



A Decade of Pentecost Resource
from the Acts in Africa Initiative



Overcoming *the* **Enemy**

How to Challenge and Defeat
Demonic Spirits

Denzil R. Miller

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Overcoming the Enemy: How to Challenge and Defeat Demonic Spirits

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus began His ministry by announcing, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). He had come to do the will of His Father and to advance His kingdom on earth. When He returned to heaven, He handed over that responsibility to His followers (John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

The kingdom of God now advances through the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit. Through the Church, God has come to take back what the devil has stolen (John 10:10). This advance of God’s kingdom results in conflict with the kingdom of darkness. The adversary, the devil, opposes the advance of God’s kingdom (1Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:8). The result is violent conflict between these two powerful spiritual kingdoms (Eph. 6:12).

Thus, God’s kingdom does not come timidly nor does it come with apology. Rather, it comes with power and authority. Paul declared, “For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power” (1 Cor. 4:20). In fact, this is the only way the kingdom of God can come. The supplanter must be driven out by force. One day, after driving a demon out of a man, Jesus said,

If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone

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enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. (Matt. 12:28-29)

Because Satan stubbornly resists God's reign and authority, the kingdom of God must advance in power. Jesus once told His disciples, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power" (Mark 9:1). The disciples, of course, had already seen the kingdom of God advancing powerfully in Christ's ministry (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). Jesus, however, was referring to a later time. He spoke of an event that would occur prior to the death of some of those present. He could have only been speaking of the Day of Pentecost when His Church would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to come to earth (Matt. 6:10). God's kingdom comes each time someone is saved, healed, or delivered by the power of God. It also comes when committed disciples are baptized in the Holy Spirit and empowered to be Christ's witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:3, 8).

Christ has sent His Church into the world with the gospel. One of its primary tasks is to overcome and defeat the powers of darkness. The Church does this in the authority of Jesus' name and through the power of His Spirit (Luke 4:36; Mark 16:17; Matt. 28:12). It is significant that the first miracle recorded in Mark involved Jesus casting out a demon (Mark 1:21-27). Later, as His ministry on earth was ending, Jesus placed casting out

demons first on His list of signs that would follow believers who were going out to fulfil His Great Commission. He promised, “In my name they will cast out demons...” (16:17).

The coming of God’s kingdom inevitably results in a clash of kingdoms. The kingdom of God violently confronts the kingdom of Satan. Jesus said, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12).

Under the devil’s command, his malignant spirits strongly resist the advance of Christ’s kingdom in the earth. Therefore, those who expect to be effective in advancing Christ’s kingdom to the ends of the earth must know how to challenge and defeat out demons whenever and wherever they may encounter them.

Such spiritual warfare takes place on a number of levels. It can occur on a cosmic level as powerful angelic beings make war in the heavenlies. John saw such spiritual warfare taking place:

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev. 12:7-9)

The prophet Daniel tells of how God sent an angel to him with an answer to his prayer. However, en route the angel was hindered by a demonic spirit named the “prince of the kingdom

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of Persia.” Only with the help of Michael, the archangel, was the angel able to defeat this powerful spirit and deliver God’s message to Daniel (Dan. 10:11-14).

Spiritual warfare can also take place on a terrestrial, or earthly, level. This happens when a follower of Christ confronts a demon and casts it out of tormented individual. Jesus did this with the demonized boy (Luke 9:37-42), and Paul did the same with the slave girl in in Philippi (Acts 16:16-18). Spiritual warfare can also occur internally, that is, within the heart and mind of an individual (2 Cor. 10:5-6). In all cases demons are overcome through the power of the Spirit (Matt. 28:12).

This booklet has been written as a practical, how-to guide offering useful guidelines to those committed to challenging and defeating demonic spirits. It will focus on two specific aspects of spiritual warfare. First, it will discuss how to deal with and cast demons out of individuals. Next, it will deal with how one can confront and defeat demons who exercise control over entire regions or societies. These demons are sometimes called *territorial spirits*.

