Bible of being deceived. They would have only believed that which had actually occurred and was in fact real.

God knows the ability of people to deceive and to be deceived. He knew that if the Israelites went into Palestine and dwelt among the Canaanites, they would eventually adopt the false religions of the Canaanite culture. He thus instructed Israel to annihilate the Canaan culture. This would be the only way to purify the land, and thus, preserve a segment of society for the bringing forth of the Savior into the world.

We know the rest of the story of Israel's possession of the land of Canaan. Israel did not destroy the inhabitants of the land. Consequently, they did adopt the religion of the Canaanites. All Israel, except for a remnant, subsequently paid the price for being deceived into believing false religion. Throughout their history, Israel struggled with false religion. The lure of such was too great for them to resist. They succumbed to the decep-

tion of running after those religious beliefs that appealed to the most base desires of men.

Though God warned Israel about being religious after her own desires, she persisted in going her own way. This was a gradual apostasy. Throughout the years of Israel's history, Israel accepted religious practices of those nations around her. Israel's religious leaders were at fault. Instead of keeping the people focused on the will of God, they led men into error by accepting the desires of religious people who were bent on constructing their own religion.

A. **Israel was led astray.**

Israel as a nation was strictly warned against being led astray by false prophets who claimed to proclaim future events. The people were to *“give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them”* (Lv 19:31). Moses warned that if there arose those who said, *“Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet ...”* (Dt 13:1-5; see Jr 14:14; Ez 13:22,23). Moses warned that many would be led astray by such practices as witchcraft (Dt 18:9-14). Regardless of the many warnings, this is exactly what happened in the history of Israel (2 Kg 9:22). Manasseh, and other Israelite kings like him, *“Practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord ...”* (2 Kg 21:6).

Israel's apostasy to spirits and gods they had created after their own imaginations caused them to forsake truth and the one true God.

Though there were numerous warnings in the Sinai law concerning occult practices that would lead Israel away from God's law, Israel ignored the warnings and became self-deceived in practicing sorcery, divination and other occult practices. What they did as a nation certainly illustrates the powerful sway these deceptive practices have in influencing the lives of men. This should be a warning to Christians today not to believe the deceptions of men. Christians should take heed to God's admonition to stay away from the religious inventions of man.

The extent of Israel's apostasy is evidenced by the extent of Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 23. In the historical context of the reform, a copy of the law was found in the reconstruction of the temple. Josiah read it. It frightened him when he discovered how far Israel had digressed from the will of God in order to follow after the religion of Baal.

Josiah commanded that they ...

... bring out of the temple of the Lord all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel” (2 Kg 23:4).

Josiah tore down all the idols and images of Baal. He killed the unrepentant priest of Baal. Israel had strayed so far from the truth that they did not know

the difference between Baal and Bible. However, once a sincere and God-fearing young man found the Bible, that was the end of Baal.

The lesson from the case of Josiah is twofold. First, when men give up a knowledge of the word of God, they are led by their own imaginations. And the imaginations of men to construct religion are very fertile. Secondly, the only way men can find their way back to God is through His word. Those who have no desire to go to the Bible for direction, will never find their way out of false religious beliefs. This is exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote,

... and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Th 2:10-12).

B. Israel's King Saul was led astray.

It is important to note that when King Saul was righteous before God he *“put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land”* (1 Sm 28:3). But when he had been caught up in sin and degradation, he searched them out. 1 Samuel 28 is a record of where Saul sought the services of a medium to call up the soul of Samuel. The facts surrounding what actually happened teach some very interesting things concerning the relationship of Saul with

witches before and after his fall into sin.

1. *The event of the calling up of Samuel was unique.* At the end of Saul's life, he sought to have the witch of En Dor call up the soul of Samuel. But this unique event in the Bible was obviously accomplished by the power of God. God allowed this event to happen in order to manifest the fallen nature of Saul and to make known to Saul his future death, which Samuel had already revealed to Saul while he was still alive.

It is evident that the witch of En Dor **had never before done something as this**, for when she saw Samuel she *“cried out with a loud voice”* (1 Sm 28:12). Therefore, she had never worked nor experienced something as this before this occurred.

It must also be remembered that this type of event is found nowhere else in the Bible, though the Bible records numerous activities of witches and sorcerers. The important thing to remember about the life of Saul is that the Bible says he died because **he trusted not the word of God, but consulted a medium (witch)**. 1 Chronicles 10:13 states, *“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.”*

2. *Saul saw nothing of the spirit world.* During the actual event of Samuel's coming forth, it seems that Saul did not actually see Samuel. He asked the woman, *“What did you see?”* (1 Sm 28:13). She responded, *“I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth”* (1 Sm

28:13). Thus in her mind God allowed her to see the spirit of Samuel. She then explained what she saw and Saul “*perceived that it was Samuel*” (1 Sm 28:14). Saul was present, but saw nothing, **indicating that nothing was actually happening in his presence that could be empirically perceived**. He had to communicate through the woman in order to communicate with Samuel. The point here is that Saul was experiencing nothing. God gave the witch a vision of Samuel coming up and communicating to Saul.

3. Samuel did not reveal any new truth. One other point to remember in this incident is the fact that Samuel did not communicate any new truth to Saul. Saul was told nothing that he did not already know. He knew that the kingdom was to be taken from him. He knew he was rejected. God had departed from him. He knew he would die. All these facts had been previously communicated to him while Samuel was still alive.

When people wonder concerning spirits beyond this world, the case of Saul and the witch of En Dor are always discussed. Since we cannot understand all of what happened during this event, we should be cautious not to read into the event preconceived ideas. It was an event that is unique in the Bible. And since it was unique, it should not be used to establish something that would happen on a regular basis. There is no truth in the belief that Christians should consult witches in order to communicate with the dead. There are absolutely no instructions in the word of God to encourage such beliefs and behavior on the part of Christians.

C. Satan leads men astray by deception.

Satan’s weapon that he uses to lead people away from God is **deception**. He uses the deceptive teachings and practices of occultism in this manner. Israel of old fell because of the deception of Satan. God said, “*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*” (Jr 14:14). Israel was led astray through the lies of deceived men. This is the power of Satan in the lives of those who do not have a love of the truth.

Satan is the great deceiver “*who deceives the whole world*” (Rv 12:9; 13:14). For this reason, the New Testament gives many warnings directed to God’s people that they not be deceived. These warnings are numerous in the New Testament because Satan’s work through deception is powerful in the lives of people. Paul warned, “**Do not be deceived**” (1 Co 6:9). “**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked**” (Gl 6:7). “*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit ...*” (Cl 2:8). “*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy ...***” (1 Tm 4:1,2). “*The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all powers, signs and **lying wonders, and with all unrighteous***

teous deception ...” (2 Th 2:9,10). John warned, *“For many deceivers have gone out into the world ...”* (2 Jn 7). The point of these warnings is clear. Do not be deceived. (More on this later.)

Satan is a deceiver, for he fashions himself *“into an angel of light”* (2 Co 11:14), and *“with all unrighteous deception”* leads those astray who do *“not receive the love of the truth”* (2 Th 2:10).

Satan works *“with all power, signs and lying wonders”* (2 Th 2:9). The term “lying” in this particular passage applies to the three words “power,” “signs” and “wonders.” The Greek text allows this understanding that is consistent with all other Bible teaching on this matter. In other words, what this passage is saying is that the man of sin works no real miracles. This text would literally read, “In every power and sign and wonder of falsehood.” The power, signs and wonders of Satan are all falsehoods. They are not real miracles. They only give the pretense of being real because of those who have given themselves over to be deceived into thinking that they are true confirming miracles.

God will allow people to be deceived. If people do not want to hear the truth, God *“will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (2 Th 2:11,12).

Satan performs works of deception. His works only appear to be real miracles. If his works were real miracles, then we could not determine if a miraculous work were actually from God or from him. **God**

will not allow Satan to work miraculously today in order to nullify His miraculous works that were worked in order to confirm the word and work of God in the first century. If Satan could work real miracles, then his works would not be deceptive. They would be real. Men would then be justified in believing them. **One is not deceived if he believes that which is real. Therefore, Satan’s works are not real. This is why they are classified by the Bible to be deception.** All deception belongs to Satan, and nothing could better describe the works of occultism.

Throughout the Bible there are commands that state **we must trust only in God and His word**, and not in the things of this world (Ps 40:3,4; 62:1,2; 64:10; 84:12). Solomon exhorted, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding”* (Pv 3:5; see Is 26:4). The joy of the man of God *“is in the law of the Lord; and in His law he meditates day and night”* (Ps 1:2; see 4:5; 37:3). The word of God should be the lamp unto our feet, the light unto our paths (Ps 119:105; see Pv 6:23). The word of God is able to thoroughly equip us *“for every good work”* (2 Tm 3:16,17). Therefore, *“if any man speaks let him speak as the oracles of God”* (1 Pt 4:11). Peter concluded, *“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue”* (2 Pt 1:3). If one would follow God, then he must abandon the superstitious beliefs of

occultism. He must trust in the word of God. One cannot believe in the lies of deception, and at the same time, accept the truth of God's word.

The Christian should look to Jesus, not mediums, as the way to knowledge and salvation. He should be "*looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*" (Hb 12:2). Jesus taught the apostles to ask of God **only through Him** (Jn 14:13; 15:16; 16:13). Jesus, not the spirits, is our **only mediator** through whom we have access to God (1 Tm 2:5; see Rm 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1,2). If we invent spirits as supposed revealers of wisdom, then we deny God's command that **we should ask directly of Him for wisdom** (Js 1:5,16,17). Prayer to God in the New Testament is addressed directly to God and in the name, or by the authority, of Jesus. This is why the emphasis in the Christian life should be to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and*

Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt 3:18). Any teaching that is contrary to these Bible truths is false.

Great emphasis is placed in the Bible on studying the Bible in order to find truth. When one's desires are turned from this objective, he will venture into the extremities of his mind. He will invent deceptive religious practices and call it religion in order to justify his carnal inclinations. Such digression from God has led to the most horrific of religions in the history of mankind.

Because of the history of distorted religions that have been invented by men, we wonder why men do not stay close to God's revelation in order not to turn on himself in the name of religion. We must be cautioned that as long as men desire to satisfy their own lusts, and do their own thing, they will create religious beliefs and practices by which they will condone ungodly behavior.

Chapter 3

GOD'S SOURCE OF TRUTH

God has revealed His existence and power through the creation of the galaxies (Rm 1:20). He has revealed His character and the gospel through the Bible. The Bible is thus the source of truth from God. Through its pages are revealed the nature of the One who is above nature. Since most of the world has long since discarded the Bible as the final source of truth concerning the nature of God, the world has sought after a knowledge of God through other means, . People have had enough sense to realize that this world

is not all there is. However, they have not had enough sense as to where to find the final source of truth. Therefore, they have given up their senses by going after every imaginable source other than the Bible in order to discover what is beyond this life.

One practice of occultism is to seek knowledge and truth from terrestrial sources in order to understand the nature of the extraterrestrial world. However, the Bible teaches that one need not and cannot acquire spiritual truth from terres-

trial sources. That which is of this material world can reveal nothing about the spiritual world.

Terrestrial refers to the **physical heavenly bodies of the universe, such as the sun, moon, stars and planets.** **Extraterrestrial** refers to **that which is beyond the physical world.** This is the spirit world of the nonmaterial. There are those who contend that knowledge can be acquired from the sun, moon, stars and planets in order to understand the spirit world. It is affirmed by some that this knowledge should be sought in conjunction with the knowledge that is revealed through the Bible. However, most astrologers believe that knowledge from the heavenly bodies is to be sought instead of Bible knowledge.

One must compare the preceding beliefs with what the Bible teaches. In doing so, we must always consider the Bible above the religious inventions of man. If we do not, then there can be no final standard of authority by which to judge all that man considers truth. We can have no final standard simply because men who reject the Bible constantly change in their religious beliefs and behavior.

God seeks to lead us through His word of revelation. He seeks to draw us to Him in order that He lead our lives. The following are sources of revelation that lead us to God's standard of truth:

A. Revelation of God's existence:

Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20, "*For the invisible things of Him from the cre-*

ation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ..." (KJV). God has indeed set His glory "*above the heavens*" (Ps 8:1) in order to reveal His power and Godhead. David said, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge*" (Ps 19:1,2).

The creation reveals knowledge in the sense of how God challenged Job. "*Listen to this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God*" (Jb 37:14; see Jb 12:7-9; Ps 111:2). God then proceeded to remind Job of the details of creation. His purpose was not to reveal hidden truth, but to remind Job that the One who could create such marvelous things could surely have the situation of his life under control. God's revelation through the created world is given to us as a witness to His existence and power. His character, however, must be revealed through direct revelation, or special revelation.

B. Revelation of God's character:

Special revelation refers to God directly revealing His character and will through special people. The Hebrew writer defined special revelation as follows, "*God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ...*" (Hb 1:1,2). Jesus said, "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*" (Jn 14:9).

Therefore, Jesus was a special revelation of the Father. Also, special revelation is the Father's inspiration through the Holy Spirit to lead men as the prophets and apostles into revealing His will to man. This is why we have the inspired Bible. The Bible is a special revelation of God to man by inspiration (2 Tm 3:16,17).

Jesus had promised the apostles, "... when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all the truth ..." (Jn 16:13). The Holy Spirit "*will teach you all things*" (Jn 14:26). Truth, therefore, comes through the inspiration of men who were carried along in writing by the Holy Spirit to reveal God's will (2 Pt 1:20,21).

The Bible affirms that through inspired words, God has "*given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him [Christ] who called us by glory and virtue*" (2 Pt 1:3). Through the knowledge of Jesus, therefore, one can acquire all that is necessary for godly living. The Bible is God's **final action of revelation** until Jesus comes again (See Jd 3; Gl 1:6-9; Rv 22:18,19). It is final in these times because it is sufficient to supply the man of God unto every good work. Because it is final, men do not need other sources of information in order to guide themselves in a way that is pleasing to God.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 states that man should give heed to God's word. Paul stated to Timothy,

... and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are

able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Since all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, man should not add to or subtract from revealed teachings by the addition of traditions or outside so-called extra terrestrial revelations (See Mk 7:6-9). Any teaching that says the Bible is not a sufficient guide to lead us to salvation and holy living is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. The gospel is our motive for godly living, and the gospel is revealed through the Bible.

The clear declaration of 2 Timothy 3:17 is the **all sufficiency** of God's revelation to man (see also 2 Pt 1:3; Jd 3). Revelation was given and chosen men were inspired to write in order "*that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" This fundamental truth is contrary to the concept that extra truth must be sought from the terrestrial world. In fact, special revelation was accomplished in a sufficient manner in order to satisfy man's desire for answers. The Bible gives man every answer to questions he should ask concerning reality. The Bible answers the questions we have concerning our origins. It answers questions concerning our purpose here on earth. It also answers questions concerning where we are going.

Answers to questions concerning our existence that do not have the foundation of God's revealed truth should be highly suspect. It is by the truth of God's revelation that the minds of men are controlled and directed. When men reject or ignore the truth of God, they will certainly drift away to destructive philosophies. This was the purpose for which Paul wrote the Colossians. "*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ*" (Cl 2:8). For the same reason, he warned Timothy to avoid the "*profane and vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*" (1 Tm 6:20).

Those who accept the Bible as the word of God are not antagonistic toward knowledge that is acquired through scientific investigation. It is only their contention that the purpose of knowledge is to be determined first by a knowledge of God. The principles of God's word determine if the discovered knowledge of nuclear power is to be used for generating power to cook food or the power to build bombs. When one gives up the knowledge of God's special revelation through the Bible, he is headed on a course of life that has no moral direction.

C. Understanding God's revelation:

The Bible teaches that man's gaining of knowledge from the physical universe is acquired through one or more of the **five senses**. The five senses are

hearing, seeing, smelling, feeling and tasting. The Psalmist wrote, "*When I consider your heavens, the work of Your fingers ...*" (Ps 8:3; see 19:1). Paul wrote, "*For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ...*" (Rm 1:20). In other words, God's existence can be perceived, or considered. This perception, however, comes through the **five senses of man**, and is, therefore, **limited to those five senses**.

If one reasoned that there was a spirit world above or beyond the physical world, then it would be reasonable to conclude that the spirit world was greater than the material world. If this were true—and it is—then we would wonder why those of the spirit world could not bypass the physical world in order to reveal their existence and nature. Why would God resort to revealing truth through the guesswork of understanding the stars and planets when He could simply reveal truth through special revelation? Of course, this is what He has done. He has revealed truth through the Bible. He expects us, therefore, to learn about those things that are beyond this physical world through a study of His revelation (the Bible).

Why do those who believe in terrestrial revelation endlessly seek the signs of the times through terrestrial investigation when they could simply find answers in the Bible? It is certainly logical to believe that there is a Supreme Deity greater than our world. However, if this Being cannot reveal Himself except through ter-

restrial means, then there is no “supreme” to Him at all. In fact, we would conclude that He is no greater than the material world. What we have now done is limit God to our own imagination, if not eliminated Him altogether. In other words, investigation of the terrestrial for truth is simply one step toward atheism.

The answers sought for the questions of stargazers can arise only from their experiential world. The terrestrial world can lead only to those conclusions that are empirically perceived. This is true because man’s empirical perception is limited to the material world. Therefore, investigation of the terrestrial world will reveal only that which arises out of the nature of man himself.

