

Chapter 12

God's Deliverance

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

1 John 3:8

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Luke 10:19

A Teen's Psychic Bondage

Acts 16:16-24

We met a slave girl who had a spirit of fortune-telling and who had brought her owners a great deal of money by predicting the future.

I was preaching on a Sunday evening and in doing so I felt a tremendous oppression. I had difficulty with the flow of the message as though there was something standing in front of me hindering me, maybe even opposing me. Whenever this has happened in the past it had been that someone was demonized or under the power of the occult and thereby hindering the Holy Spirit in the service. So, I stopped mid-message and paused for a full minute. That usually gets people's attention.

I told them what I felt was going on and I read a long list of occult activities that lead to demon infestation. I said, "Somebody here has dabbled in the occult. I am going to pray and bind the enemy in Jesus' name." I prayed and went on with the sermon.

When I finished preaching almost everyone left except for this one young lady. She came up to me and said, "It's me." I had already put the matter of a hindering spirit behind me so I didn't know what she meant. I asked, "What do you mean, 'It's me?' What are you talking about?" She replied, "I'm the one that has dabbled in the occult." She went on to tell me that her mother regularly went to a psychic. Her mother had given her a note from a psychic which she was told to carry in her purse. It was supposed to protect her from all the diseases and physical afflictions she was experiencing. The note was an incantation. It was supposed to stop the evil and she would have no more sickness. She then reached into her purse and brought out the note. I read it and was appalled. This was just like the Brazilian white magic and demonic spells used that we encountered in Brazil. I couldn't believe this was in an evangelical church in the States.

After I read the note I told her she needed to repent of that witchcraft and turn to the Lord for her body and health. I instructed concerning the Scriptures in Deuteronomy 7:25-26 regarding witchcraft that tell us all items belonging to the devil should be burned to utterly destroy them. It was quite frightening for me to realize that even believers can be deceived into witchcraft as good magic.

I would like to report that she trusted the Lord, but she did not. She continued to be influenced by her psychic mother and she continued to battle undiagnosed illnesses. A few years later I heard that she had died of an unknown illness.

Over the years while working with people involved in the occult and witchcraft I found that it was best to open the Bible and allow them to read God's condemnation of those activities and what should be done about it. I keep these references in the back of my Bible so I can easily find them. I have the individual read it out loud. The effect is powerful. They usually turn white with fear and start to tremble.

I recommend in today's culture that all God's children should have these passages marked in their Bible to use in such occasions.

- **Leviticus 19:26, 31, 20:6, 20:27**
- **Deuteronomy 7:25-26, 18:19-12, 28:15-47**
- **Isaiah 8:19-22, 19:2-3, 47:9-15**
- **Micah 5:12-15**
- **Galatians 5:19**
- **Revelation 21:8**
- **1 Corinthians 10:19-21**
- **2 Corinthians 6:14-17**

Comatose People

In several cases in Brazil and here in the USA I have been called upon to visit someone who was comatose from demonic involvement. Once in Brazil it was a young lady who had been comatose for three days, unable to wake up. No medicines or psychological therapies helped. When I was called I recognized it immediately as an occult phenomenon where a demon caused them to fall under a spell. Another occasion was in New Jersey. A man in my church told me his college age daughter was comatose for three days and would not come out of it.

In each case I did the same thing. I sat by their side and talked to them. They could hear me, just as many people in a coma can hear. They were just unable to respond. I told them what I believed was happening, that they had opened a door for Satan to afflict them through immoral living or occult involvement. I tell them that Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil. Then I opened my Bible and read aloud Psalm 91. It worked EVERY TIME. Before I got finished reading they woke up and asked what was happening. I then shared the Gospel with them and how they could call on the name of the Lord and be saved. I recommend this to anyone dealing with demon possessed, oppressed, or obsessed.