CHAPTER 1

HOW TO CAST OUT DEMONS

Demons are real. To deny this fact is to deny Scripture and the day-to-day experience of millions of people around the world. In His Great Commission Jesus commanded,

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: *in my name they will cast out demons...* (Mark 16:15-17, emphasis added)

Casting out demons thus appears as an integral element of Jesus' strategy to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. In doing authentic gospel ministry, the follower of Jesus must be prepared to confront and defeat demons. This is especially true when he or she seeks to advance God's kingdom into ancient and unreached civilizations where people live in daily contact with demonic spirits.

Thus, the reality of demons cannot be ignored, nor can it be explained away. Real people are in real need of deliverance from

demonic bondage, and it is our responsibility, as proclaimers of Christ' gospel, to set them free. In this lesson we will discuss how we can best go about this essential task. First, however, we must come to a better understanding of who demons are and what they do.

UNDERSTANDING DEMONS

The Origin and Existence of Demons

Bible scholars sometimes disagree about the origin of demons. Most, however, believe the Bible teaches that demons are fallen angels. These are the angles who sinned and fell with Satan when he rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-15 ; Matt. 25:41; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:9).

We can be sure of one thing, demons do exist. The Bible, especially the four gospels, leaves no doubt that demons are real. We can also be certain about their evil nature and work. This work includes giving power to sinful people (including witches, sorcerers, and evil rulers) who seek to gain control over other people.

Jesus often faced and cast out demons. He has commissioned His Church to have the same ministry (Mark 1:23-27; 16:17).

Characteristics of Demons

What are demons like? The Bible teaches several things about their nature and character:

1. *They are actual living beings* (Luke 4:33-35; Acts 16:16-17; James 2:19). They are not some impersonal force, either real or imagined. Demons are real living beings with their own minds, wills, and personalities.

2. *They are spirits* (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 16:13). Demons are spirits without bodies. They sometimes seek to dwell in the bodies of men and women.

3. *They are powerful*. Demons have intelligence, strength, and power (Luke 8:29; Acts 16:16-17; 2 Thess. 2:9). While they are powerful beings, their power is limited. Demons are not like God, who is all-powerful and uncreated. Rather, they are created beings with only limited power. Demons cannot stand against the great power of God.

4. *They are morally depraved* (Mark 1:23; Eph. 6:12). Demons are completely given over to sin and rebellion. We call this being depraved. Thus, they are absolutely evil, cruel, and harmful to people.

Demonic Goals and Actions

The angels' chief desire is to fulfil the will of God. In similar manner, demons desire to fulfil the will of Satan. Satan seeks to strike out at God and hurt Him, and demons share this evil desire. However, they know they cannot stand against God's power, nor can they hurt Him directly. They, therefore, try to hurt Him indirectly. They do this by attacking those whom God deeply loves, the human race. As a result, demons level their attacks on people. They harm people by attacking their bodies, souls, and spirits in at least three ways:

1. *By seeking people's worship* (1 Cor. 10:19-21). Demons want people to worship them and their ruler, Satan. By doing this, they deny God the worship that He rightfully deserves.
2. *By holding people in bondage*. Demons want to hold people in bondage to fear, sickness, and evil habits. In this way, they blemish the image of God in mankind.
3. *By blinding people to the truth of the gospel* (Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 2:14). Demons try to keep people from believing the truth. They do not want people to enjoy a living relationship with God. Demons want to keep people from going to heaven.

In his book, *Introduction to Biblical Christianity from an African Perspective*, William O'Donovan, Jr., listed several types of demon activities. These activities include the following:

1. *Deception*. Demons use lies to breed hatred, false religions, and even false teachings within the Church (John 8:44; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2Pet. 2:21).
2. *Murder and violence*. If they are not defeated, demons can bring violence, harm, and even death to their victims (John 8:44).
3. *Torture*. Demons torture people by inflicting them with physical sickness (Job 2:7, Acts 10:38), blindness and dumbness (Matt. 12:22), madness (Luke 8:27-29), and physical deformity (Luke 13:11-17).