The terrestrial world reveals that there is a Designer greater than the material world. However, the character of that Designer cannot be discovered from creation.

The investigator would do well to caution himself at this point. Some have

affirmed that God’s love is discovered by investigating the material world. We would challenge this thinking on the basis of the preceding point. The investigator would should be cautioned about reading into his conclusions of terrestrial investigations his own character, and thus create a god after his own image. In other words, we would not conclude a Designer from the created world, and then, import our character and nature into this Designer. Terrestrial investigation concludes, “He exists. Look for a greater and more exact revelation.”

We thus seek for revelation that is above and beyond the terrestrial world. We then discover the Bible. And in the Bible, we discover a loving God who exists above this world. In this way we are always driven toward revelation from the Creator. This guards us from ourselves, and thus, guards us from creating a god after our own image. We would not be idolaters by rejecting the revelation of God.

Chapter 4

FREE-MORAL CHOICE

In the context of studying the work of Satan, we must have a clear understanding of the free-moral agency of man. A fundamental teaching of the Bible is the nature of man in reference to making free choices. This is an obvious and necessary teaching that must be true because of Bible teachings concerning God’s justice, man’s repentance, and the nature of the gospel plea to the sinner to repent. A

call for repentance would be foolish if the destiny of individuals is sealed and cannot be changed. The justice of God would fall if individuals were predetermined to disobey, and thus, be cast into hell. There would also be no need for a gospel plea for salvation if individuals could not respond in a way to save themselves from condemnation. These and numerous other biblical teachings would collapse if our

future were sealed and unchangeable.

Many of the beliefs of the occult are centered around the teaching that one's life is relegated to fate, that is, events in life occur regardless of the free-moral choices of the individual. If such were true, then there is no such thing as free-moral agency in reference to one's individual responsibility for his own life.

The occults of astrology and fortune telling contradict the Bible teaching concerning the free-moral agency of man. It is taught by many of those of the occult that man's future is set in the stars and cannot be changed. It is taught that the environment in which man lives controls the future of man. The Bible, however, presents a different view of man in his environment. This is the view that man has the power of choice in an environment that allows him the opportunity to make choices. He can determine his destiny by the choices he makes in relation to God's law in the present.

A. The free-moral agency of man:

Free-moral agency means that we are able to make choices of good or evil in an environment that allows us to make such choices. We are not programmed as a computer and we are not controlled like robots. We are allowed to commit great sin, but we are also capable of doing great good. We have the power to determine our future by choices we make in the present. The fact that God allows us the opportunity to make choices in the environment in which we have been placed is evidence that we are free-moral

agents. And it is also evidence that God expects us to make correct choices.

1. God gave man the ability to choose. If men have no right to choose, then there can be no one who can be lost. If one were lost to some type of punishment when he or she had no choice in the matter, then how could we believe in a God who would allow such to happen? Could God be just by allowing such to happen when one had no choice about the matter?

Think also of the mental ability of man in reference to choice. If we have been programmed to make certain choices, then we cannot be held accountable for the bad choices we make. If we do not have the mental ability to make choices, then we are as robots in an existence of chance, wandering about as machines in collision with one another.

The fact that we have the ability to choose, makes feelings as compassion, kindness, love and mercy mean something. If we do not have any such abilities or emotional capacities, then we are as robots. In fact, we might say that because we have emotions and feelings means that we are free-moral agents. We must choose how to express or control our feelings and emotions.

2. God placed us in an environment to make choices. There is no such thing as a free-moral agent who has no occasion or opportunity to make choices. Adam and Eve were placed in an environment wherein existed two trees that presented an opportunity for choice. They were not to eat of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil. The presence of the tree offered them a choice of either doing right or wrong. Every free-moral agent must be in an environment that allows such choices. There must be the choice of the greatest good. There must also be the choice of the greatest evil. We must consider how much pain and suffering we inflict upon ourselves and others because of our bad choices.

3. *God expects man to choose.*

God expects man to choose between good and evil. *“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ...”* (Jc 24:15). Joshua called on Israel to exercise their free-moral agency in order to decide to follow God’s will. Moses exhorted, *“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live”* (Dt 30:19; see also Pv 1:29; Hb 11:25; 1 Co 10:13).

If man is a free-moral agent—and he is—**then he cannot be cursed by someone else**. In other words, no one can take away the free-moral agency of any man by placing a curse on him. The will of one man cannot be miraculously exercised over another individual.

The practice of “cursing” is an effort of one person attempting to exercise subjective power over another. Such is possible in a psychological sense, if the one cursed **chooses** to give up his will to another. However, if the one who is cursed refuses to submit his will, then the one who places the curse has no influ-

ence over him whatsoever. The one who curses cannot have any subjective influence over another if one does not choose to psychologically submit to another. This is why those in Ephesus who believed found freedom from magical arts and the trickery of men. Luke records that the word of God **prevailed** in the community (At 19:20). The word of God prevailed because men believed it and not the false and pretentious deception of the sorcerers. Psychologically, the people were delivered from the oppression of deception. We must keep in mind that it is the deception of clever men that is used to oppress the hearts of the ignorant. It is through the word of truth that we gain knowledge of how God actually allows Satan to work.

B. **Harmony between the material world and free-moral agency:**

The material world does not work against free-moral agency. God created the heavenly bodies as part of an environment in which man could exercise free-moral agency. This environment was not created to destroy free-moral agency. It was not created to subjectively influence or take control of the future of man in any way. Man’s future is changed by the environment only when one voluntary reacts to historical or natural happenings in his or her life. In other words, if a natural tragedy happens in one’s life as a tornado or earthquake, his free-moral reaction to the event will affect the rest of his life. How we react determines the effect of the event on ourselves.

The purpose of the heavens is to testify concerning the glory and existence of God (See Ps 19:1-6; Rm 1:20). The heavens were not meant to determine the future of individual lives as astrologers affirm. Neither were they created as a means for man to predict the future. It was through Jeremiah that God said **not to be dismayed** by any happening that occurs in the heavens. Jeremiah wrote, *“Do not be dismayed at the signs of the heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them”* (Jr 10:2).

If evil destinies of individuals are set in the stars, and there is no way to avoid such destinies, then why struggle to live a good life in the first place? Israel was deceived into trusting in the vain pronouncements of astrologers and stargazers. But these misguided counselors could not foretell Israel’s certain doom (See Is 41:23,26-29; 42:9; 47:12-15). If they could not foretell the most significant historical events in the nation of Israel, then certainly they were false prophets.

The above principle is still true today. When major historical or political events happen today that bring surprise to all, then where are the prophecies of those who claim to be prophets? Great earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanoes erupt without any so-called prophecies being made by self-proclaimed prophets. Great national events happen without one word from any of these self-proclaimed prophets. A man by the name of Kabila in 1997 swept through old Zaire in Africa in a matter of weeks and overthrew an entire nation. Where were all the proph-

ets who would foresee such an event? In 1995 over 500,000 Rwandans were slaughtered in five weeks in an hysterical killing mania of a nation. Where were all the prophets to foretell such a genocide? When the Berlin wall fell as a symbol of the collapse of communism, where were all the prognosticators who should have foretold the event? The point is obvious. No movements in the stars predict these or any other historical events. There are no prophets who can foretell future events because there are no prophets today who can know the future.

Only God knows the future. No occult practice can reveal such. One is self-deceived if he or she believes that the future can be seen in the stars. Therefore, man should not seek for the things that God has chosen not to reveal, for *“the secret things belong to the Lord our God”* (Dt 29:29). And the future is a secret thing that belongs to God alone. It is wrong to seek a guide unto eternal life other than the guide God has provided for man to follow, that is, His revelation, the Bible (See Ph 3:18,19; Cl 2:8; 2 Tm 3:16,17).

One must remember that Paul stepped into a world of mystics and witches when he evangelized the Gentile world. Not for one minute did he give credit to any so-called miraculous powers that were supposedly being exercised by witches and mediums. In fact, the incident of the evil spirit of Acts 19:11-17 proves that supposed exorcists had no miraculous power to cast out “left over” demons. The fact that Luke’s statement

in Acts, “*The word of God grew mightily and prevailed,*” emphasizes the fact that truth conquered erroneous beliefs. This is the answer to those of the occult world who claim magical powers. The Bible is truth. It brings freedom to those who are captured by the fear of deceptive workers and their works.

God has created man a free-moral agent who has the ability to choose freedom in a world of misguided beliefs. Those who choose God can deliver themselves from a world that is tossed to and fro by every mystical belief that is conjured up in the minds of misguided deceivers who have forsaken a knowledge of God. This is what the Ephesians, who

lived in a culture of mysticism, did when they put their faith in God and His word. Through inspired apostles and prophets, God delivered His word to them in order that they “*should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive*” (Ep 4:14).

If God’s revelation to man is truth—and it is—then anything that would contradict it in the spiritual realm is only the “cunning craftiness” of men who seek to deceive. We have a choice as to whether we accept the word of God, or turn to those who “lie in wait” to deceive.

Chapter 5

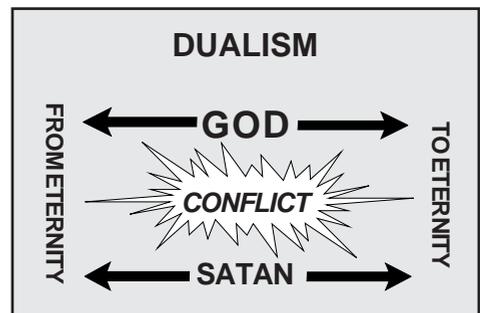
THE OMNIPOTENT GOD

The Bible teaches that there is one eternal and all-powerful God. However, one of the principle teachings of satanism is the concept of **dualism**. This is the belief that God and Satan are **equal in power** and **eternal existence**. It is affirmed that these two equal powers have been battling one another for eternity.

The dualist affirms that Satan, who is eternal, exercises indigenous supernatural power that is independent from God. In other words, Satan does not need God in order to have supernatural power. Because Satan’s power is indigenous and independent from the existence of God, it is claimed that he can function as he wills in the affairs of men.

One immediate question that arises out of the claim that Satan has indigenous

power, and can so exercise such at will, is the question as to why he does not. Why would he not unleash every so-called supernatural power he has in a constant attack against the saints of God? Why does he not possess every person with demons? If one says that God has limited him, then we must wonder how much he has been limited. This is the point.



We must determine how much God has limited Satan and in what way. (More on this later.)

A biblical world view sees God as the source of all power that is beyond this natural world. No supernatural power exists except that which originates from God who is the creator of all things. Satan would not exist if God did not exist. Therefore, Satan is subject to God in every way.

Satan is not eternal, but originated in one form or another from God who created all things through the creative work of God the Son. If one wonders from where Satan originated, the answer is in Colossians 1:16 where Paul wrote of Jesus, ***“For by Him [Jesus] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”***

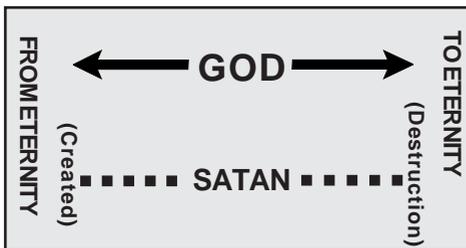
Jesus created Satan when those things that are invisible to our eyes were created. We do not assume that Satan was evil when he was first created. We believe the concept of “fallen angels” is a valid biblical teaching and one that is expressed by Jude. ***“And angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has re-***

served in everlasting chains ...” (Jd 6; see 2 Pt 2:4). We would include Satan among those who fell from their proper habitation. They left that which was their original existence and fell into the darkness of evil. Therefore, Satan originated as part of the good things that were originally created in the beginning, but he later fell into rebellion against God.

The point is that Satan had a beginning and he will have an ending (See Mt 25:41). Therefore, supernatural power in eternity does not originate from Satan, for he originated from the One who is all-powerful. Satan can exercise supernatural power in the created world only as God permits him. He does not have the right to do what he wants to do with humanity.

A. There is only one all-powerful Deity.

The Bible teaches that God is **omnipotent**, that is, He is all-powerful (See Gn 17:1). This means that He alone is the ultimate and final power. He is the final authority, for ***“with God nothing will be impossible”*** (Mt 19:26). God says, ***“I am the Lord, and there is no other. There is no God besides Me”*** (Is 45:5). There is, therefore, only **one** God. The fact that God is one excludes any other gods. The point is that there cannot be two Gods, while there is only one God. It is right to conclude, therefore, that there is no one like God. He is all-powerful and Satan cannot be considered a god and also all-powerful. If we conclude that God is the sole all-power-



ful and eternal Supreme Being, then we would conclude that Satan is not the same as God. Understanding God's omnipotence is essential to understanding the limited influence of Satan. The following scriptures emphasize the omnipotence of God in relation to all things:

1. **There is one God** (Dt 4:35; 32:39; Is 44:8; 45:5,14,18)
2. **God is all-powerful** (Gn 18:14; Jb 42:2; Jr 32:17; Mk 10:27; Rm 1:20; Rv 19:6)

The importance of the "one God" teaching of the Bible is in the truth that "one God" excludes the existence of any other being as God. There cannot be two all-powerful Gods. If one has all power, then the other cannot. Therefore, since the Bible teaches that there is one all-powerful God, then Satan is excluded from the realm of being all-powerful. If one believes the omnipotence of God, he cannot be a dualist. This point is very significant when studying the teachings of occult religions. It is important because most occult religions misunderstand the power and influence of Satan.

B. All power originates from God.

If God is all-powerful, then He has the power to limit Satan and allow him to do only certain things. All power means He has power over all things, including Satan. This fact is evident from God's control over Satan in the hardships that He allowed to be brought upon Job by Satan. Satan could afflict Job only as God supplied and allowed His supernatural

power to be used in the life of Job (Read Jb 1:9-12; 2:3-6).

Satan said to God, "... *stretch out your hand and touch all that he [Job] has ...*" (Jb 1:11). Therefore, God relinquished supernatural power to Satan, and thus said, "*Behold, all that he has is in your power [or, 'hand']*" (Jb 1:12). When Job was tried by Satan, he remained faithful, though as God said to Satan, "... *you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause*" (Jb 2:3). The point of the testing of Job clarifies the fact that **all supernatural power originates from God**. Without God no such power would exist. Any power that Satan would have, therefore, must originate from and be regulated by God. Satan can do nothing apart from God's source of power. (More on this later.)

Because there is only one God, and that God is all-powerful, then there is the necessity that all supernatural power originate from that God. If supernatural power originates from Satan in and of himself, then he would be an eternal Deity as God. But this belief would be contrary to the Bible teaching that God is the Creator of **all things through Jesus**, both in the physical world and in the spirit world (Cl 1:16-18).

By way of summary, the following points reveal why Satan is not omnipotent:

1. **The Lord rebukes Satan.** Zechariah wrote, "*And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!'*" (Zc 3:2). Therefore, it is

the Lord rebuking Satan, not Satan rebuking the Lord.

2. Kingdoms have been given to Satan. Luke recorded the words of Satan in reference to Satan's temptation of Jesus, "*All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom-ever I wish*" (Lk 4:6). Notice that the authority of the kingdoms had been delivered to Satan. But who gave this authority to Satan? The answer is that God gave and Satan received. The conclusion is that God has all authority, and thus can give some to Satan.

3. Satan must ask permission. Jesus said to Peter, "*Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat*" (Lk 22:31). Notice that it is Satan who must ask. He does not have the power to take someone against their will.

4. Satan cannot take Jesus' sheep. Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand*" (Jn 10:27,28). Therefore, it is not within the power of Satan to snatch away the sheep of Jesus against their will. If the sheep choose to remain with Jesus, then Satan cannot take them.

5. Satan can be resisted. James wrote, "*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (Js 4:7). Therefore, if one will resist Satan, he will flee. This does not sound like Satan has the power to overcome anyone he so chooses. He can be resisted

by those who have chosen to submit to the will of God.

6. Satan will be cast into hell. Jesus said that Satan and his angels will eventually be cast into eternal hell (Mt 25:41). John revealed, "*And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ...*" (Rv 20:10). It is the all-powerful God who will decree the casting of Satan into destruction, thus Satan will stand helpless in the end before the all-powerful God.

Any teaching that assumes that Satan stands alone in reference to supernatural power is in conflict with the Bible that teaches he does not. There is only one eternal and all-powerful God.

C. Jesus is incarnate Deity.

Jesus is incarnate Deity who was proven to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. Paul wrote that Jesus was "*declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead*" (Rm 1:4). This biblical concept is probably one of the principal contradictions between many segments of the occult and the gospel. The denial that Jesus was the only begotten and incarnate Son of God permeates almost every facet of satanism, astrology and spiritism. Therefore, the denial of the deity of Jesus is directed at the very core of gospel. In reference to this denial, therefore, there are two serious considerations that must be maintained in reference to the gospel: The first is that Jesus is incarnate Deity, and the second is that

He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

1. *Jesus revealed the invisible God.* “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (Jn 1:1). The Word was with God and then “*became flesh and dwelt among us*” (Jn 1:2,14) by taking the “*form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men*” (Ph 2:7; see 1 Jn 1:1-3). Jesus was with God in glory before the creation of the world (Jn 8:58; 17:5). But He “*came down from heaven*” (Jn 6:51,62; 3:13; Ep 4:9). Peter confessed concerning Jesus, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt 16:16). And John wrote that “*whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him*” (1 Jn 4:15). Those who do not confess Jesus as such are “*not of God*” (1 Jn 4:3).