An Affluent Executive

Acts 19:18-20

Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

This story happened in the United States, so we know these demonic activities and spiritual oppressions happen here as well. I was pastoring in New Jersey in a middle class American town. It was an upper middle class neighborhood with people living in a nice community. My neighboring pastor called me one day to ask me to visit a man of his church who believed his house was haunted. He said, "Dick, I need you to come over. You've been in Brazil, you know about witchcraft and haunted houses and all that stuff. I've got a guy in my church who thinks his house is haunted." He went on to tell me that the man's son had been sick. They had been to every doctor and nothing could make the boy better. He also said they had been hearing noises and seeing things in the house, like someone walking around at night. The man was terrified that it was a ghost. So, this pastor wanted me to come over to convince his parishioner that his house wasn't haunted. I paused for a moment for effect. Then I said, "Well, Dennis, I'll come over, but I'm not going to convince him that his house isn't haunted, because HIS HOUSE IS HAUNTED!"

I went on to explain that if they were seeing things in the dark and hearing noises of people walking through the house at night it is always because somebody had dabbled in the occult. They have been involved with witchcraft in some shape or form.

Dennis assured me this was an upper middle class guy. He had a great job. He was highly educated. He was an executive in a big firm. He was a former Catholic. He was a new Christian. There was no way that he dabbled in the occult. I responded, "I'm just telling you what I know. Let me come over and talk with him."

That evening Dennis and I went over to his lovely home. We sat down and started to chat. I asked him to tell me a little about himself and his background. He told me about his son having tremors and night fears and was seeing things in the dark and hearing bumps in the night like footprints in the house. I just waited for him to finish the story.

"Let me ask you a question," I said, "Have you or anyone in your family dabbled in the occult?" Then I explained what that meant. I identified things like horoscopes, Ouija boards, tarot cards, palm readers, fortune tellers, ESP, psychics and psychic healers and such. I went through a whole litany of things that are spiritual and occult and that God says are an abomination. I explained that they are gateways to demonic activity, and haunted houses are just a symptom of demonic activity.

You could see his face turn red with embarrassment as I spoke. Then the blood drained out of his face. I looked at Dennis and just raised my eyebrows. Even his wife noticed his discomfort and guilt and asked him what it was.

Then he told me his story. He explained, "My son has been sick for months. We have tried everything medically speaking and nothing worked. We've gone to church and they prayed for him and nothing happened. So, I saw this lady advertised in the newspaper. She's called the "Mother of Saints." He continued to explain that he decided since nothing worked he was going to call her and see if there was anything she could do. She was based in Texas. He called and asked for her help. She told him there were some things she could do, but there was also something he would have to do in return. She began to send him amulets and items that were supposed to protect his house and family. They were pictures, chains, incantations, cloths, even crosses. He was to put them in strategic places around the house and bury some of them in the backyard. Still with all this his son was not getting better.

Finally, she said the curse on them must be strong. She wanted him to buy a Rolex watch. She specified the make and model number. She wanted him to buy one that cost more than \$5,000. She instructed him not to tell his wife or anyone else but keep it a secret. Once he bought the watch he was to send it to her by FedEx. She promised to take the watch and say certain prayers over it. Then she would turn back the hand of the clock and his son would be healed.

The man felt like a fool. He pleaded, "I didn't know it was wrong. She is a Catholic lady. She said prayers in Jesus' name. She used crosses and quoted the Bible. His wife looked at him when he admitted he bought a \$5,000 watch and yelled, "You did what? Are you out of your mind?" and they started to argue.

Dennis, the pastor, didn't know about any of this. He sat there dumbfounded. He whispered to me, "I can't believe this. This is a guy in my church dabbling in the occult and getting really deeply into it."

I interrupted their heated argument. I said, "You know there is a solution. You need to repent and ask God's forgiveness. You did it in ignorance. You didn't know that was wrong, but God says it's wrong. I opened the Scripture, showed him where it says it's wrong. I had him read it out loud from Deuteronomy 7:25-26. I told him he needed to take these things that belong to Satan and burn them so no one else could be entangled in them. After that we were going to walk through every room and claim the victory of Christ over his son, his family, and his house. They were broken and willing.