4. *Sexual uncleanness.* The Gospels often refer to demons as “unclean spirits” (cf. Matt 10:1; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36). This term points out their moral filth. It further points to the unclean thoughts, passions, and actions they inspire in people (Matt. 10:1; Mark 1:23; 3:11).
5. *Hindering the work of the gospel.* Demons strongly oppose the advance of the gospel and seek to hinder its advance (Eph. 6:12; 1 Thess. 2:18).
6. *Troubling God’s people.* Demons trouble, disturb, frustrate, and discourage believers whenever they can (Luke 22:31; 2 Cor. 12:7).
7. *Promoting idolatry and witchcraft.* Demons control and give power to witchcraft, idolatry, and ancestor worship (Deut. 32:16-17; 1Sam. 15:23; 1 Cor. 10:19-20).

Demon Possession

Demons afflict and control their victims in a number of ways. The most severe form of demon influence is called “demon possession,” a phrase used often in the NIV Bible (cf. Matt. 4:34). Demons possess people by entering into them and taking control of their lives. The demon can control a person either entirely or in part. This demonic control can be either continuous or occasional. Demon possession affects its victims in many tragic ways. These ways include the following.

- Physical problems (Mark 1:26), including deaf-muteness and blindness (Matt. 9:32-34; 12:22-30),

- Desire to kill or hurt oneself (Mark 5:5; 9:22),
- Reaction to, and fear of, Christ or His name (Mark 1:24),
- Personality changes, or a clouding of consciousness (Mark 9:26),
- Another personality speaking through the afflicted person (Luke 8:28-30),
- Great physical strength (Luke 8:29),
- Unexplained knowledge or occult powers (Acts 16:16-17).

Some have taught that a Christian can be possessed by a demon. Others deny that this is possible. What does the Bible teach? Can a Christian be demon possessed? The answer is, No. While a born-again Christian can be tempted, deceived, attacked, and even oppressed by demons from the outside, it is not possible for a Christian to be possessed by a demon. A demon cannot inhabit and take control of a Spirit-indwelt child of God.

Four facts support this belief. First, the New Testament never describes a born-again believer as being demon possessed. It gives no example of a demon being cast out of a child of God. Second, deliverance from demons often happened at the moment of salvation. Third, none of the New Testament epistles present demon possession as a danger for Christians. Finally, demon possession is possible for backsliders and apostates.

Some claim to have ministered deliverance to “demon-possessed Christians.” However, these so-called “Christians” were, likely, backsliders or apostates from the faith.

Satan Is a Defeated Foe

In confronting demons, we should keep two important truths in mind. First, the power of the devil in this age is greatly limited by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess. 2:7). Through the Spirit, we have commanding power over demons (Matt. 12:28). Second, the power of Satan and his demons was broken at Calvary (John 12:31). Paul wrote, “He [Christ] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Col. 2:15).

“Rulers and authorities” do exist, but Jesus has already defeated these demonic powers. At the cross, He broke Satan’s power base. Now, Satan and his demons are defeated enemies. It is true that they continue to attack human beings. Yet, because of Christ’s mighty work on the Cross, they cannot resist the advance of the Church.

HOW TO CAST OUT DEMONS

We will now discuss the topic of casting out demons. However, before we do this, we need to talk about the minister of deliverance himself or herself.

The Deliverance Minister

Anyone wanting to be involved in a deliverance ministry must know and do certain things. Those things include the following:

- The minister must understand that casting out a demon is an actual battle. He or she thus faces a real and dangerous enemy. They must never take this fight lightly (Eph. 6:12).
- Because it is a spiritual battle, the deliverance minister must be presently full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Matt. 12:28).
- The minister must be submitted entirely to the will of God (James 4:7).
- The deliverance minister should have a working knowledge of his or her spiritual armor (Eph. 6:10-18). And they must know how to use this armour in battle.
- The minister must have a living faith in the victory of Calvary and in the blood of Christ. They must be living under the authority of Jesus Christ in every area of their lives.
- The minister must maintain a strong relationship with Christ through prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29, KJV).