While Jesus was on earth, He was God who came in the flesh of man, for Jesus said, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” (Jn 14:9; see 12:45). Jesus was “*the image of the invisible God*” (Cl 1:15), “*the express image of His person*” (Hb 1:3). Paul taught that in Jesus “*dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (Cl 2:9; see Cl 1:15-19; Jn 1:1-18). In other words, Jesus was the expression of Deity on earth. If one wants to know God, he or she must look to Jesus. One cannot approach God without going through the medium of the person of Jesus.

2. *Jesus was resurrected to give hope.* If Jesus were not the Son of God, then we would have no hope. This is a

second consideration that must be faced by any who would deny Jesus as the Son of God. If Jesus were not the actual Son of God, then He was the greatest deceiver who ever lived. Millions have believed His lies for centuries concerning His claim to sonship. If He were not the Son of God, then all humanity will be subjected to the dismal certainty of eternal doom. Each person is left to his or her own superstitious inventions of religious guilt and fear.

Paul explained the above in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20. If Jesus were not raised from the dead, then we could not consider His teaching any more authoritative than Muhammad’s, Confucius’ or any other non-Christian religion. We could not trust the divine origin of His example. If we cannot find a divine standard of moral law in Jesus, then which supposed medium, witch, or lurking spirit are we to trust in order to find truth? If we cannot trust Jesus and His word, then mankind is left with a hopeless trust in the confused imaginations of wondering witches, presumptuous prophets and meaningless wizards and mediums throughout the world. And in the contradicting world of occultism, one is thus driven from one seance to another in an exasperated effort to find something onto which one can find emotional and spiritual security in life.

But if Jesus was resurrected, things are different. He is the Son of God, and thus, we can have hope. We have a way to truth and knowledge. We have a glimpse of life at the end of a dismal tunnel of religious confusion and satanic darkness brought on by the relentless decep-

tions of Satan. If Jesus is the resurrected Son of God, then He deserves to be heard. And when Jesus is heard, the “*prince of this world*” is cast down in the lives of men (Jn 12:31).

The gospel message, therefore, is that Jesus is the resurrected Son of God. When Paul was converted, Luke wrote of his first preaching as follows: “*Immediately he [Paul] preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God*” (At 9:20). He could preach this because God “*has raised up Jesus*” (At 13:33; see Ep 1:20ff). Jesus, therefore, was “*declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead*” (Rm 1:4).

We must remember that there cannot be two all-powerful Deities. One all-powerful Deity excludes any other. Since there is only one God who is all-powerful, then all supernatural or miraculous power must originate from this one God. This reduces Satan to have no more supernatural power than what is issued to him by the one true God.

In order to emphasize that all power is from the one true God, Jesus came into this world. Since He was declared to be the Son of God by the power of the resurrection, then we conclude that the power of resurrection originates only from God. Jesus even said to the Jews, “*Many good works I have shown you from my Father ...*” (Jn 10:32). Jesus’ works were from the all-powerful God.

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him (Jn 10:37,38).

We know and believe in Jesus because Jesus unleashed the power of God through confirming miracles. His works originated from the all-powerful Father. For this reason, we believe the Son. In this way God revealed to Peter and all who witnessed the work of Jesus, that Jesus was as Peter confessed, “*The Christ the Son of the living God*” (See Mt 16:16,17).

Chapter 6

THE FINALITY OF DEATH

The fundamental meaning of the word “death” is separation. James explains this in James 2:26 in reference to the death of the body: “*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (See Lk 8:55). In death the spirit leaves the body and returns to God (Ec 12:7).

In separation by death, something is

always lost or terminated. Something comes to an end. In spiritual death, one’s relationship with God comes to an end (Rm 5:12). Such can be restored only by the grace of God that comes through the sacrificial redemption of the blood of Jesus (Rm 5:1,2). In physical death, the physical body returns to the dust and can be restored only by the power of God who

will raise the body and reunite it with the spirit (Jn 5:28,29; 1 Co 15:50-54). However, the physical body as we know it will have terminated for we will be raised with a changed body (2 Co 5:1-8).

Between death and resurrection, the body has returned to the dust and the spirit to God (Ec 12:7). In this state of existence, God keeps the spirit of all the dead until the final resurrection. It is our task to investigate the supposed communication of the spirits of the dead in reference to the living. Since there are those who claim to have communicated with the dead, then we are obligated to determine if the Bible teaches this is possible.

The Bible teaches that one cannot communicate with the dead. However, one of the primary beliefs of spiritism is the practice of attempting to call up the dead in order to communicate with them. However, there are some important teachings in the Bible that rule against this belief.

A. Israel erroneously sought the dead.

The nation of Israel fell because it reverted to occult religious practices that led them away from God. Isaiah condemned Israel's apostate search for answers from the dead instead of finding answers in the word of God.

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? (Is 8:19).

Isaiah's question firmly states that one should seek God, not the dead. He continued, *"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"* (Is 8:20). One will never be able to find answers to life's problems by searching for such from the dead.

Isaiah 8:19 explains the problem with those who seek communication from the dead. His question reveals the problem. *"Should not a people seek their God?"* Seeking advice from the dead is a manifestation that one has given up on advice from God. Those who seek communication from the dead are searching for answers in the wrong place. They feel there is no God who has communicated instructions to them. Therefore, they run after phantoms in the dark, inventing whispers of communication that have only been the imagination of a self-deceived mind.

Isaiah's second question is a derogatory statement concerning the foolishness of those who seek communication from the dead. *"Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?"* In other words, how can we expect the dead to communicate any more or better information to us than a living person who is standing beside us? Isaiah is actually stating the foolishness of the practice of self-deceived minds that seek to communicate with the dead.

B. The rich man could not communicate with the living.

In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus taught that the dead are not allowed to communicate with the living. In this story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man desired that Lazarus return to life in order to warn his brethren of their doom if they did not repent. But **Lazarus was not permitted to do such** (Lk 16:31). The rich man was told, “*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*” (Lk 16:29). In other words, **they should seek God’s word**. All that was necessary for the brothers to “avoid this place” would be found in the word of God.

It is significant to note various details about what happened at the time of the death of both Lazarus and the rich man. These details plainly teach that the spirits of the dead are in a “place” and are not roaming around in space, detached from the place where they are reserved by God. When Lazarus died, he was “*carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom*” (Lk 16:22). He was not left to float in spirit among the living or anywhere on earth.

When the rich man died, he found himself “*in torments*” (Lk 16:23), in a **place** to which he had gone (Lk 16:28). He did not want his five brothers to “*come to this place*” (Lk 16:28). Therefore, he was somewhere away from his brothers where he could not communicate with them. The very fact that he made a request of Abraham concerning the sending of Lazarus to his brothers is evidence that he realized he could not go himself. He could not go to Abraham’s bosom because of the Great Gulf that was fixed between him and Lazarus. He could

not go back to earth. He was thus ‘*reserved under darkness*’ until the end of time and the resurrection (See 2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6).

God has left no spirits of the dead to wander among the living. All spirits of the dead are gone from the earth. The righteous have gone to paradise (Abraham’s bosom). The lost have gone from the living in order to begin their punishment for sin they committed on earth. God has confined the spirits of all the dead to their respective destinies.

Luke 16:19-31 reemphasizes the basic teaching that when one dies his spirit returns to God who gave it (Ec 12:7). That spirit cannot return and speak the secret things of God (Dt 29:29). God will not allow such. God revealed all things necessary for life and salvation to the apostles and prophets (Jn 16:13; Ep 3:3-5). “*All things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Pt 1:3) have once and for all time been “*delivered to the saints*” (Jd 3). Therefore, God will not allow the dead to return to reveal anything else to man. There is no need that they should. Spirits and demons would not and could not reveal any more truth than that which has already been revealed. **Bringing back dead men’s spirits could not accomplish anything toward the salvation of a man’s soul**. It is obedience to the gospel of Jesus that saves one from sin and gives direction to life (Js 1:21; 1 Pt 1:22,23).

It is interesting to note what Abraham said to the rich man of one returning from the dead to speak concerning what is after death. “*If they do not hear*

Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Lk 16:31). The fact is that Jesus was raised from the dead, and many do not listen to him today. During Jesus' ministry He raised Lazarus who was the brother of Mary and Martha (Jn 11:43,44). However, the Jewish religious leaders sought to murder him because he was a living testimony to the power of Jesus (See Jn 12:10). The religious leaders had no desire to listen to Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who had been raised from the dead.

Abraham's point is true. Those who practice communication with the dead do not lead repentant lives. They do not seek the one true God in order to glorify His Son Jesus Christ. They continue on a self-deceived life of creating imaginary religious beliefs after their own desires. If they desired to deter their destination from the same place as the rich man, then they must go to Moses and Prophets. They must turn to their Bibles and understand what God would say to them. It would not be a time to search around for some man-made solution for their salvation. It would be a time to search out the word of God and read.

C. The dead communicated with Jesus.

At one point during His ministry, Jesus took Peter, James and John to a mountain in northern Palestine in order that they witness His transfiguration. We do not know exactly what transpired on the mountain where Jesus was transfig-

ured (See Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36). Matthew simply records that Jesus *"was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light"* (Mt 17:2). We do know many specific facts surrounding this unique visionary happening.

1. Jesus was transfigured. His form changed. Mark says that *"His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them"* (Mk 9:3). Luke writes that *"the appearance of His face was altered"* (Lk 9:29). It is clear that Jesus changed form for the purpose of meeting with Moses and Elijah in the vision.

2. Only Jesus communicated with the dead. The texts state that Moses and Elijah were talking **with Jesus**, not with Peter, James and John who were fast asleep at the time. When they were awakened, *"they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him"* (Lk 9:32). *"And it happened, as they [Moses and Elijah] were parting from Him,"* that Peter suggested to Jesus that three tabernacles be built (Lk 9:33). **Therefore, neither Peter, James nor John communicated with either Moses or Elijah. Neither did Elijah and Moses communicate with them.** Peter related many years later that the only communication they received from anyone other than Jesus was a voice out of heaven saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (2 Pt 1:17,18).

It would be presumptuous, therefore,

to use this unique visionary experience in the life of these three disciples as proof of humans communicating with the spirits of the dead. No one communicated with the dead on the mountain except Jesus. And Jesus was at that time transformed Deity. This would at least indicate that flesh and blood would have to be transformed in order to be in a state that would be able to communicate with the dead.

Throughout the Bible the concept of death means the termination of a particular state of being. Something ceases. That which ceases is the living's relationship with the living world. The cessation of this relationship is the termination of

communication with the living. The dead move into another realm or state from which they are not allowed to communicate with the living. They do not need to communicate facts about this realm or state because enough has been revealed in the Bible to satisfy our intellectual and emotional needs in the present. One should seek in the Bible for knowledge concerning the afterlife, not from the dead. If one seeks to know things concerning what will come after death, then he or she should seek the one who was raised from the dead, that is, Jesus. Only He has the key to hope for what lies beyond the grave, for He has the key to living the abundant life before the grave.

Chapter 7

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

The word **eschatology** refers to the study of last things. These are those things that will occur when Jesus returns. We would include the last things in our personal lives, for we will all eventually die and face judgment (Hb 9:27).

The teachings of occultism contradict many fundamental Bible teachings concerning biblical eschatology. The Bible defines the journey of our spirit from the time when God created our spirit and gave it to us at conception. It will abide with our body until the time when we conclude our journey on earth. As individuals, and in order to complete our journey, we are made up of body, soul and spirit (1 Th 5:23). At the time of death, the body returns to the dust of the earth, but the

spirit, and the soul that is the result of the spirit within man, will continue on in the presence of the Lord. Though the details of our afterlife are not clearly revealed in the Bible, there is enough information that is revealed to know that occult teachings contradict the Bible in many areas. There are some basic Bible teachings concerning biblical eschatology in reference to the final coming of Jesus and eternity that each Bible student must understand. (More information, see Book 8, *The Christian's World View*, at www.africainternational.org.)

A. Journey of the spirit and soul from birth to afterlife.

1. Birth: When one is born, he is born with a created spirit (Zc 12:1) which is formed by God (See Nm 16:22; 27:16; Is 42:5; 57:16; Ec 12:7; Hb 12:9). This spirit is created in the spiritual image of God (Gn 1:26; Jn 4:24) and given to every person. The Bible does not say that our spirit is inherently eternal. In other words, the spirit of man does not exist separate from the existence of God. The Bible simply says that God creates our spirit that is clothed in a physical tabernacle throughout our earthly existence.

As the electricity creates light in a light bulb, so the spirit of man creates the soul of man. The soul of man is dependent on the existence of the God-created spirit. Therefore, the soul will exist within an individual as long as the spirit is there also.

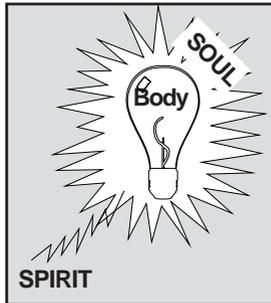
The body of man is the medium through which the spirit generates soul that communicates character and personality to other spirit-filled individuals. However, there is a dimension of communication that is beyond the confines of the body, for there was communication between the rich man and Abraham in the hades realm of existence as explained by Jesus in Luke 16:19-31. Their bodies were in the grave, but in some way, they were still able to communicate with one another.

2. Death: Death is the termination of that which was living. It is a termina-

tion because the spirit is separated from the body (Js 2:26). In reference to our physical body, therefore, death is the termination of our physical body. When one dies, the body “*returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it*” (Ec 12:7; see Gn 3:19). The spirits of men return to God to dwell in one of two different places: (1) The righteous go to paradise, or Abraham’s bosom (Lk 16:22; 23:43; 2 Co 12:4). (2) The wicked to go and are reserved in torments (Lk 16:23; 2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6).

It is important to remember that in death there is a separation of the body and the spirit (Js 2:26). In reference to the righteous, they, as Lazarus, are “*carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom*” (Lk 16:22). Our spirits go to some specific destination. We are not left to float around in space, seeking for someone or something in which to dwell. The rich man in Luke 16 was also in some place (Lk 16:28). He did not want his five living brothers to “*come to this place*” (Lk 16:28). The spirits of the unrighteous are also not floating in space, seeking to indwell either animate or inanimate objects. Neither are they seeking to be called from the dead. God is in control in places wherein are all the spirits of the dead. There is no such thing as wandering spirits of the dead who are detached from some place.

3. The last coming of Jesus: When Jesus comes again, “*all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth ...*” (Jn 5:28,29). There will be a bodily resurrection of all the dead (See 1 Th 4:13-18).



The body of the Christian will be raised in the last day. However, it will be changed. It will be a “same-changed” body. John, who personally handled and saw Jesus’ resurrected body, did not understand the nature of this resurrected body. Many years later he wrote, “***It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is***” (1 Jn 3:2). Therefore, we shall be like Jesus when we are resurrected, though we do not fully understand the nature of this body.

We can only assume that Jesus’ resurrected body immediately after His resurrection is the body into which we will be changed. After His resurrection, Jesus said, “*Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have*” (Lk 24:39). Jesus’ statement was in the context of the disciples’ proclamation out of fright that He was a spirit. But He was certainly more than a spirit according to His statement. He was in the glorious body into which Paul affirms we will be transformed? Paul wrote that Jesus “*will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body*” (Ph 3:21). From this statement it seems that we will be transformed into the same body in which Jesus now dwells. This is the body that the disciples handled, and in which body Jesus ascended into heaven. In the context of Luke 24:30, Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that He was bodily raised. He was not raised as a spirit. He also bodily ascended and will bodily come again.

Paul stated that our “*body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption*” (1 Co 15:42). It is buried a body that decays, but it will be raised a body that cannot decay. He continues, “*It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*” (1 Co 15:44). It is buried a physical body, but will be raised a body that is changed to exist in a changed environment that is different from this physical world. Paul continued, “*... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Co 15:50). Therefore, “*the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*” (1 Co 15:52). Our mortal body will become immortal. Our corruptible body will become incorruptible. This is truly, as Paul said, a **mystery**. It is something beyond our present experience, and therefore, beyond our present vocabulary to explain. This is why John could not explain to us the nature of the body of Jesus. Paul could not explain the nature of our resurrected body. **There are no earthly words to explain that which will be beyond this earthly existence.**

When Jesus comes, He will bring with Him the spirits of those who are dead in Christ (1 Th 3:13; 4:14). The saints will be coming for their resurrected bodies. They are coming to be embodied again for heavenly dwelling in the new heavens and earth (2 Pt 3:13).

4. The last judgment: After the final coming of Jesus, “*we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to*

what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Co 5:10). Paul does not say in this statement when judgment will take place in reference to each individual. He said in Acts 17:31, “*He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.*” We could assume that he is here talking about the last day of history. On the last day there will be the final assignment of those who had already died and been judged before that day. It will be the day of last judgment for those who are alive at the time of Jesus’ coming. However, it will not be a time of judging again of those who have already died before Jesus’ coming and have been reserved in either paradise or torments. Such people will have already been judged. Those in torments do not have a second chance for salvation in another final judgment in their existence.