Ministering Deliverance from Demons

As followers of Jesus Christ have been commissioned and equipped to deliver those possessed by demons. Jesus is our example and guide in such spiritual warfare (Luke 4:18-19; 31-37). He has commissioned us to follow Him into the battle (Mark 16:15-18).

Jesus has given us the power and authority we need to deliver the oppressed. The empowering and gifts of the Holy Spirit

enables us to expose and reveal demons. We have also been given power and authority to expel demons from people (Luke 9:1-2; 10:17-19).

The Process of Deliverance

Casting out demons and breaking demonic bondage is ultimately a work of God. Therefore, this work can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). Defeating demons is a sign that the kingdom of God is present (Luke 9:1-2). It also shows the power and lordship of Christ over His world (Col. 2:15).

Three steps are normally involved in casting a demon out of an individual: the interview, the ministry engagement, and post-prayer guidance. Let's look at each of these steps.

1. *The interview (discovery)*. An interview with a possessed or oppressed person is not always possible. However, if it is possible, it is the logical first step in the deliverance process. The interview allows the minister to discover the demon's presence and the extent of the infestation. We often discover the demon's presence through the gift of discerning of spirits (1 Cor.12:10; cf. Acts 16:16-18). It is also helpful to closely observe the person being ministered to. Demons sometimes become troubled in the presence of God that they expose themselves. This sometimes happened in Christ's ministry (Mark 1:23; 5:6-7).

Before we attempt to cast the demon out of a person, it is essential, if possible, that we demand a commitment from the one seeking deliverance. We should lead them in a prayer of repentance and confession of their sins. Further, we should emphasise those sins that are closely related to their spiritual

bondage. The person must boldly renounce every demonic practice and work of the flesh.

2. *The ministry engagement.* We begin the actual power encounter by praying in Jesus' name and by asking the Holy Spirit to come and empower us for the task. We should wait until we sense the presence and power of God. We can then proceed to the power encounter. We can cast out (or drive away) the demon using one or more of the following methods:

- by binding the demon in the name of Jesus (Matt. 16:17-19; 18:18).
- by commanding the demon to come out, be gone, or release its hold on the person (Luke 4:35).
- by commanding the demon not to re-enter (Mark 9:25).

Sometimes, the demons will struggle or resist (Luke 8:29; 11:14). At such times, the deliverance minister should continue in faith until the victory comes. Deliverance often results in physical demonic manifestations and contortions (Mark 7:30; Luke 4:33-35; 9:42). The minister should not be distracted by, nor fear, these physical manifestations. Instead, they should order the demon to be quiet and come out (Mark 1:25:34). The minister can, in Christ's authority, command the demon to come out and stay out (Mark 9:25).

The *Life in the Spirit Study Bible* contains an article entitled "Power Over Satan and Demons" (1502). This article outlines seven guidelines in delivering people from demonic bondage:

1. Recognise that we are not in a conflict against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces and powers of evil (Eph. 6:12).
2. Live before God, fervently committed to His truth and righteousness (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 6:14).
3. Have faith that Satan's power can be broken in any specific area of his domain (Acts 26:11; Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8), and realize that the believer has powerful spiritual weapons given by God for the destruction of Satan's strongholds (2 Cor. 10: 4-5).
4. Proclaim the gospel of the kingdom in the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 4:23; Luke 1:15-17; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 8:12; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 6:15).
5. Challenge Satan and his power directly by trusting in Jesus' name (Acts 16:16-18), by using God's Word (Eph. 6:17), by praying in the Spirit (Acts 6:4; Eph. 6:18), by fasting (see Matt. 6:16 note) and by driving out demons (see Matt. 10:1 note; 12:28; 17:17-21; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12).
6. Pray especially for the Holy Spirit to convict the lost concerning sin, righteousness and the coming judgement (John 16:7-11).
7. Pray for and eagerly desire the manifestation of the Spirit through gifts of healing, tongues, miracles, signs and wonders (Acts 4:9-33; 10:38; 1 Cor. 12:7-11).