We must keep in mind that final judgment has already happened in the existence of those who have already died. Hebrews 9:27 indicates that judgment takes place immediately when one dies. “*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this judgment.*” This is what happened in the existence of the rich man, for when he died he found himself in torments (Lk 16:23). Lazarus was judged and found in Abraham’s bosom (Lk 16:22). There will be no changing of destiny after this final judgment. If one finds himself in torments after death, then he or she is destined for the certain destruction of the gehenna that is especially prepared for the Devil and his angels at the end of time (Mt 25:41). There is no

hope for the lost after death to receive another opportunity to be judged at the coming of Jesus.

5. Eternity: After the judgment of all mankind, the Bible says that the wicked will suffer a just punishment that has unending consequences (See Mt 10:28; 18:8; 25:41; 2 Th 1:9; Rv 19:20; 20:14,15; 21:8). On the other hand, the righteous will go into an existence that does not fade away (See Mt 25:46; 1 Co 15:42,50; Cl 1:12; 1 Pt 1:4; Rv 14:13; 21:4).

The above is a brief picture of the journey of the spirit of man from creation to final destination. This is not the general view of those who believe and practice occult religions. Many sects of the occult believe that the spirits of the dead are in a state of limbo, that is, they are detached from a place. The Bible teaches that the spirits of the dead return immediately to God at the time of death. Many cults believe the spirits can communicate with the living. However, the Bible teaches that neither Lazarus nor the rich man could communicate with the living. The fact is that the spirits of the righteous are with Jesus (2 Co 5:8; Ph 1:23). The spirits of the unrighteous are reserved in torments.

If one contends that the dead can communicate with the living, then we must wonder what it is they can communicate. What greater information can the dead communicate about life and death than what has already been communicated to man through the Bible?

B. Occult beliefs contradict principal Bible teachings.

There are several teachings in the Bible that contradict the teachings and practices of the occult. A few of these teachings are listed below. This contrast of teaching gives us some idea of the vast amount of Bible teaching that is against the deceptive teachings that are associated with the religious beliefs of the occult.

1. *The Bible says that we should not worry about tomorrow* (Mt 6:34; Rm 8:23). Occultism says we should. The reason why many of those of the occult worry about tomorrow is because of their uncertainty of life, but specifically, their uncertainty of life after death.

2. *The Bible teaches that we should trust only in God for guidance* (Ps 48:14; Is 58:11; At 17:28). Astrology says we should trust in the stars and planets, for in them it is believed, one can find guidance in life.

3. *The Bible teaches that the word of God is the Christian's strength* (Ps 119:1-8; 2 Tm 3:15-17). Occultism says to depend on anything but the Bible, for those of the occult have usually given up on the Bible as a standard for moral direction.

4. *The Bible teaches that there is power in prayer to change the future* (Js 1:5; 5:15). Occultism says that the future is unchangeable. Many of those of the occult usually believe that all things happen as the result of unchangeable fate.

5. *The Bible teaches that God actively works in the affairs of man* (At 17:28; Rm 8:28; 13:1,2). Occultism says that the destinies of men and nations are

unchangeable. All historical events happen as a result of fate.

6. *The Bible teaches that the Christian has all things necessary for godly living* (2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3). Occultism says we need knowledge from stars and spirits in order to direct our lives or determine the future.

7. *The Bible teaches that God will work on behalf of the Christian in supplying his needs* (Mt 6:25-34; Ep 3:20). Occultism says trust in other things than God. It is certainly not the belief of those of the occult religions to trust in a God who works in our lives. Those of the occult seem to put their faith in everything other than God and His word.

8. *The Bible teaches that Christians should have a spiritual character and their minds should be set on the things that are above* (Mt 16:23; Jn 4:24; Rm 12:1; Ph 3:20; Cl 3:2; Js 1:14,15; 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15). Occultism says trust in the horoscope, signs of the times, and happenings of this material world. The world view of many of those in occult religions stress those things that are of this world. Their obsession with the things of the world takes their minds off God.

9. *The Bible teaches that man does sin against God* (Rm 3:23; 6:23; 1 Jn 3:4). Satanism says there is no such thing as sin. Those of satanism do not believe in the concept of sin because sin assumes there is a final authority before whom all will eventually give account.

10. *The Bible teaches that man is to give glory to God and condemns the worship of nature* (Dt 7:25; Rm 1:18-32; Ep 1:12). Astrology says to give hom-

age to the stars and planets. Because those of occult religions place much emphasis on the events of the world, their thinking is centered around the world.

11. *The Bible teaches that man should not live after the lust of the flesh* (Rm 8:6-8; 14:8; Gl 5:19-21). Satanism says we are not subject to any unchanging moral code, and thus, are free to fulfill the lusts of the flesh according to our individual choices.

12. *Satanic teachings contradict the following Bible truths concerning the attributes of the nature and being of God:*

- a. God is loving (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:8,16).
- b. God is merciful (Lm 3:22,23; Ps 116:5).
- c. God is our Father (1 Jn 3:1).
- d. God hears our prayers (Js 5:16).
- e. God is holy (1 Sm 2:2).
- f. God is longsuffering (2 Pt 3:9,15).
- g. God is just (Ps 89:14; 119:137; 1 Jn 1:9).
- h. God is a savior (Ps 27:1; 37:39; Hs 13:4).

13. *The Bible teaches that Satan is the opportunity for sin in the lives of men.* However, the advocates of satanism affirm that what Satan does is right, and thus, the following would be acceptable in their eyes:

- a. Satan corrupts purity (2 Co 11:3).
- b. Satan corrupts the mind (1 Jn 3:8).
- c. Satan corrupts the body of man by causing man to reap what he sows (Gl 6:7).
- d. Satan teaches that we should live for

ourselves and not totally love God (See Mt 6:24; 22:37-39).

- e. Satan is the father of deceit and encourages deceit (Gn 3:1,4; Jn 8:44; 2 Co 2:11; 2 Th 2:9-12; see 2 Co 11:13,-14).
- f. Satan says to live after the flesh (1 Jn 2:16; 1 Pt 1:13-15; Jd 18,19).
- g. Satan's teachings are always contrary to God's teachings (1 Tm 4:1).

We must remember that there are several general condemnations in the Bible against the beliefs and practices of occultism. These warnings are there because occult beliefs and practices lead one away from God. We must remember that the Bible is all-sufficient in guiding one in his or her spiritual life. In fact, we can have hope and security in this life, and salvation in the life to come, by trusting in and obeying only the Bible. Therefore, the search for wisdom, direction and knowledge through the incantations of occultism is useless and unnecessary.

The heavenly bodies cannot reveal direction for individuals. Man is a free-moral agent and has the ability to make choices in order to affect his own future. Man was created by an all-powerful God who controls the universe. He revealed His Son Jesus and thus expects all men to approach Him through the Son. Jesus will come again to judge the world. The only standard by which He will judge the world is His word (Jn 12:48). Therefore, we must seek to be submissive to His word. Every recourse that is given by God to deal with Satan and his work is found in the word of God.

Chapter 8

DEMON POSSESSION

Adventurous wanderers have always searched for answers to questions that excite their imagination. When they do, they seem to always go to extremes in their search. Astronomers gaze through telescopes in order to discover some new secret that might answer the riddle of life. However, the telescopes are never large enough to satisfy man's desire to go to the extreme. Others will keep sending probes and space ships into deepest space in order to seek either knowledge or life or both. Geologists keep digging deeper into the earth's surface, hoping that they will uncover some fragment of the ancient past that will shed light on man's history. Men continually become doctors of philosophy, hoping that they will come up with some new truth. Man has always had a desire to uncover and discover that which he does not fully understand, and too often, cannot understand. His inquisitive nature has always driven him to the limit of his senses. He is the same with his religion.

In the religious world, many people have for centuries sought to understand the spirit world. Hearsay and phenomenal "experiences" of supposedly wandering spirits and lurking demons have only excited our imagination to visualize things that go beyond the facts and beyond our senses. Our mystic inclinations have moved our minds beyond Bible facts. Too many emotional adventurers have roamed beyond reality into a world of self-decep-

tion and fantasy. Our concern here is what the Bible says about these things, and especially, what does it say concerning the subject of demon possession. This subject seems to fascinate the mystically excited and often biblically misguided religionist who cannot seem to place his faith in God's word alone.

Those who believe in modern-day demon possession contend that demons have the power to voluntarily and subjectively indwell and control any person they so choose. It is also believed by some that these demons can work miracles through those over whom they exercise control. As demons possessed individuals in the first century during the ministry of Jesus and His disciples, so it is believed that they possess people today. As they were cast out in the first century, so they must be cast out today.

It is not our purpose here to study either the history of or the current events surrounding the subject of demon possession that are commonly circulated among excited and misguided religionists. Our purpose here will be **to study the subject in the Bible**. From this study we can then determine whether "modern-day demon possession" is the same as that which is explained in the Bible. If it is not the same, then it must be called something else.

There are specific definitions in the New Testament that identify true demon possession. The Christian does not want

to allow himself to be deceived by the modern-day psychological phenomena that people claim to be demon possession. Therefore, we must seek to understand the characteristics of demon possession only as it is defined in the New Testament.

True demon possession must be defined by the Bible. It is erroneous to associate New Testament demon possession with a modern-day psychological phenomenon, as the self-hypnotic trance of some witch or charmer, or the hysterical fit of some uncontrolled neurotic worshiper. It is wrong to identify epilepsy or physical sicknesses we observe today as the demon possession that is identified in the New Testament. In other words, **we must never define demon possession in the New Testament by what we may claim to be demon possession today.** We must do the reverse. We must first gather as much information as possible from the New Testament cases of demon possession in order to construct a definition of what true demon possession is. We would approach any subject of the Bible in this manner, and thus we must do the same when studying demon possession.

With the above in mind, the following points and chapters give a brief description of the characteristics of demon possession in the New Testament. We must remember, however, that we do not have a complete picture of what occurred in every case of New Testament demon possession. **When we combine all the cases of possession,** we are still left without information that would allow us

to have a complete picture of this first century phenomenon. However, the New Testament does give sufficient information to identify first century demon possession to be different from the psychological phenomenon that we see today that is often called demon possession.

The following is a list of demon possession cases in the New Testament. As we survey through these cases, there are specific things that are mentioned in each case that help us formulate a definition of the characteristics of true demon possession. One should not simply consider one case of possession. Consider all the cases together in order to develop a composite understanding of the nature of true demon possession.

CASES OF DEMON POSSESSION

1. Matthew 8:28-33; 9:32-34; 12:22,23 (15:21-28; Mk 7:24-33)
2. Matthew 17:14-18 (Lk 9:37-43; Mk 9:17-29)
3. Luke 4:33-37 (Mk 1:21-28,32-34; Lk 8:1-3,30-38; Mk 5:1-20)
4. Acts 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:11-16

From the above recorded cases of demon possession, consider the following characteristics or situations that surrounded the possession. These are important guidelines we must use in determining what true demon possession was.

A. The beliefs of demons:

Demons had an intellectual ability to believe in certain things. They were not raging characters with hideous animalis-

tic manifestations that often characterize the descriptions of those who believe in the modern-day demon possession of Hollywood films. Their characteristics as defined in the New Testament do give us a glimpse of the hideous world of Satan and his hosts. Keep in mind that it was not the work of demons to strike terror in individuals. It was their purpose to lead the possessed from God and to manifest the wretched world of Satan.

1. Demons recognized the final judgment. One demon replied to Jesus, “*Have you come here to torment us before the time?*” (Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24). Demons, or the devil’s angels, know that they are destined for a final judgment and destruction that is “*prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Mt 25:41). Demons are evidently fallen angels, and thus, have now been “*reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*” (Jd 6). They are now “*reserved for judgment*” (2 Pt 2:4), after which they will face their destruction. They intellectually know their destiny.

2. Demons believe in God. In view of the demon’s recognition of the one God, James wrote that “*the demons believe—and tremble*” (Js 2:19). They believe in one God and are not polytheists, that is, they do not believe in many gods. The Gadarene demoniac confessed, “*What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?*” (Lk 8:28). It appears that demons are more willing to confess their belief in God than many of the world today.

3. Demons recognize the deity of Jesus. In reference to their recognition of Jesus, demons cried out, “*What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God*” (Mt 8:29). One demon cried out, “*I know who You are—the Holy One of God*” (Mk 1:24; see Lk 4:34). Demons certainly recognized the virgin birth of Jesus and His heavenly origin. They knew that all things had been delivered into Jesus’ hand, for He had power over their destiny (See Jn 3:35; 13:3; 17:2).

4. Demons recognized the power and authority of Jesus. In recognizing the sovereignty of Jesus, several demons “*begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss*” (Lk 8:31). Jesus had the power to instantly condemn demons to confinement in the abyss (See Mt 8:29; Mk 5:7). Because the demons recognized this, they unquestionably subjected themselves to Jesus. Mark 5:6 describes the reaction of a demon possessed individual when the demon recognized Jesus: “*But when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.*” Demon possessed people in the first century recognized the power and authority of Jesus. The demons did not move the one whom they possessed to attack Jesus. They moved the possessed to fall down before Jesus.

5. Demons recognized their end. When demons were confronted by Jesus, they recognized that their end was near. The unclean spirit in Mark 1 asked Jesus, “*Did you come to destroy us?*” (vs 24; see also Lk 4:33-36). The answer to the question was, “**Yes!**” Jesus did come to destroy their human possession and to

keep them cast “down to hell [tartarus]” and delivered “to chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Pt 2:4). Because of this power that Jesus exercised over demons, they totally submitted to His will, pleading as one did, “I beg You, do not torment me” (Lk 8:28).

Knowing that their end was imminent, the demons of Luke 8 “begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss” (Lk 8:31). Instead, they asked Jesus for permission to enter a herd of swine (Lk 8:32). **They made this request in view of the fact that their days for possessing humans were drawing to a close during the ministry of Jesus.**

One important point that is understood from the demon possession case of Luke 8 is that spirits seek to be embodied. The demons of Luke 8 chose to indwell the bodies of pigs over being disembodied. Paul related that the final desire of Christians is not to be disembodied (unclothed), “but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life” (2 Co 5:4). “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven” (2 Co 5:2).

We do not want to exist apart from bodily presence. Neither did the demons. For this reason, God allowed demons to have a brief taste of what could have been in their case in reference to their proper habitation (Jd 6). He allowed them to briefly indwell bodies in history in order to give us evidence of their reality, but also to manifest the great desire on the part of spirits to indwell a body. It

also reveals to us the great privilege that we have to indwell a body in the presence of this physical environment. It also gives us encouragement concerning the new habitation that we will receive in our changed body in which we will dwell in heaven to come (2 Co 5:1-8).

B. Characteristics of demon possession:

When we consult the dictionary of the New Testament, there is definitely a difference between a Bible definition of demons, and those fantasies of demons that are conjured up in the minds of imaginative men.

BIBLE DEFINITION OF DEMONS

1. Demons could comprehend the prophecies of their doom (Mt 8:29).
2. Demons could speak (Mk 1:34).
3. Demons could carry on a coherent conversation with the living (Mk 5:7).
4. Demons could obey (Mt 8:16; 17:18).
5. Demons could entreat (Lk 8:31).
6. Demons had intellectual abilities (Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24).
7. Some demons enhanced the physical strength of those they possessed (Lk 8:29).
8. Some demons evidently caused physical deformities (Lk 13:11-17).
9. Some demons evidently caused one to be mute (Mt 9:32,33).
10. Some demons evidently caused one not to be able to speak (Mk 9:17,25).
11. Some demons evidently drove the individual they possessed to suicidal mania (Mk 9:22).

12. Some demons evidently caused mental disorders (Mt 8:28,29; Lk 8:26-36).
13. Demons could easily be cast out by the word of Jesus (Mt 17:18; Lk 9:41,42).
14. Demons could easily be cast out by Jesus' disciples (Lk 10:17; At 16:16-18; 19:11,12).
15. Demons could pass through "waterless places" and not find rest (Mt 12:43-45).
16. Demons could leave men and enter animals (Mk 5:12-14).
17. Demons indwelt those who did not practice occult religions that promoted psychological and mental control that they called demon possession. (This seems to be the case of Mark 9:14-29. This possessed son had been cursed with an unclean spirit from childhood.)
18. Demons recognized and confessed the Son of God (Lk 8:28).
19. Demons confessed the one true God (Lk 8:28).

In the New Testament, demons are referred to as "devils," "demons," "evil spirits," "unclean spirits" and the "angels" of the Devil. Demons had certain beliefs and characteristics. They caused certain effects in the individuals they possessed, but they did not cause a person to be diseased. Demon possession was not a disease.

Any so-called "possessions" today must be defined by the cases of demon possession we read about in the New Testament. Any effort to use a modern-day phenomenon to explain Bible revela-

tion is unwarranted. The same would be true concerning the practices of witches and enchanters during the time of Jesus. **Any effort to use the beliefs and practices of sorcerers today to define the demon possession of Jesus' time would be using a deception of Satan to explain the reality of evil that Jesus personally confronted.** Jesus confronted and conquered the real powers of Satan that God allowed at that time to be unleashed. Jesus did not show His power over Satan by confronting the tricks of some deceptive sorcerer of Palestine. The battle between the super powers was fought in Jesus' day between the real powers of the unseen world. Jesus won the battle. The victory was recorded. God does not have to prove that victory again by allowing demons to carry on today as they so desire.