3. *Post-prayer guidance.* The final step in the deliverance encounter is post-prayer guidance and counsel. A person who has been under the control, or strong influence, of demons will

need a great deal of help. Follow-up counselling, emotional support, and prayer are essential. This is not the time to leave the delivered person alone. We must show him or her loving concern and ongoing spiritual support.

The minister must determine the person's spiritual condition. The newly-liberated person should be led immediately to salvation and peace with God. They should also be led immediately into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Only then will they have the power to resist future demonic temptation and attacks. Jesus sternly warned us about these matters:

When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. (Matt. 12:43-45a)

The person will need ongoing help in dealing with any remaining emotional and spiritual problems. The minister should maintain close contact with the person until he or she is completely free from bondage. Our ministry should also show loving concern for the dignity of the people receiving our ministry.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO CHALLENGE AND DEFEAT TERRITORIAL SPIRITS

In the last chapter we talked about how to cast out demons who infest and afflict individuals. In this lesson we will discuss how we can deal with demons who influence and control regions or societies. These demons have been called *territorial spirits*.¹ We often encounter such spirits as we enter new areas to seek and save the lost and plant the church. It is therefore important that we know how to confront and defeat them.

WHAT ARE TERRITORIAL SPIRITS?

As stated above, territorial spirits is another term for demons. However, here we are speaking of demons with a different assignment. Rather than controlling individuals,

¹Since many of these spirits control people groups and societies rather than geographic areas, they could more properly be called *controlling spirits*, *societal spirits*, or *tribal spirits*.

territorial spirits seek to control certain localities, people groups, or societies.

Demons Are Well Organized

The Bible indicates that evil spirits have different ranks and work. Paul wrote,

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:12; ref. Col. 2:15)

Scripture further suggests that ruling spirits are assigned to localities, societies, people groups, and tribes throughout the earth. According to Peter Wagner,

Satan delegates high ranking members of the hierarchy of evil spirits to control nations, regions, cities, tribes, people groups, neighbourhoods and other significant social networks of human beings throughout the world. (77)

Using the different designations of demons in Paul's writings, Wesley Deuwel has attempted to classify this hierarchy of demon spirits (104-105). He wrote,

How Satan has organized the demons in his kingdom of evil we do not know. Scripture uses a number of terms for spirit beings, and often in a way which indicates they are under

Satan's dominion. Here are some of the terms in the Greek, along with references where they may be found:

- *archa* rulers (1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:6; 2:10, 15)
- *exousiai* authorities (1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16)
- *dunamis* powers (Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21)
- *kuriotes* dominions, lordship (Eph. 1:21; Col 1:16)
- *throni* thrones (Col 1:16)
- *archontes* leaders, princes (1 Cor. 2:6)
- *kosmokratores* world rulers (Eph. 6:12)

These terms may refer to different ranks of authority, different backgrounds, or different assignments under Satan. The important thing is that all these beings are limited in power, knowledge, and scope of activity. All were defeated by Christ at the Cross. All know they are awaiting their judgement, to be followed by their eternal punishment (Matt. 8:29).

Satan Is Their Commander

These ruling spirits are under the control of their commander, Satan. The Bible says, "We know ... the whole

world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). The term, “the whole world” (Greek: *kosmos holos*) speaks of all earthly human systems. These include political, religious, educational, social, and economic systems. George Otis wrote, “Satan’s objective . . . is to gain control over the lives of human beings by dominating the systems—political, economic and religious—that they have created” (88).

Satan exercises this control through a powerful network of demonic rulers, authorities, powers, and evil spiritual forces (Eph. 6:12). Otis describes this powerful network of ruling spirits:

Today, a hierarchy of evil powers radiates out over the earth to administrate areas and peoples already under satanic dominion (strongholds), and to wage war against those that are not. In Scripture, certain “spiritual strongmen” (high-ranking spirits) are actually referred to by the territories they control. These include the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13), the prince of Greece (Daniel 10:20), the king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:12) and the spirit of Babylon (Revelation 17:3-5). In other cases, leading satanic powers have assumed the identity of territorial deities, such as Bel in Babylon (Jeremiah 51:44), Baal-Zebub of Ekron (2 Kings 1:2-3) and Apollyon of the underworld (Revelation 9:11). (94)

In summary, territorial spirits are high-ranking demonic spirits. They control, or seek to control, the territories or societies in which they stay.

THE WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF TERRITORIAL SPIRITS

The Work of Territorial Spirits

The primary work of territorial spirits is to hold societies, areas, or people groups in bondage. They try to keep people within their area of influence from believing the gospel and being saved (2 Cor. 4:4). One way they exercise their control over people is by influencing human leaders and governments (see Rev. 16:14). Douglas Pennoyer describes the “collective captivity” enforced on people by these high-ranking spirits. He believes that demons control a given society by controlling important people within that society:

Demons working through individuals can control the society to some extent and actively use the system to prevent the gospel light from penetrating into members’ lives.... The demonic goal is to keep the captives in the devil’s dark dungeon, in a kind of collective captivity that discourages the individual from breaking out and into the kingdom of light.
(250)

The Activities of Territorial Spirits

How do territorial spirits keep a society from receiving the light of the gospel? One way is by blinding people to the truth. Paul wrote the Christians in Corinth,

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And even if our gospel is veiled [hidden], it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

How can Satan blind the minds of billions throughout the entire world? He obviously cannot do this alone, because he is a finite being. He is not omnipresent like God. Satan depends on a highly developed system of ruling and controlling spirits to carry out His wishes.

Satan further controls territories and societies by working through man's sinful nature. All men without God are morally and spiritually depraved (Rom. 8:7). People become more and more bound as they become more and more corrupt. This is Satan's plan for territorial spirits.

HOW TO DEFEAT TERRITORIAL SPIRITS

Territorial spirits must be challenged and defeated. This can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the authority of Jesus' name. We can combat and defeat these controlling spirits in three ways: through strategic prayer warfare, through binding the strong man, and through proclaiming the gospel in the power of the Spirit. Only then will the gospel be able to spread effectively into an unreached area. Let's look at these three ways of defeating territorial spirits.

Strategic Prayer Warfare

The first way to defeat territorial spirits is through *strategic prayer warfare*. As we learned in the last chapter, as ministers of Christ, we have been given power and authority to command demons who are afflicting individuals. In the same way, we can command evil spirits to loose their control over specific territories and people groups. Through this kind of prayer we can confront and defeat ruling spirits. As we have stated, this spiritual warfare can only be accomplished in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Strategic prayer warfare also involves calling upon the Holy Spirit to come and bring revival to a region or people. The presence of the Holy Spirit is a restraining force over demonic powers (2 Thess. 2:7), and helps to open the way for the preaching of the gospel.

Thus strategic prayer warfare results in the “opened doors,” often mentioned in Scripture (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev. 3:8). It is important to set aside time for such strategic prayer warfare. We should do this before entering a country, area, city, or village to preach the gospel and plant churches.

Binding the Strong Man

A second way to defeat territorial spirits is to bind the “strong man” exercising control over a people or place. Jesus spoke of using this powerful spiritual weapon:

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can

someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. (Matt. 12:28-29)

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. (Luke 11:21-22)

Who is the "strong man" in these passages? He is a powerful demon who controls an individual, a society, or a region. Note that in Luke 11:21 Jesus describes this demon as being "fully armed." The strong man's "house" can be the body of the individual possessed by the demon. It could also be the region, people group, or society controlled by the demon. The "goods" (Matt. 12:29) are the souls of men and women held in bondage. (See chart below.)