We must remember, therefore, **that the Bible must define true demon possession.** This is true because of the wild imaginations of those who are set on deceiving both themselves and others. The above list of characteristics of demons and their possession of individuals is taken from an overview of New Testament cases of demon possession. We must study these characteristics closely and then compare them with what is called demon possession today. In doing this we discover that the phenomenon that is called demon possession today is not the same as the true demon possession that is recorded in the New Testament.

It is far too easy to allow modern-day psychological experiences, that we may personally not understand, to influ-

ence our understanding of demon possession in the New Testament. It is not right to label with a Bible word or phrase something that is entirely foreign to the Bible. Such is commonly practiced in the religious world today. The Bible alone must be used to define true demon possession. If we do not do this, then we are subject to stealing from the Bible any word or phrase we might so desire in order to “make biblical” some religious invention

we might conjure up. The Bible is our only dictionary when discussing those things that relate to the spirit world. For this reason, we will contend that we first define and identify all things by what the Bible says. We will refrain from reading into the Bible those things that we experience of this world, lest we create a religion after our own experiences.

Chapter 9

THE PURPOSE OF DEMON POSSESSION

God does things for a purpose. His final purpose is to get prepared people to a prepared dwelling in the new heavens and earth (2 Co 5:5; 2 Pt 3:13). Therefore, when considering the demon possession of the New Testament, we must remind ourselves that there was a purpose for which God allowed demons to possess people in the first century. Understanding this purpose helps us to understand why God limited the time when demons could possess people.

We must recognize that demon possession was actual and real during the ministry of Jesus and the early disciples. But this was a unique period of God’s work in the world. God allowed demons, who were representatives of Satan, to possess people for specific reasons. When we understand these reasons, then we will understand why demons have not been allowed to possess people today.

A. Demon possession existed in order to demonstrate Jesus’ authority

and power over Satan.

Jesus came in order to “*destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Hb 2:14). He came to crush Satan (See the prophecy of Gn 3:15). He accomplished this work at the cross, “*having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them*” (Cl 2:15; see Mt 12:28,29; Lk 10:18; Jn 12:31). **Therefore, God allowed demons to possess people during the life of Jesus and His disciples in order that He might openly manifest for us the power and authority of Jesus and His disciples over Satan and his hosts.** Every time a demon was cast out it was a demonstration of the forces of righteousness over the forces of wickedness (See Mt 9:33; 12:22,23,28,29; Lk 10:17-19). Once this demonstration was completed and recorded, there was no more need to openly and visibly manifest the power and authority of Jesus over the

spirit world of Satan and demons. Once God proved the superiority of Jesus, the environment in which the spiritual battle had taken place was forever changed. The enemy would never again be allowed to make himself visibly known through the possession of people. He would be able to make himself known only through the obsession of those who would seek to do evil.

It is very important that we clearly understand the above purpose of demon possession in the first century. When God accomplished this purpose in allowing demons to possess people, He terminated this open manifestation of the power and work of Satan. Once the purpose was completed, there was no more a necessity to prove the point.

Satan is *“the prince of the power of the air”* (Ep 2:2). All demons are subject to him. Jesus came **in order that the works of God might be manifested in Him** (Jn 9:1ff). In order for this to be done, God had to allow Satan the opportunity to manifest his delegated power and authority in an open manner during the ministry of Jesus as Jesus was the revealed power of God among men. Therefore, **God allowed Satan to develop an environment in the land of Palestine that would allow Jesus to prove His power over Satan.** When Jesus came, therefore, He came to demonstrate His power and authority over the kingdom of Satan. This is what Jesus meant when He said, *“Or else how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plun-*

der his house” (Mt 12:29). God allowed the strong man (Satan) the opportunity to build his house in order that Jesus plunder it. We would never have known that Jesus had absolute authority over all that Satan represented if God had not allowed Satan to manifest his most wicked behavior.

Satan was the strong man in the statement of Jesus in Matthew 12:29. Jesus was the one who plundered the strong man’s house. John wrote, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 Jn 3:8). Jesus did this in order to bring salvation to mankind and in order that John and the other New Testament writers could write encouraging words as, *“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”* (1 Jn 4:4). When Jesus destroyed *“him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,”* He despoiled Satan’s works, including demon possession (Hb 2:14).

Luke recorded that Jesus had and has greater power over the power of Satan.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all this armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils (Lk 11:21,22).

Jesus was stronger than Satan. Even in His “humbled state” of incarnation, Jesus had absolute power over Satan. In order to prove such, God allowed demons to possess people during Jesus’

ministry in order that we might have a record of the authority and power of Jesus over all things (Mt 28:18).

We would never have known Jesus' total authority over the realm of Satan if demons had not been permitted to possess people during the ministry of Jesus. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, a few representative cases of demon possession lingered in order to prove that Jesus' delegated authority did not cease with His ascension to heaven. The prophecy of Mark 16:17 was thus fulfilled in the lives of those who believed. The disciples, as Jesus promised, did cast out demons. They continued to prove apostolic authority on behalf of Jesus throughout the early ministry of the disciples.

The primary purpose of the early disciples was to represent the One who manifested power over Satan while on earth. Their mission was to preach the gospel that was all-powerful over the works of Satan (Rm 1:16). God had proved Jesus' authority and power during His personal ministry. He proved the continuation of that power and authority in the disciples' exorcism of demons after the ascension of Jesus. That proof has been recorded for us in the Scriptures. There was no need, therefore, for God to allow demons to continue to possess people after He had proved His point. If we do not accept the Scriptures as sufficient proof of God's final authority over all things, then we are doubting God's invested authority in the Scriptures.

B. Demon possession demon-

strated the hideousness of sin.

God allowed demon possession in the first century in order to inform all Christians of all time that ...

... 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 (Eph 6:12; Gl 5:19-21).

This statement by Paul to the Ephesians defines the true nature of the Christian's enemy. However, Paul's defense mechanism for Christians in Ephesus, as well as for us today, was not the power of exorcism, **but the power of the gospel and the word of God** (See Rm 1:16; Hb 4:12).

Paul's defense against the temptations of Satan is the word of God. In Ephesians 6:10-18 he exhorted Christians to free-morally "*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*" Christians must "*put on the whole armor of God*" that they "*may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*" This is something that Christians must **do**. They must choose to act by submitting to these instructions of Paul and the other New Testament writers.

God wants us to realize that Satan is real and that his nature is hideous. If Satan were allowed to exercise his full desires upon humanity, the result would be far greater than the wretched state of individuals who allowed demons to possess them in the first century. Though

we do not struggle against demon possession today, we do struggle against the deceiver who has desires far beyond what God allows him to exercise in our present time. The only way Satan can get to God is by inflicting humanity. Because of his evil nature, he would destroy all humanity if he could, just to make an attack against God. He did such before in the days of Noah, and he would do it again.

C. Demon possession demonstrated that Jesus and the disciples were from God.

The scribes condemned Jesus by saying, “*He has Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons He casts out demons*” (Mk 3:22). But Jesus answered, “*How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand*” (Mk 3:23,24). “*And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided,*” Jesus continued, “*he cannot stand, but has an end*” (Mk 3:26). This brief conversation between the scribes and Jesus, therefore, openly manifested the proof that Jesus was not from Satan. Jesus’ casting out of demons demonstrated that He was from God. If He had been working for the kingdom of Satan, He would not have been doing those things that destroyed Satan’s work among men.

In preparation for one of their preaching tours, Jesus gave authority to His disciples to cast out demons (Lk 10:17). Therefore, their authority over the realm of darkness was visually manifested to all as Jesus’ exorcism of de-

mons manifested His authority over Satan and his angels. These cases of Jesus and the disciples’ power and authority over Satan were recorded in the New Testament. Therefore, we have a record that we must believe in order to trust in God. God does not need to continue this visible power over Satan today.

The power of Jesus and the disciples over any power Satan is allowed to have has been manifested. The manifestation of this power has been recorded for all to see. Therefore, we must read the record, the New Testament, in order to gain faith in the power of Jesus over Satan.

D. Demon possession demonstrated that God’s people can overcome anything of Satan.

Paul said that when God seated Jesus “*at His right hand in the heavenly places,*” He wanted all Christians of all time to realize that Jesus is “*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*” (Ep 1:20,21). Therefore, God put all things under Jesus’ authority “*and gave Him to be head over all things*” for the sake of the church (See Ep 1:22). Peter recorded that Jesus “*has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him*” (1 Pt 3:22).

Jesus’ open manifestation over Satan during His personal ministry on earth clearly demonstrated His authority and power over Satan. This demonstration

of power continued in the lives of the early disciples as they commanded the supernatural in the working of miracles and the casting out of demons (See Mk 16:17). Christians today must answer Paul's question that "*if God is for us, who can be against us*" (Rm 8:31)? The answer is, **no one**. Paul's conclusion to this matter is expressed in the words of Romans 8:38,39.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christians must be confident that Jesus now has authority over all things. God had given all things into His hands while He was on earth (Jn 13:3; 17:2). He is now at the right hand of God with all authority.

Christians have an inspired record of the victory of Jesus over Satan. They must trust in this record and believe that they "***are more than conquerors***" through the One who loved us (Rm 8:37). John summed up the matter in Revelation 17:14: "*These will make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.***"

We must believe these words. When it comes to anything that we cannot explain, we must resort to the word of God for an explanation. If we do not

do this, we will be led astray by the deceptions of Satan. We must stay with the sixty-six inspired books of the Bible. If we read books that report contrary information to what is reported in the Bible, we must not add to that which is written in the Bible (See Rv 21:18,19). In a world of misguided religionists, we must search only the Scriptures for evidences of God's power and authority. Though the universe manifests that there is a great God out there (Rm 1:20), one must discover the revelation of this God in the Bible in order to understand His nature and character. It is the Bible that reveals this one true God and how He has worked in the lives of men.

We should not allow ourselves to be deceived into believing modern-day deceptions of deceived men who seek a following in order to enrich their bank accounts. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the clever of men as Simon, the sorcerer. Concerning Simon, Luke wrote,

To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying 'This man is the great power of God.' And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time (At 8:10,11).

Throughout the world there are many crafty men who have held captive by their deceptions many innocent victims who are ignorant of the Bible. Therefore, we must remember Jesus' admonition, "***Take heed that no one deceives you***" (Mt 24:4).

Chapter 10

EXORCISM

Because demons were allowed to possess individuals in the first century, Jesus and the disciples were given the authority and power to cast them out. **No one could cast out demons in the first century other than Jesus and His disciples.** If unbelievers could cast out demons either in the first century or now, then Jesus' power over the influence of Satan would be nullified. In other words, **if a sorcerer could actually cast out demons, then the power and authority of Jesus and His disciples over Satan would be brought to naught.** It would certainly be confusing if God allowed false teachers to cast out demons today. Nevertheless, there are those today who claim to be exorcists with the ability to exorcise their make-believe demons. According to the word of God, however, the modern-day rituals and incantations of deceived men contradict the New Testament examples of casting out demons.

We maintain the proposition that only Jesus and His disciples could exorcise demons in the first century. If such were true in the first century, then it would certainly be true today in the presence of any so-called demon possessed people. Exorcism is classified as a miraculous work in Acts 8:6. And only Jesus and His disciples could work miracles. If we claim, therefore, that one casts out demons today, then we must affirm that the exorcist is a Christian and that he has

authority over the supernatural. However, from our understanding of how one comes into a covenant relationship with God through obedience to the gospel (faith, repentance and baptism), we would affirm that such modern-day fakes are not Christians. Therefore, they are not casting out demons because they are not Christians.

The real work of Satan is in the lives of false exorcists who teach the doctrines of demons. These false teachers existed during the time of Jesus and the early disciples as in the case of Simon, the sorcerer of Samaria. Such false teachers have always existed. This is why there are so many warnings against such in the New Testament. Paul warned, *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"* (1 Tm 4:1).

These deceiving spirits are the real instruments of Satan. These are those who are practicing the deceptive practices of trickery in order to lead people to believe that they have control over the supernatural. Those who teach the illusion of demon possession today are teaching the doctrines of demons. James explained this. *"But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic"* (Js 3:14,15). This is why John said, *"Be-*

loved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jn 4:1; see vss 2,3).

Satan and his hosts work today through the deceptive teachings of false teachers. Christians who believe their false practices of exorcism and false teachings are being deceived into believing the doctrines of demons. They are being deceived by wisdom that James calls demonic.

This is precisely what Jesus warned in Matthew 24:23,24. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus knew that there would be those who would seek to deceive the disciples into believing that they were the Christ. Jesus' instructions to His disciples concerning such false christs was, "*Do not believe it.*" He said that these deceivers would show "*great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*" The deceivers would pretend to command the supernatural. However, their great signs and wonders were only tricks, set forth to deceive. Jesus said, "*Do not believe it.*"

When we hear of supposed miraculous wonders here and there, we are safe and confident to follow Jesus' advice. Even if such things are written in books with appealing covers, it is the Bible that must be our final authority to determine that which is miraculous. This is necessary for there are those who are eager to read of fantastic stories of this or that supposed miraculous work of some deceiver.

This is illustrated in Jesus' message to the churches of Asia in Revelation 2

and 3. There was a group of false Jewish teachers in Ephesus who Jesus called "*a synagogue of Satan*" (Rv 2:9). By their blasphemy, they led others into their false teachings. Among the disciples of Thyatira, there was the sinful apostate Christian named Jezebel "*who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols*" (Rv 2:20). This false prophet was teaching the doctrine of Satan (Rv 2:24). Those in Philadelphia were undergoing a similar attack by those of the "synagogue of Satan" who were teaching lies (Rv 3:9). Satan was not miraculously working among the disciples of Asia. However, he was working. He was working through his most powerful medium, through the lives of self-deceived individuals who have given up a knowledge of the truth and have run after the workings of error (2 Th 2:9-12). Satan's greatest workers are self-deceived religious leaders of this world.

What was going on among the disciples in the Asian is the same thing that has continued throughout history. Satan was venting his frustrations against the early Christians through lies and immoral influences. John pictured this war of Satan against the church in Revelation 12. In verse 17 John wrote,

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

It is evident, therefore, that Satan's war against the church is through deception and evil influences. We must not be led astray by the demon theology of modern-day witches and religionists who seek a following by preaching doctrines of fear to innocent victims.

It is important for every Christian to understand the true practice of exorcism as it is explained in the New Testament. This will help us separate what is true from that which is deceptively practiced today by false teachers who are teaching doctrines of demons.

As in defining true demon possession, so we must understand the exorcism of demons by allowing the New Testament to be our only dictionary. We must not allow the deceptions of modern-day exorcists to define for us what exorcism is. We must go to the New Testament in order to discover what actually went on when a demon was exorcized from someone. In an indirect way, this also helps us to understand the true nature of demon possession.

A. Exorcism was in the name of Jesus.

In the New Testament demons were always exorcised by the disciples of Jesus in His name, that is, **by His authority**. When the seventy disciples returned from their mission to which Jesus had sent them in Luke 10, they reported, "*Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name*" (Lk 10:17). In Philippi, Paul cast out a spirit of divination from a young girl by the same authority.

Paul said to the spirit, "*I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her*" (At 16:18). There was no "exorcism formula" performed here by Paul or any of the other disciples. The demon was simply cast out by the authority of Jesus' name.

One of the first indications of false demon possession and exorcism today are the formulas or rituals supposed exorcists go through in order to cast out their imagined demons. When compared to the exorcism of real demons in the first century, such modern-day rituals and formulas appear ridiculous. In the first century, exorcism was simply in the name of Jesus. This was the only authority that was needed to get the job done. The power was in the name of Jesus.

B. Only Jesus and His disciples could exorcise demons.

In the case of demons in Matthew 9:32-34, it is clear that only Jesus could cast out demons at this particular time in His ministry. **The actual casting out of demons had never before been seen in Israel.** Notice what the observers of this event stated, "*It was never seen like this in Israel*" (vs 33). Later in His ministry, Jesus gave the power of exorcism to His disciples (Lk 10:17-20; Mk 16:17). Those who witnessed Jesus' casting out of the demon in Matthew 9 had thus never seen such before. This is clear evidence that the practice of real and actual exorcism had never been successful before Jesus came. We would conclude, therefore, that only Jesus at the time of the

events of Matthew 9 could cast out demons.

Since Matthew 9:33 is stating that such had never before happened in Israel, then it is logical to conclude that such has also not happened since the close of the first century. In other words, one is not being objective if he contends that demon possession and exorcism have occurred since the first century. **This is true simply because we have no knowledge that such had occurred in the history of the world until the first century.**

This also helps us understand the absence of discussions concerning demon possession in the Old Testament. If demon possession were as common in the Old Testament times as some claim it is today, then we wonder why there is no discussion of such in the Old Testament Scriptures. Why are there no recorded cases of exorcism in the Old Testament by the prophets of God?

The case of demon possession and exorcism of Mark 9:38-41 is often used to argue that people who were not disciples of Jesus were able to cast out demons. John said to Jesus, *“Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us”* (Mk 9:38). In John’s statement the problem is revealed. He said, *“... follow us.”* There seems to have been some sectarian pride manifested here on the part of the disciples. John should have said, *“Follow You.”* **The point is that the one who was casting out demons was following Jesus, for**

he cast demons out in the name of Jesus. He was just not in the inner circle of disciples where John and the other disciples thought he should be in order to cast out demons. Therefore, Jesus said to all the apostles, *“Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me”* (Mk 9:39). Jesus’ statement concerning what the man was doing, verifies the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus. He was casting out demons in the name of Jesus.

There were many disciples of Jesus who were not of the immediate inner circle of followers. In Luke 10, authority had been given to seventy disciples to cast out demons. Therefore, not only did the twelve disciples have such authority to cast out demons, others did also. But their authority to exorcise demons was given to them **directly by Jesus.** The disciple of Mark 9 could have been one of these disciples who was originally a part of those whom Jesus sent out to preach.

C. Exorcism was by word only.

Jesus *“cast out the spirit with a word”* (Mt 8:16). The casting out of demons simply by a spoken word manifested His unquestionable power over the demon world. This leads us to believe that those who go through exhausting performances are actually trying talk the possessed into coming to his or her senses. This point again proves the argument that if one uses rituals or ceremonies to cast out demons, then that which is being cast out is not a demon. Exorcism is not a

mental process through which one must go in order to come to his or her senses. It is an instantaneous action on the part of the one who has the authority to cast out demons.

D. Exorcism was by the finger of God.

Jesus' authority was manifested in the fact that He cast out demons by the **finger** of God (Lk 11:20). The term "finger of God" is here a metaphor that would refer to the smallest effort on the part of God to accomplish a particular work. If Jesus had used the metaphor "arm of God," then emphasis would have been on the great power of God. But in the case of demons, there was little power that was needed to cast them out in reference to any power the demons had.

Because of His authority over Satan, Jesus gave power to the seventy disciples in Luke 10 to also cast out demons. Therefore, the casting out of demons is associated only with the working of God through Jesus and His early disciples. The miraculous authority given to them was given in order to manifest the insignificant power of demons, for the disciples also cast out demons by the "finger" of God.

E. Exorcism was by command.

In Acts 16:18 it is recorded that Paul was able to cast out demons by a simple command. Luke recorded, "*But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name*

of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And *he came out that very hour.*" Paul did not use long involved rituals. There were no ceremonies performed. He simply spoke the word and the demon departed.

The emphasis in the New Testament was that Jesus and His disciples had instant command over the demons. The reason for this was to prove that there was absolutely no contest between the authority of Jesus in relation to any powers of Satan's world. Power and authority that were manifested in Jesus were meant to prove to us that Jesus reigns supreme over all principalities and powers of the underworld.

By understanding the little power that is needed to cast out demons, we begin to understand the purpose why God allowed demons to possess people in the first century. The purpose lies in the fact that God wanted to reveal to us that there is no comparison between His power and authority and that of Satan and his demons. Jesus and the disciples simply spoke the word, and the demons vanished from the presence of those in whom they dwelt. There was no struggle. There was no confrontation between the Christian exorcist and the demon. There was no fear involved on the part of the possessed or the Christian. The word was simply spoken. The demon immediately left the possessed. This is certainly a different picture than what we see today with those who promote demon possession and other abnormal human behavior.

There are no cases of ritualistic ex-

orcism in the New Testament. Exorcism was by command, not by potions and rituals. In Acts 19 there were some Jewish exorcists who attempted to assume the authority of exorcism that had been invested in Paul. However, their attempted exorcism went wrong when the man in whom the evil spirit dwelt, leaped on them.

The Jewish exorcists of the Acts 19 context represent false exorcists who lived at the same time Paul lived. However, their false exorcism was unfruitful. This is evident in the fact that they saw what Paul was doing in casting out demons was real and actual. **Because they had no faith in their own practices, they resorted to calling on “the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits ...”** (At 19:13). **If their previous rituals and practices had been effective, then they would not have tried Paul’s practice that did work.** It is evident that they recognized the authority and power of Paul to be greater than anything they pretended to do.

The evidence in the text that these Jewish false teachers were presumptuous and had no authority to do as Paul, is proclaimed by the demon possessed man himself. He said, *“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”* (At 19:15). This seems to indicate that simply using the name of Jesus in exorcism was not enough. **Authority had to be given to the exorcist in order for him to be able to cast out demons.**

Modern-day exorcists have not been divinely commissioned to cast out demons. **Their false teachings confirm that**

their exorcism is false. Therefore, Christians should not be deceived by the false claims of religiously misguided and self-appointed exorcists. Why would any Christian want to believe the declarations concerning supposed demon possessions today that are made by those who are not Christians and who have no understanding of demon possession as it is defined in the Bible?

Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians 6:10-18 is to trust in the word of the Spirit. He exhorts us to have faith and believe the gospel. Faith and gospel are the Christian’s defenses against Satan. Throughout the New Testament, exhortations are given to Christians in order that they arm themselves against the work of Satan. In view of Satan’s work, however, **there are no New Testament instructions or exhortations given to Christians that they must practice exorcism in order to fight demon possession.**

We must conclude that exorcism **was not** to be a continuing practice among Jesus’ disciples. Since this were true, then we would rightly conclude that God would not allow demons to continually possess people as they did in the first century. This would leave one without any biblical authority for the practice of exorcism today. And indirectly, this would leave one without any biblical evidence for a belief in a continued real and actual fact of demon possession after the manner by which demons possessed people in the first century. In other words, because God was going to terminate demon possession, He knew there would be no need

to give Christians instructions on exorcism. The practice of exorcism, and the fact of demon possession, existed together in the first century. Both passed away together after the first century.

It has been argued that it is one of Satan's deceptions to lead people to believe that there is no such thing as demon possession today. But we would ask, What would be the purpose of such possession? We would also ask, Why would God allow Satan to continue to manifest the underworld in only random areas, for such "possessions" are prevalent where they are believed and practiced? **Could we not also respond by saying that it is a deception of Satan to lead people to believe that demons actually possess people today in order to keep people in fear?**

Satan works in order to control us through fear. If our life is controlled by fear, then we have not yet been made perfect in love. *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love"* (1 Jn 4:18).

Only Jesus and His disciples could cast out demons in the first century. Therefore, if a so-called demon possesses someone today, then only a disciple of Jesus can cast out that demon. If we hear of a demon being cast out by some individual, then that exorcist must be a Christian. If it turns out that the exorcist is not a Christian, but a teacher of false doctrine, then we affirm that the exorcism he did was false. The demon he supposedly cast out was also false. It

was not a true case of demon possession. There was no demon and there was no exorcism. Everyone involved in the situation was deceived. The question is whether Christians will become involved in such deception in order to spread the lie. If one does not have a love of the truth, then God will send him strong delusion in order that he believe the lie (2 Th 2:10-12).

The miraculous authority of exorcism does not continue with the church today. We concluded from the preceding chapters that God does not allow demons to possess people today because He has not continued the authority and power through Christians to cast them out, for only the true disciples of Jesus were invested with the authority and power to cast out demons in the first century. In fact, this was one of God's proofs that one was a true disciple. *"In My name they [Jesus' disciples] will cast out demons ..."* (Mk 16:17). **If we believe that a certain individual casts out a demon, we must be prepared to accept the fact that that person is a disciple of Jesus, preaching the truth of God's word.**

Since Jesus said that only those who were of the group of His disciples could cast out demons, then only those who were of the group of His disciples cast out demons. If such were true in the first century, then such would be true today. Therefore, we must caution some in their eagerness to accept the exorcisms that are supposedly carried out in some village or town across the country. If an exorcism is supposedly carried out, then

we must assume that Christians are at work. However, in order not to be deceived, we must take our Bibles with us when we go and check out the supposed exorcism. If the teaching of the exorcist is contrary to the word of God, then we

know that no exorcism took place. We must remember the exhortation of Jesus, "Be not deceived." If one is willing to believe the fantasies of men, then he will be deceived.

Chapter 11

THE REALM OF THE MIRACULOUS

Miracle refers to the realm of the supernatural that is unleashed into the realm of the physical. Supernatural refers to that which is above this physical world of physical, or natural laws. The supernatural, or that which is above the natural, is the realm of God. It is the realm in which disembodied spirits are kept by God until the time of embodiment. It is the realm where the physical does not exist, and thus, the realm of no physical laws.

We live in the natural world that is controlled by the physical laws of nature. The realm of existence that is not physical is governed by laws that are of the supernatural realm. When those laws are brought into contact with the physical world in which we live, miracle occurs.

During each particular period of human history, God has allowed the supernatural realm to be manifested in our world of natural laws. He did this in order to remind us that we are the product of a Creator who exists beyond this physical world. When Jesus came, the world needed proof that He was from the Father (Jn 3:2), but also that He had authority even over the supernatural realm of spirits. Therefore, Jesus came working

the works of the supernatural world. He came working the works of the Father.

It is important to understand that exorcism belongs to the world of the supernatural. For this reason, exorcism is a miraculous work. In the incident of Mark 9 when another disciple was casting out demons, Jesus said of the exorcism, "*Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of me*" (Mk 9:39; see also At 8:6,7). Jesus identified the disciple's work of exorcism as a miraculous work. Therefore, when we discuss the cessation of confirming miracles, we must understand that this includes the cessation of exorcism.

Demons belong to the spirit realm. The Bible teaches that demon possession would not continue indefinitely because the time in which Deity would prove superiority over Satan through exorcism would pass away. Therefore, there would be no more need to openly and miraculously through exorcism, prove Jesus' power and authority over the spirit world, and particularly, over the spirit world of Satan. Miraculous workings as exorcism by Jesus and the first disciples had a special purpose. When that purpose was

accomplished, confirming miracles ceased, demon possession ceased, and exorcism ceased.

A. **God worked confirming miracles for specific purposes.**

In the first century, the realm of the supernatural was manifested through Jesus and the early Christians. The purpose of this manifestation was to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Some disciples were allowed to work confirming miracles in order to prove that their word was from God, not from Satan.

The purpose of confirming miracles is clearly defined in the New Testament. Mark said that the early disciples “*went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs*” (Mk 16:20). Nicodemus said to Jesus, “*no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*” (Jn 3:2; see 10:37,38). Jesus commanded the miraculous in order that we might believe that He “*is the Christ, the Son of the living God...*” (Jn 20:30,31). Therefore, Jesus was “*attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs ...*” (At 2:22). Concerning the early disciples, God bore “*witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit*” (Hb 2:3,4).

Since the miraculous work of God is a central subject in the Bible with reference to His work, it is logical to understand that there are reasons or purposes surrounding this work of God. Modern-day religionists who claim to work

miracles usually ignore this point. The reason they often ignore this point is that the purpose and work of miracles at particular times in the history of God’s people proves that God has ceased working in such a manner today. If there is purpose behind the work of confirming miracles, then it is imperative that we understand this purpose or purposes. When we understand why confirming miracles were worked, much of the proof for the cessation of miracles is understood. Therefore, with this in mind, consider the following points:

1. *Signs would follow the disciples.* Concerning the disciples, Jesus said that “*these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues ...*” (Mk 16:17,18). This was Jesus’ promise that the early disciples would be able to work miracles and cast out demons in order to confirm the message they preached. Some have had difficulty understanding this early confirmation of the word of the disciples because they have failed to understand the reason why the signs were to follow the disciples in the first century. We must first understand that God does nothing without purpose. There was a purpose why the miraculous signs followed the early disciples. When we understand this purpose, we will then understand why God’s miraculous confirmation is no longer needed in the following centuries.

2. *Signs confirmed the word and work of the disciples.* The Lord worked with those disciples by “*confirming the*

word through the accompanying signs” (Mk 16:20; see 1 Co 12-14). God **bore witness** “with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit ...” (Hb 2:4). In other words, God proved that the disciples represented Him because of their authority to command the supernatural. For this reason, we affirm that **no representative of Satan has ever worked miracles**. God would not allow Satan to do anything that would offset the work of the early disciples. Why would God allow Satan to work signs through his disciples if the purpose of the signs was to indicate supernatural authority that was standing behind the disciples of Jesus? (More on this later.)

3. Exorcism confirmed the power of God in the disciples. God allowed demons to possess people during the ministry of Jesus in order to present an **opportunity** where Jesus and His disciples could manifest power over Satan (See At 16:18). Some demons were left as a remnant after Jesus’ ascension in order to allow the disciples an opportunity to manifest their divinely given authority and power.

God wanted the world to know that Jesus’ conquest continued through the work of the disciples. In every place and on every occasion Jesus’ disciples were able to conquer the powers of Satan in order to prove Jesus’ continuing power over the world of demons. These cases of exorcism by the disciples have also been recorded in order to prove that Jesus’ authority and power did not cease with His ascension.

One might look at this from an opposite position. What if Jesus did not cast out demons? If He did not, then we would conclude that His authority was limited. If Jesus had not cast out demons we would have never known that He has **all authority** (Mt 28:18). We would never have known that the Father delivered all things into His hands (Jn 13:3; 17:2). It was necessary for our benefit, therefore, that God present a stage where Jesus and the early disciples be openly shown to have authority over the work of Satan.

Herein lies the purpose for demon possession. Demons did not possess people on their own power. The one who was possessed in some way had to voluntarily submit to the work of the demons. There were no demons floating around, arbitrarily selecting innocent victims in whom to dwell. The point is that God allowed the demons to possess people in the first century. Those who were possessed also allowed the demons to possess them.

God accomplished His purpose for allowing a few demons to possess people in the first century. This was the only time in history when men experienced this phenomenon of the spirit world (Mt 9:33). But keep in mind that this was the only time in the history of the world that God determined to reveal His Son and establish the church.

4. Miraculous confirmation ceased. After God had confirmed the spoken word by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, **the miraculous confirmation was needed no more**. When the complete will of God was delivered

to man, the miracles were terminated. This was why Paul wrote, *“But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away”* (See 1 Co 13:8-12). The point is that when God accomplished His purpose through the miraculous manifestation of the supernatural, the manifestation of the miraculous was done away.

When the disciples received all truth from the apostles, that truth was eventually recorded in order that all baptized disciples come to a unity of the faith (Ep 4:11-16). Our faith is complete when based on the word of God (Rm 10:17), and thus, we no longer need the miraculous confirmation of what we believe (Jd 3). After the word of God was confirmed to be of divine origin, then there was no more a need for miraculous confirmation. When the word of God was confirmed, the miraculous confirmation ceased. **Christians now have the inspired and confirmed record of God’s power over Satan.** This record is *“profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for all good work”* (2 Tm 3:16,17).

God has proved the power of Jesus over the powers of Satan. This conquest was recorded for our admonition and faith. We must trust in the confirmed record. In other words, we must study and trust our Bibles. If our faith is based on the word of God, then God is pleased (See Jn 20:30,31).

There are those who still crave a miraculous confirmation of their faith. Such is an indication of a struggling faith. We must remember the case of Thomas. After Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to the disciples when Thomas was not present. They eventually told Thomas of the appearing, but he would not believe them. He said, *“Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe”* (Jn 20:25). Thomas would not believe unless he could walk by sight. Many today are the same. They struggle to walk by faith. They must see, hear and touch in order to believe.

Eight days after Jesus had appeared to the disciples without the presence of Thomas, Jesus again appeared to the disciples. However, Thomas was present. Jesus told Thomas to *“reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side, Do not be unbelieving, but believing”* (Jn 20:27). When Thomas did such, he said, *“My Lord and my God!”* (Jn 20:28). And then Jesus made a most interesting statement to Thomas. *“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* (Jn 20:29).

Those who are seeking miracles today are asking God to take away their blessedness, for if we see, then we are no longer more blessed than Thomas who did see. Those who cry for the miraculous today are as Thomas. They will not believe unless they can walk by sight. The

cry for confirming miracles today, therefore, is not a manifestation of faith, but a desperate plea of those who lack of faith.

B. The miracle of exorcism came to an end.

Though God continues to work in our lives today, the age of confirming miracles has passed because God proved His point when He confirmed the spoken word in the first century. He does not work in a miraculous manner today as He did in the first century to confirm His spoken word simply because He does not have to. Once He proved His point in the confirmation of His word, He does not have to continue doing the same thing throughout the centuries.

This is also true concerning the subject of casting out demons. The following points emphasize the teaching that demon possession cannot exist today because God does not work in a miraculous manner today through exorcism:

1. Miraculous power was given by God. It was by the authority and miraculous power given by God that allowed Jesus and some of the first disciples to cast out demons in the first century (Mk 16:17,20; Hb 2:3,4). Exorcism was considered miraculous, and thus, was the manifestation of miraculous power from God (Mk 9:39; At 8:6). It must be emphasized that this power was given in order that men might know that Jesus and His disciples were sent by God (Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4). It was an authority and power that Jesus had, and it was an

authority and power that Jesus gave to His disciples. Only Jesus and the disciples manifested this authority to command the supernatural in order to exorcise demons (Mk 16:20).

2. God has terminated the open manifestation of confirming miracles. Today, **God does not give confirming miraculous power (gifts) as He did in the first century.** He does not openly manifest His work in order to offer miraculous confirmation of His word or His people over the powers of Satan.

The record of the exorcism of demons is recorded in the New Testament. Men have this record as evidence for all history of the divine origin of Christianity. John wrote that the miracles of Jesus were written “*that you may believe*” (Jn 20:30,31). Satan’s power has been shown to be insufficient. In the New Testament, we have the record of Jesus’ devastation of Satan’s power. This is why Peter said of the word of God. God’s power “*has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue*” (2 Pt 1:3).