The Strong Man of Matthew 12:28-29 (Two Perspectives)	
The Strong Man	The Strong Man's "Goods"
A demon possessing and controlling an individual	The body of the individual possessed by the demon
A powerful demon controlling an region, people group, or society	The people living in a territory, people group, or society controlled by the demon

We learn two important lessons from these two passages of Scripture.

1. *Territorial spirits are cast out or driven away by the Spirit of God* (see Matt. 12:28). In Luke 10:12, Jesus described the Spirit of God as “someone stronger” than the demonic strong man. We can defeat these powerful demonic spirits only through the power of the Spirit.
2. *We overpower the strong man by entering his house and “overcoming him” and “binding him”* (Matt. 12:29). What does this involve? It requires us to enter the demon’s territory and in the name of Jesus “tie him up” (NIV). We can demand that the demon loose his control on the people held in bondage. And we can bind his power in Jesus’ name through the Spirit’s greater power and anointing.

Proclaiming the Gospel

A third way to defeat territorial spirits is by proclaiming the gospel in the power of the Spirit. The gospel of Christ has great spiritual power. Paul called it “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” (Rom. 1:16). As it is preached in a region, the light of the gospel shines brighter. As people hear and believe the truth, the grip of territorial spirits is loosened. Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). When light shines in darkness, the darkness cannot

stand against it (John 1:5; Psa. 119:30). The darkness is shattered and people are set free.

Seven Important Guidelines

Here are seven important guidelines for engaging in spiritual warfare against territorial spirits.

1. *Have a proper relationship with God.* Only a fool would attempt to battle these dark spirits without personally knowing God. The seven sons of Sceva painfully discovered this truth (Acts 19:14-17). The spiritual warrior must first know that he or she is truly born again. They must have an active personal prayer life and a close relationship with God. And they must realize their absolute dependence on God.

2. *Confess and forsake all known sin.* God's warrior must not attempt spiritual warfare with unconfessed sin in his or her life. Remember the words of the prophet:

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isa. 59:1-2)

3. *Deal with any chronic sin.* A chronic sin is any repeated sin or work of the flesh in a person's life. Such a pattern of sin is an opening for demonic attack (Gal. 5:19-21). This must therefore be dealt with and defeated. A spiritual warrior must seek personal deliverance from any habitual sin in his or her own life.

They should experience their own deliverance and healing before attempting spiritual warfare.

4. *Put on the full armor of God.* The apostle admonishes us to “put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:10). The spiritual warrior must do this before engaging in battle. No soldier would go into battle unarmed, and no spiritual warrior should begin spiritual warfare without first putting on the full armour of God.

5. *Be filled with the Spirit.* Jesus drove out demons by the Spirit of God (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20), and so must we. We cannot defeat the enemy in our own strength. We need the power of the Spirit. We must, therefore, be baptized in and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). Then, we must walk continually in the presence and power of the Spirit. Jesus overcame Satan by being full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).

6. *Continue in prayer until the victory comes.* Victory in any war is not won in a single battle. Like Daniel, the spiritual warrior must continue in prayer until the victory comes (Dan. 10:2, 12).

7. *Combine prayer with anointed preaching of the gospel.* God will confirm the preached word with signs and wonders (Mark 16:15-18). Salvation and victory in a demon-controlled area is possible only when the gospel is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:18-19). No demon can resist the mighty power of the gospel preached under an anointing of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

As we go into the world to win the lost and to plant churches, we should expect demonic opposition. This opposition will occur on two levels. It will occur on an individual level and on a societal level. In other words, we will encounter spirits who afflict and possess individuals, and we will encounter controlling Spirits who hold entire territories or peoples in collective captivity. In any case Jesus has given us all the power we need to defeat the enemy.

No matter what the challenge we can be sure that Jesus is with us. He has promised, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20, NIV). Therefore, if we will remain full of the Spirit and submitted to the will of Christ, no demon can stand before us. Jesus promised, “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you” (Luke 10:20).

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