3. God does not allow modern-day demon possession. Our conclusion is that God would not allow demon possession today without also giving Christians the power to cast them out, since only Christians could have such authority. God would not allow His Son’s demonstration of power over Satan in the first century to be nullified today by permitting demons to possess people without the miraculous power of Christians to cast them out. But if Satan has again

arisen in power to possess people after Jesus crushed him in the first century, then Jesus did not actually accomplish a complete victory over him in the first century. But why would God allow Satan to have miraculous power today if He limits Himself and does not give His people the power of exorcism?

Those who believe that the Holy Spirit continues to work in a miraculous manner today are often easily deceived into believing that demons also work in such a manner. Such people are generally psychologically prepared to accept the belief of modern-day demon possession. We have found that the more one believes that confirming miracles continue today, the more he or she will believe in the modern-day miraculous workings of Satan. Both beliefs lead one away from a Bible-based faith, because both lead one to base their faith upon a search for miraculous happenings rather than the revealed word of God. Inevitably, both lead one into a religion that is subjective. But if one understands the temporary nature of the miraculous works of God, it is easy to understand the cessation of demon possession.

We must not forget that when the New Testament was not yet written, God confirmed His presence among His people, the church, through empirically confirmed miracles. But when His word was written by the Holy Spirit, there was no longer the need for the empirical confirmation of His word or people. The confirmation is in now recorded in the New Testament.

Keep in mind that we are not say-

ing that God does not work today. He works, but His work is not of an empirically revealed manner as it was in the first century. His work today is in a providential nature. He works behind the scenes of that which we observe in order to work out His plan and good in the lives of His people (Rm 8:28). Therefore, we must not over react to a biblical teaching that God does not allow confirming miracles today as that miraculous work that is defined by the Bible. God works. He simply works in order to be detected by faith, not by sight. Such is the difference between the empirically identified miracle and His “miraculous” work today that is perceived by faith.

C. Christians can resist Satan.

Today, God balances the temptations of Satan by offering to the Christian a way of escape. Paul wrote, “*God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it*” (1 Co 10:13). Christians must remember this promise. Satan, however, is still a persistent deceiver (2 Co 11:13,14; 2 Th 2:9,10; 1 Tm 4:1,2; Rv 13:14). He goes about as a **roaring lion** “*seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pt 5:8). However, God has promised, “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*” (Js 4:7). Therefore, the Christian is “*able to stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Ep 6:11), as long as he or she stands upon the foundation of the gospel (1 Co 15:1,2).

Satan does not have the power

to subjectively bring someone under his control. He can bring one under control only through the deceptive doctrines of demons (1 Tm 4:1). It is within the power of every individual, therefore, to resist the deceptive teaching of Satan. No one is tempted beyond his power to endure the deception of Satan.

God has never allowed Satan to voluntarily control people against their own will. Upon the volition of certain individuals, demons subjected people in the first century. However, one would be hard pressed to find a conceptual teaching in the Scriptures that such possession began as a result of demons involuntarily subjecting an individual against his will. All Scripture affirms the proposition that the possessed individuals must have first

allowed demons to possess them. After the possession, the individuals were submitted to unfortunate circumstances.

If demons could possess people against the will of the people they possessed, then the world of the first century would have been a world of darkest fear and rampant possession of demons throughout the world. If demons subjectively possessed people today, the same would exist. If demons did so possess people apart from the free-moral choice of individuals, then we wonder why there were not more people possessed in the first century, especially religious leaders. Could not Satan just crush the work of religions by simply submitting the religious leaders to the possession of a few with his demons?

Chapter 12

THE DISARMED DEVIL

Then consider the work of Satan in deceiving the world. The power of deception is much more effective than demon possession. Only a few were demon possessed in the first century. On the other hand, millions throughout the world were under the deceptive influence of Satan. The Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes, with other religious leaders around the world, were all under the deception of Satan. Why would Satan need to work any miracles today since he already has the majority of the world under his deception. It seems ridiculous to think that God would allow Satan all the miraculous power some think he has when he already has led to hell the vast majority

of the world's population without the use of a single miracle.

The results of deception, therefore, are always greater than miracles or demon possession. Deception is Satan's greatest weapon against truth. We would be wise not to succumb to false religious beliefs that are propagated throughout the world in order to lead even the righteous astray.

More happened with the conquest of Jesus over Satan at the cross than we perceive. There was a struggle going on beyond the limits of our perceptions that brought to finality much of the power of Satan in reference to his work to deceive the world. It is not necessary for us to

understand every implication of the conquest of Jesus over the power of Satan in order to appreciate the great victory we have in the cross. What is within our ability to understand has been revealed in clear words. What is not within our realm of understanding is not revealed. At least, it is not revealed in a way we can understand, for there are some things concerning Satan's work beyond this world that are not within the realm of our understanding. We should not be presumptuous, therefore, to claim that we understand all of God's work with Satan that has taken place behind the curtain of our empirical awareness.

When we study the subject of this chapter, there are certain things that are difficult to understand. However, through faith we understand that Jesus took care of Satan and his host in a way that settled some old scores. Satan has been cast down. He does not now reign as he did before the cross. Demons have been led into captivity. Therefore, we must not underestimate the victorious conquest of the cross in reference to the work of Satan. When Jesus said that the prince of this world (Satan) has been cast down, there is more to the story than an offering for our sins on the cross. Something happened in the realm of the spirit world that we cannot fully comprehend. We simply assumed that Jesus accomplished a victory over Satan that had from the time of Satan's rebellion in heavenly places, been waiting to happen. More happened on the cross and in the resurrection than the atonement for our sins. Satan was dislodged from his throne of

power. He was cast down.

There are three important subjects to consider in examining Jesus' conquest of Satan: (1) Jesus came to disarm Satan. (2) Jesus has bound Satan by the power of the gospel. (3) The only power that Jesus will allow Satan to have today is the power of deception through false teachings.

A. **Jesus disarmed Satan.**

The disarming of Satan must be viewed in the context of Old Testament prophecies. The prophecy of Psalm 68 clearly states that Satan's influence was going to change when Jesus came. Things would be different after the cross. To what extent the change would be, we might disagree. However, the fact is that there would be and was going to be a change. This change had eternal consequences, not only for man, but also for Satan.

1. *Prophecy of the captivity of "captivity"*: In its historical context, Psalm 68 is a victory psalm. While seated in the historical context of David's victories over his enemies, the prophecy of verse 18 reached many years into the future. David said, "*You have ascended on high, **You have led captivity captive, You have received gifts among men.***" This was a prophecy of the coming downfall of Satan. **Verse 18 is quoted by Paul in Ephesians 4:8 in reference to the ascension of Jesus.**

When Jesus ascended, He sent the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. The gospel was

preached by Peter and the church began when men submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus. In Acts 1 Jesus ascended to the Father and in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit was given to men. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter stated, *“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear”* (At 2:33). But Peter also said that the gift of the Holy Spirit was to all who would submit to the gospel by immersion.

Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (At 2:38,39).

Ephesians 4:11 again refers to Psalm 68 in reference to Jesus’ setting forth “gifts” of ministries among the disciples in order to edify and build up the church. These ministries referred to teaching ministries as apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and shepherds. Such ministries were set forth by Jesus in order that ...

... we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive (Ep 4:14).

Therefore, in the prophecy and fulfillment of Psalm 68:18, God was saying that the time would come when Satan

would be led away into captivity by the empowerment of His people. This would happen when Jesus ascended on high (Ep 4:8). Satan lost his powerful influence over men when God’s people were empowered by the Holy Spirit who taught them all things concerning the truth (See Jn 14:26; 16:13,14). Satan could no longer lead people away from God as he so led them before the coming of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The only work of Satan that was left is the power of deception. The power of the gospel has conquered the power of Satan (Rm 1:16). For the child of God who trusts in the word of God, this power is unlimited (See Hb 4:12). **Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians was centered around their preparation to combat false teaching, not demon possession.**

When Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, he stated, *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”* (Ep 4:1). His emphasis in the Ephesian letter was to fine tune their understanding of the body in reference to its head, Christ. He wrote that *“we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive”* (Ep 4:14). Could he have stated more clearly the danger of crafty men deceiving the hearts of the innocent? Certainly not! The deception of practices as astrology, spiritism, voodooism, witchcraft, and the other religions of the occult, are simply the crafty practices of

men to lead people from the truth. The New Testament was given to us that we be not led astray after these deceptive practices of men.

Now consider specifically the present-day practice of or belief in demon possession. If demon possession were to continue past the first century, we would think that Christians would be armed and prepared by the Holy Spirit to fight such with instructions on exorcism. We would even assume that examples of exorcism would be included in the epistles of the New Testament writers. But those examples or instructions are just not there. This is a most significant fact to recognize in studying the epistles. **There are no exhortations in the New Testament letters to the disciples concerning demon possession. There are no rituals or ceremonies given to guide the disciples as to how to cast out demons. There are no warnings against demon possession.** This is a devastating argument against the present-day belief and practice of demon possession.

The majority of the New Testament letters were written in the 50s and 60s. In A.D. 70 the Jewish state was destroyed by the destruction of Jerusalem. Since there are no references to demon possession in the epistles that were written to exhort the disciples, then we could conclude that the last remnants of demons were carried away with the last exorcism that was worked by a disciple of Jesus before the destruction of Jerusalem. The silence of the epistles concerning both demon possession and exorcism leads us to conclude that this activity of the first cen-

ture had passed away by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

2. Prophecy of the “unclean spirit”: Zechariah prophesied that God would cause “*the unclean spirit*” to depart from the land of Israel (Zc 13:2). Within this prophecy was the promise that Satan’s kingdom would be devastated by the taking of demons from the land. Zechariah recorded,

“It shall be in that day,” says the Lord of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land” (Zc 13:2).

Jesus came to accomplish the destruction of Satan and to fulfill the above prophecy. The ministry of Jesus began the fall of Satan. Jesus said during His ministry, “*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out*” (Jn 12:31). One indication of this fall was proclaimed by the seventy disciples in Luke 10 who had gone forth to preach, heal and cast out demons. When they returned, Jesus said, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*” (Lk 10:18).

Jesus came to destroy the house of Satan (See Lk 11:21-23). John wrote, “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil*” (1 Jn 3:8). In a specific way, therefore, Satan’s work was being destroyed by the ministry of Jesus. The destruction of Satan’s work began during the ministry of Jesus and was cul-

minated at the cross. This certainly would not refer exclusively to Satan's work of deception, for he continues to deceive the nations. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pt 5:8).

There is a meaning in the prophecy and fulfillment of Zechariah 13:2 that took place behind the curtain of our empirical perception. It was the gospel of Jesus on behalf of men in sin that brought down the house of Satan. There was a score Jesus had to settle with the rebellious Satan that had destructive consequences in relation to the existence of Satan when all things are finalized. Satan had brought down Jesus' creation of man in the garden of Eden (Cl 1:16). But it was at the cross that Jesus brought man back up through His blood offering. And in the end, the final score will be settled when Satan is cast into the flames of eternal destruction.

A very important passage to remember on this point is Colossians 2:15. Of Jesus' work, Paul wrote, "*Having **disarmed** principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*" The Greek word that is here translated "disarmed" in some translations is defined by Greek lexicons to mean "to strip off one's military arms." The *Revised Standard Version* also translates the passage with the above emphasis. "*He **disarmed** the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.*" In other words, **Jesus disarmed the power of Satan.**

Though we may not understand all

the implications of Paul's statement in Colossians 2:15, at least one thing is clear. In some way Jesus kicked Satan out of rank and demoted him from a previously held position or work. Some would argue that this is solely in reference to man's sin problem. This is certainly true in reference to Jesus' redemptive work at the cross. However, Colossians 2:15 seems to be stating something specific concerning the principalities and powers that enslaved men. Something more than redemptive work seems to be in Paul's mind when he writes the scripture.

However, in reference to salvation, man's salvation has always been by grace through faith (Hk 2:4; Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11; Hb 10:38). Abraham was saved by faith. Paul was saved by faith. And we are saved by faith. The grace of God made the saving blood manifest (Ti 2:11), but the blood produced redemption before the actual pouring out of blood on the cross. Paul wrote that God set forth Jesus "*to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed*" (Rm 3:25). And again, "*He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant ...***" (Hb 9:15).

Here is the point. Retroactive redemption happened before the act of redemption by Jesus in the first century on the cross. Abraham, David and others who lived by faith before the cross were redeemed by the blood of Jesus at the cross.

When it came to defeating Satan in reference to man's sin problem, such had happened in God's predestined redemption in Christ (See Ep 1:3-6). Jesus was crucified before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8). However, the open manifestation of such was made known on the cross. It was at the cross that God openly proclaimed salvation by grace (Ti 2:11). It was at the cross that God openly manifested the destruction of Satan's reign of sin in the lives of men.

"When He [Jesus] ascended on high, He led captivity captive" (Ep 4:8). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus destroyed *"him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Hb 2:14). Peter adds, *"Who [Christ] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him"* (1 Pt 3:22; see Ep 1:20-23). Jesus has disarmed Satan by relieving him of his reign over man. That which led men captive has been led captive by Jesus.

The disarming of Satan at least included binding him from open manifestation of power through demon possession. Jesus took "captivity," or "the spiritual host of captives," into captivity. Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension to power did not automatically cast out those demon possessed people with whom neither Jesus, nor the disciples before the cross, had made personal contact. There was a remnant of demons who were eventually cast out by Jesus' disciples after the crucifixion and ascension (See At 5:16; 8:7; 16:16ff). **There are no state-**

ments, however, of demon possession in the epistles as a problem that faced the early Christians. This would indicate a declining activity of demon possession after the ascension of Jesus.

The emphasis of the epistles is that our struggle is against *"principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"* (Ep 6:12). These powers originated in the heavenly places, not on this earth. This is the wickedness of Satan as it is manifested in the wickedness of men.

3. Prophecy of the kingdom reign of Jesus: Daniel's prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14 refers to the ascension of Jesus. Daniel prophesied that Jesus would ascend to receive authority of kingdom reign. He would be given *"dominion and glory and a kingdom."* In this kingdom reign, *"all dominion shall serve and obey Him"* (Dn 7:27; see Ps 22:27,28).

When Jesus came, He began the binding of the "strong man" (Satan). He cast him down by exercising authority over his kingdom (Lk 11:20-22). The casting out of demons had never before been experienced in Israel (Mt 9:33). **Therefore, Jesus' casting out of demons was a sign of His coming kingdom reign.** When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, *"He disarmed principalities and powers"* (Cl 2:15) and *"led captivity captive"* (Ep 4:8). He was seated at the right hand of God *"far above all principality and power"* (Ep 1:21). He is now reigning as *"King of kings and Lord of lords"* (1 Tm 6:15).

We must not assume that Jesus allowed some power or activity of Satan to “slip through His fingers.” All the work that Jesus intended to do in reference to Satan was accomplished at the cross and ascension to the right hand of God. Jesus did not do an incomplete job in dealing with Satan. He finished the predestined work of redemption. Satan was cast down. Satan was as lightning fallen from heaven. When the seventy returned from a limited preaching tour, Jesus proclaimed, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 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*” (Lk 10:18,19).

The metaphorical statement of trampling on serpents and scorpions is the power of the saints over any power that we might perceive Satan to have in the spirit realm. Wicked governments and criminals may hurt Christians by harming or killing them. But there is no subjective power that Satan may have that can in any way hurt a Christian.

When it comes to the deceptive work of Satan in the world today, Christians must remember the above promise. Christians must not behave with fear of any supposed mysterious work that goes on among religiously deceived people. “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Tm 1:7). The religiously misguided fear because they are often ignorant of God’s word and the deceptive tricks of Satan to keep people in the bondage of lies. But this is not true

of those disciples who trust in God and His word.

B. Jesus bound Satan by the gospel.

Jesus came to bind Satan by His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. He came to die on the cross, “*that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Hb 2:14). By such, He “*disarmed principalities and the powers ... triumphing over them ...*” (Cl 2:15). It was as John symbolically wrote, “*He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan and bound him ...*” (Rv 20:2). When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, He led a host of demons into captivity (Ep 4:8). Thus ended Satan’s reign of fear over all mankind (See Hb 2:14,15).

Satan is kept bound by the power of the gospel as it is preached and obeyed. Jesus has taken every demon and reserved them “*in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*” (Jd 6; see 2 Pt 2:4).

Jesus was given all authority by the Father (Mt 28:18). He has now “*gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him*” (1 Pt 3:22). We would correctly assume, therefore, that those angels of Satan who are reserved in chains under darkness are now under the control of Jesus. We believe He is going to keep them under control until He casts them into destruction when He comes again (Mt 25:41). Until

that time, Jesus, through the Spirit, has delivered to His disciples His word in order that they fight against the wiles of the Devil.

Christians must resort to the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, in order to fight against the deception and false ideas of Satan. Paul exhorted Timothy to “*be diligent to present yourself approved to God*” (2 Tm 2:15), and to “*preach the word,*” for many “*will not endure sound doctrine*” (2 Tm 4:2,3). Many will give “*heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*” (1 Tm 4:1). The power of the word of God is able to build us up (At 20:32). It is effective in guarding us against the deceptions of Satan (2 Tm 3:16,17; Hb 4:12). Therefore, Christians must be exhorted to depend on the word of God in their struggles against the wiles of the Devil. If they do not, then surely they will be led astray after every imagination of man.

C. Satan’s power is through deception.

Before Jesus left this earth, He warned that Satan would work false miracles that would be so convincing “*as to deceive, if possible, even the elect*” (Mt 24:24). But these works would be false. They would be deceptive works that God would allow men to believe “*because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved*” (2 Th 2:10). Paul wrote, “*And for this reason God will send them strong delusions, that they should believe the lie, that all might be condemned who did*

not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Th 2:11,12). Because Satan “*deceives the whole world*” (Rv 12:9; see 13:14), the constant warning of the New Testament is, “*be not deceived!*” (See 1 Co 6:9; Gl 6:7; 2 Tm 3:13; 2 Jn 7).

Satan’s power is through deception, not possession. Paul warned that some give “*heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy*” (1 Tm 4:1,2). These “*evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (2 Tm 3:13; see 2 Co 11:13-15). Therefore, Christians should continue steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching lest they be deceived into believing false miracles and false teachings (At 2:42). They should continue to do what Paul exhorted the Corinthians to do: “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves*” (2 Co 13:5).

Self-examination is continually necessary because of the deceptive influences of Satan. Paul warned, “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (1 Co 10:12). Those individuals who put their trust in God and His unchanging word are able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Nothing can separate them from God (See Rm 8:35-39). However, if one thinks he can trust in his own reasoning, without education in the word of God, then he is fertile soil for the deceptive work of Satan. People will believe anything. And since God knew this, He has exhorted us to continually live by the gospel that is revealed in His word.

Chapter 13

THE BOUND DEVIL

We live in a world where Satan's deceptive influences have ravaged the minds of men. Satan needs to be given no miraculous power simply because he can win more people through lies and false religion than through any miracle he might perform.

Christians must understand that in a world that seems to be totally given over to Satan, they are more than conquerors through Jesus who loved us (Rm 8:37). We must remember that Jesus is now in control, and because He is in control, Satan has been put in his place.

Satan's work is through enticement and deception. God will not allow him to emotionally or physically control people as he so chooses. Since God does not allow Satan to work without His constraints, we can trust that God has all things under His own control. In order to gain assurance in God, it is good to understand the limits of Satan's influence. Once we understand his limits and how he works, we can guard ourselves against his work.

A. Satan does not have subjective power.

Subjective means to have direct control over an individual in the sense that the will of an individual is subjected to an outside force. Satan is not allowed to work in a subjective manner in relation to the free-moral nature of man. Satan does

not have direct access to the human heart. God has never allowed him the power to directly change the behavior of individuals. Satan can only work through temptation in order to lead one into sin. This is illustrated in the following cases:

1. The temptation of Eve: Satan tempted Eve through the medium of **words**. Genesis 3:4 says, "*The serpent said ...*," thus words were used to lead Eve away. Paul said that it was through these words that Eve was "**deceived**" (1 Tm 2:14). Eve's reply to God was, "*The serpent deceived me, and I ate*" (Gn 3:13). Therefore, it was by the words of Satan that Eve was led into temptation and sin. It was not by any direct influence upon her heart.

2. The temptation of Israel: 1 Chronicles 21:1 states that **Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.** Satan worked against Israel in this situation through the wrong motives of King David. Joab responded to David, "*Why should he [David] be a cause of guilt in Israel?*" (1 Ch 21:3). But "*the king's word prevailed against Joab*" (1 Ch 21:4). Therefore, against the will of God, Israel was numbered. The nation was numbered because of the wrong desires of David, though David later repented (1 Ch 21:7,8).

In this case, Israel was tempted and sinned because Satan worked through the wrong desires of King David. Israel was

drawn away by the wrong counsel of someone else. Satan “stood up against Israel” through the wrong actions of David. He did not stand up in a miraculous way in order to lead Israel way. Therefore, the meaning of the phrase “stand up against” refers to a non-miraculous activity that is meant to lead people astray by the influence of those who do wrong.

3. *The temptation of Jesus:* During the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4, it is emphasized that “*the tempter came to Him and said*” Satan did not work directly on Jesus’ heart. He worked through words and ideas. Through words and ideas Satan sought to divert Jesus from His destiny.

4. *The temptation of Judas:* Luke 22:3 states “*Then Satan entered Judas*” But John 13:2 states, “*And supper being ended, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.*” In John 13:27 Jesus said to Judas, “*What you do, do quickly.*” Therefore, Satan entered into Judas when Judas submitted to the idea to betray Jesus. When Judas carried out his idea, Acts 1:25 reads that “*by transgression*” he fell. Satan worked through an evil thought of Judas to betray Jesus. He did not force Judas to carry out the betrayal scheme against his own will. If he had, then Judas would have been free of guilt. He could not personally be guilty for that over which he was subjected to do. In order for one to stand before God and still be held accountable for personal sins, he must have voluntarily sinned after his own free will.

We would define the phrase “Satan entered” to refer to one submitting to an idea or thought that works against the will of God. In this way Judas was entered by Satan. When one so behaves as to carry out the work of Satan, Satan has entered that person. Emphasis is not on a literal understanding of the word “entered,” but on a metaphorical understanding. When one works evil, Satan has entered his being.

After Satan had tempted Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, “*he departed from Him until an opportune time*” (Lk 4:13). That opportune time came again when Satan influenced Jesus through the wrong counsel of another person in Matthew 16. This other person was Peter who tried to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he knew that bad things were going to happen. Jesus said to Peter, “*Get behind Me, Satan*” (Mt 16:23). Jesus called Peter “satan” because he was doing the will of Satan, that is, to discourage Jesus from going to the cross. Jesus made a similar statement concerning Judas who acted in the same manner as Peter. To the disciples, and of Judas, Jesus said, “*... one of you is a devil*” (Jn 6:70). Judas was a devil because he did the will of Satan just as Peter was doing the will of Satan to discourage Jesus from going to the cross.

John 13 was another “opportune time” when Satan’s plans were carried out in the life of an individual (Judas) who worked the will of Satan to betray Jesus. The phrase used in John 13:27 that Satan entered Judas, therefore, simply **refers**

to one doing the will of Satan in his speech and life. It does not refer to Satan actually and literally coming into the body of an individual. **Figuratively**, therefore, one is “satan” or a “demon” when he or she so advises or acts in accordance with the will of Satan.

The above is undoubtedly what Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 11:14. “*For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel [better, “messenger”] of light.*” **This passage is not saying that Satan can incarnate himself into flesh and blood.** God would never allow this to happen. The word translated “transform” in verse 14 is also used in verse 13 where false teachers **transformed** themselves into true apostles. They did not somehow remold their bodies into bodies similar to Paul, John or any of the other apostles. They simply **assumed the authority of the Christ-sent apostles.** It is in this way that the “*man of sin,*” or lawless one in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8, is manifested. This is not an incarnation of Satan. Satan is manifested only when individuals submit to his will in their lives. He is transformed into a messenger of light when false teachers with wrong motives become the proclaimers of his will.

5. The temptation of Ananias and Sapphira: In Acts 5 both Ananias and Sapphira reasoned together in order to lie about the amount of money they had received from the sale of their land. The couple had “***conceived this thing in their hearts***” (At 5:2,4). But Peter said to Ananias, “*Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?*” (At 5:3).

When an individual allows thoughts that are contrary to God’s will to be carried out in his life, he has allowed Satan “to enter his heart.” This is a biblical definition of how Satan enters and indwells an individual. It is not a literal entry. Satan enters one’s heart when an individual allows himself to be deceived into believing lies that work against the will of God. When one carries those lies out in his or her life, then he or she is filled with Satan.

Numerous cases as the above could be listed. In Acts 13:10 Paul called Elymas, the sorcerer, a “*son of the devil.*” He was not a literal son of the devil. He was a son of the devil in the sense that he would “***not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord.***” Therefore, it was Elymas’s perversions of the will of God that influenced the deputy, Sergius Paulus.

In Luke 22:31,32 Jesus said to Peter, “*Satan has asked for you.*” But Jesus prayed that Peter’s “***faith should not fail.***” In other words, Peter must grow in faith. He had to do what James later wrote, “***Resist the devil and he will flee from you***” (Js 4:7). Men have the power to resist, but that power to resist comes from faith. We must realize that “*each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed*” (Js 1:14). It is through faith that we stand against the deceptive temptations of Satan. We must remember what Paul said is the source of faith, “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rm 10:17).

Satan influences people only through

the words and evil imaginations of wicked men. Jesus said to some wicked Jews, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would **do the works of Abraham**” (Jn 8:39). These Jews did the works of Satan. Therefore, Jesus said to them, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do” (Jn 8:44). Their father, the devil, “was a murderer from the beginning ... he speaks a lie” (Jn 8:44). When one does the works of Satan, Satan is his father. The evil works of Satan are communicated to humanity by the actions of evil men.

B. We can voluntarily resist deception.

Because man is a free-moral agent, Satan cannot voluntarily control him. The door through which Satan must go in order to take control of the life of an individual is the God-created nature of man.

1. Areas of man’s vulnerability: God has allowed Satan to influence man in an indirect manner. In other words, Satan is not allowed to directly control man. He can exercise his influence of deception on men by approaching individuals in three areas of vulnerability. These are areas of man’s nature that can be fulfilled in a sinful manner and are mentioned in 1 John 2:15,16. Satan can influence man only through man’s (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes and (3) pride of life.

the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

It is interesting to note that Satan approached Eve with temptations that would cause her to be tempted in all three of these areas (Gn 3:1-7). He also tried to lead Jesus away by tempting Him in the same areas of influence (Mt 4:1-10). The point is, when Satan approaches to tempt man, his temptations must appeal to either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Since men are free-moral agents, God will not allow Satan to exercise influence over any individual other than to draw him away by tempting him to sin in the above areas. As stated before, James wrote, “Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his **own desires and enticed**” (Js 1:14).

Satan drew Eve away by words. It was also by words that he attempted to draw Jesus away from His purpose. Through the medium of words, Satan gave false promises and made false statements both to Eve and Jesus. After Satan had enticed Eve with deceptive statements, she willingly allowed herself to submit to the lust of flesh, eyes and pride of life. She was thus led to sin. James wrote, “Then, when desire has conceived it gives birth to sin” (Js 1:15). This is how Satan wins souls. It is not by an overpowering force by which he subjectively takes control of the individual. God does

Do not love the world or the things in

not allow him to violate man's free-moral agency.

2. Man's avenue of escape: God has always provided man with a **way of escape** from all of Satan's temptations. Satan has no deceptive influence over man if man will do the following:

1. Draw close to God (Js 4:7,8).
2. Resist Satan (Js 4:7).
3. Turn away from Satan (1 Tm 5:15).
4. Hear God's words (Jn 8:47).
5. Give no place to Satan (Ep 4:27).
6. Put on the armor of God (Ep 6:11-17).
7. Choose to escape sin (1 Co 10:13).
8. Pray without ceasing (1 Th 5:17)
9. Encourage one another daily (Hb 3:13).

The above is what one must do in order to guard against the deception of Satan. All these things involve man's free-moral agency. God will not allow Satan to have any influence over us outside our free-moral agency.

C. Satan does not have indigenous power.

By indigenous, we mean that Satan does not have miraculous power that originates from himself alone. **All supernatural power originates from God alone because God is the Creator of all things.** To state that Satan has indigenous supernatural power is to affirm the teaching of dualism. But there is only one eternal God, and all power comes from Him.

The following are some commonly misunderstood cases where interpreters

have been led to believe that Satan worked miracles. However, we must understand these cases in the context that Satan has been bound. God will not allow him out of his area of confinement.

1. The case of Job: One would search in vain in the Bible to find any true miracle that Satan has performed. The case of Job is a good example. It is important to understand that **Satan worked through circumstances around Job**, and not directly upon his free-moral behavior. And in working in those circumstances, the Bible **does not say that Satan worked any miracles.**

The real power that Satan used against Job in controlling the circumstances did not originate with Satan. After Satan had accused God of putting a hedge around Job, it is recorded in Job 1:11 that he said to God, "*But now stretch out **Your hand** and touch all that he has and he will surely curse You to Your face.*" Why would Satan request that God put forth His hand to destroy Job's goods if Satan had the power himself to do such?

But this is not all. After Job had lost his material goods, Satan returned to God. In Job 2:3 God said to Satan that Job "*holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.*" Therefore, **it was God's hand that was moved against Job.** But Satan again said in Job 2:5, "*Stretch out **Your hand** now, and touch his bone and his flesh.*" It is interesting to note Job 42:11 where all of Job's brethren came to him after his great or-

deal “*and comforted him for all the adversity that **the Lord had brought upon him.**”*

God has all power. Satan has nothing other than that which is given to him by God. In Job’s case, God only allowed Satan to exercise divinely given power in order for Satan to carry out his afflictions of Job.

The point that is emphasized in the case of Job is that at that time Satan was under control. He was not running loose to do as he desired in the lives of men. Now in this Christian age, Satan is under more restraint. John recorded that the angel ...

*... **laid hold** of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him** for a thousand years; 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 (Rv 20:2,3).*

If these words teach anything, they teach that the confinement of Satan in this age is a real thing. He is not a spirit entity out there subduing people at will. He is only the roaring lion to those who have given themselves over to his cause. In reference to the life of the Christian, he has been bound.

2. The case of the lawless one: In 2 Thessalonians 2:9 Paul talked of the lawless one whose coming “*is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders.*” As previously stated, the word “lying” refers

to power, signs and wonders. In other words, these are false signs, false powers and false wonders.

The lawless one would not work any real miracles. It would be as what Jesus said in Matthew 24:24: “*For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*” These were not real miracles, for they were performed “so as to deceive.” One is not deceived for believing that which is real. If these were real miracles, then one would not be deceived if he believed them. So it was with the lawless one about whom Paul wrote. Such a one worked deceiving works in order to lead men after himself.

Any miraculous activity today that one would classify with the confirming miraculous work of God we read about in the Bible should be highly suspect. Confirming miracles of God were visible, instantaneous and carried out to accomplish specific purposes. Those purposes rule out allowing Satan to also do miraculous work. If Satan could have worked miracles through his agents as God allowed the disciples to work miracles, then the very purpose of miracles would have been nullified.

The supposed demon possession of today should be compared with the New Testament definition of demon possession. Such a comparison defines the modern-day experiences as something different than first century demon possession. God allowed demons to possess people in the first century for a specific purpose. When

the purpose was completed, the possession ceased. Though God allowed demon possession in the first century, we must remember that He also gave power to Jesus and the disciples to cast out those demons. The purpose of miracles and the power to cast out demons were to prove Jesus' power over the world of darkness. Jesus proved that power. He even proved it through His disciples to whom He gave the power of exorcism. Therefore, Jesus disarmed Satan and his angels. Satan is bound by the gospel. Demons have been reserved in darkness until the final judgment. They are not allowed to possess people today.

Satan cannot control individuals as he so chooses. He never has and never will. The Bible was written in order that we not allow Satan to have "an advantage over us." In 2 Corinthians 2:9-11 Paul warned the Corinthians concerning their obedience "*lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*" Therefore, we must study the Scriptures in order not to be ignorant of how he works (See 1 Tm 5:15).

So what should be our attitude toward those reports of "astonishing happenings"? Jesus clearly stated, "*Do not believe it*" (Mt 24:23). Even though false christs and false prophets perform "*great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect*" (Mt 24:24), our attitude as disciples of Jesus must be, **do not believe it**. Jesus concluded, "*See, I have told you beforehand,*" (Mt 24:25). "*Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go*

out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' **do not believe it**" (Mt 25:26). In the context, these warnings were in reference to the time before Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70. However, such warnings are certainly appropriate for us to heed today in reference to the many false teachers who are supposedly performing great signs and wonders. Jesus still says, "**Do not believe it.**"

As a final message, or warning, let us not underestimate the ability of the individual to allow himself to be deceived. If one is thoroughly convinced that satanic spirits roam the earth in search of innocent victims whom they might possess, then one will do one of two things. Either he or she will become the possessed, or at least, he or she will associate the self-inflicted hypnotic trance or psychological fit of deceived people to be the actual workings of the spirit world.

We must affirm that an individual has the psychological ability to place himself in an uncontrollable hysterical state of mind. If one firmly believes that such is a **direct** work of the spirit world, then he or she can be talked into this uncontrollable state of mind.

This is a human psychological phenomenon. It is one that Satan **indirectly** encourages people to do in order to lead them away from God. This is the work of Satan. He deceives people to do or participate in anything that will lead an individual away from God.

The above psychological state of being out of control should not be confused with real and actual demon possession in the New Testament. Those

who claim to be demon possessed today are simply mentally and emotionally out of control. The answer to such is submission to the word of God. It is this word that *“is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Tm 3:16,17).

One of the problems that has destroyed living by the gospel is the mixing of Bible teachings with the beliefs of invented religions. This is the result of those who have preached half-truths concerning God’s word and filled in the rest of their theology with fictitious fantasies. Bible principles have been mixed with nonbiblical concepts throughout the world. What has happened, therefore, is that many Bible names have been tagged on

to pagan practices. Self-hypnotic practices of voodooism or spiritism, or whatever, have been labeled with Bible names. As a result, words and phrases as “miracle,” “demon possession,” “evil spirits,” “demons,” and others have been defined by religionists who have mixed Bible with Baal.

Bible believers must stand with a biblical definition of all Bible subjects. The Bible student must not be dissuaded from his or her stand to allow the Bible to be our only source of truth and definition when it comes to defining that which is beyond this physical world. People need to read more Bible and watch fewer Hollywood movies on the subject of Satan and demons. They need to read more Bible and be less influenced by the religiously deceived world in which we live.