They walked around the rooms and started collecting things from Satan's kingdom. They had three bags full of all the paraphernalia from this lady. Then he said, pastor, there are things buried in the backyard. I don't know if I can ever find them. I assured him that it was good enough to burn what he could find. Later the Lord would show him where to find those other hidden things and he could burn them.

We spent that evening burning all those things and claiming the victory of Christ over his family. Then we walked through every room of the house claiming Psalm 91 and the protection of the Lord upon that household.

I got a call two weeks later and he said his son had been healed. His son was well for the first time in years. There were no more bumps in the night. There were no footsteps walking through the house and nobody was seeing any ghosts anymore. His house had been set free.

How were they set free? By the word of God and prayer! It's an amazing story. I hope that makes you feel the willies too because there are a lot of Christians who are carelessly dabbling in cultic things. They don't realize that the word of God gives us power over all the work of the enemy. If we repent and surrender those things to the Lord and obey His word, He will put a stop to the enemy's actions.

The rest of the story is that this man was so distraught and upset by being deceived that he got in touch with the FBI through a friend in Texas and made a formal complaint against the lady. The police had already accumulated other complaints against her so they raided her home and found hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of merchandise and cash she had deceived people into sending her. She was arrested and jailed. He received the Rolex watch in return. The Lord returned all that the devil had stolen!

Demonized With Pain

Luke 13:10-13

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

I was pastoring a church of 300-400 people. It was a great church but it was filled with conflict from the first day I set foot in it. The complaining and criticizing was overwhelming. There was conflict on every side. I mean, it was so bad my wife laid in bed the second week we were there and said, "Get me out of here!" She never had said anything like that before.

We stayed five years, but we knew there was something wrong in that congregation. It was non-stop bickering, fighting and conflict. One Sunday I was ready to walk out to preach. My study was behind the sanctuary platform area. There was a hallway leading up to the platform. I walked toward the platform with my mind on the Lord and His word when a little 90 year old lady came up to me shaking her finger in my face complaining about something I did or didn't do that got her upset. It was probably some insignificant thing like the color of my tie, but she was outraged. I walked out on the platform and silently prayed, "Lord, how do I preach to a congregation like this?"

I began to teach my elders about spiritual warfare and how to battle evil through prayer. I told them that spiritual warfare is real and they needed to do something about it. I preached messages on spiritual warfare and the authority of the believer. I taught my elders that when there's conflict in the church and when there's bitterness and anger, there is something going on behind it in the spiritual realm.

In this particular church there was evil. We could feel it. It was strong. It was so strong that there was a fist fight in the foyer of the church between board members! Eventually, I set the elders as spiritual watchmen at the door. I told them, "I want you to stand at the doorway of the church. No one needs to know what you're doing, but I want you to stand against the work of the enemy. I want you to plead the blood of Jesus. I want you to bind the enemy in Jesus' name. You need to pray that no evil will come into this place and that God will stop it.

One Sunday morning a lady was walking into the church and suddenly bent over screaming. "I can't go in. I can't go in. I can't go in, take me home!"

Her family took her home. I heard about it a little while later. I asked who it was. They mentioned her name. It was one of the ladies who was causing great turmoil in the church. When the elders guarded the door against the evil one, she had trouble entering in.

I preached the series on spiritual warfare on Sunday evenings. Our messages were broadcast on the radio every Sunday night. I preached about spiritual warfare and how it affects the church. When I finished the service I went into my study. I noticed the answering machine blinking so I pushed the message button. There came a lady's voice groaning, "I'm dying. I'm dying, I'm dying! Help me, I'm dying!", then hung up. I thought somebody was joking. It sounded like the wicked witch from *The Wizard of Oz* saying, "I'm melting, melting, melting." It gave me goose bumps up and down my neck.

I didn't know who it was immediately. She didn't identify herself. I was all alone, the last person to leave the church. Just then one of my elders happened to come back in because he forgotten his Bible. I asked him to listen to the message. I played it. He said, "Oh, that sends chills up and down my spine."

I asked if he recognized who it was. He answered that he didn't. Then I said, "I think I recognize the voice." It was the voice of this woman that could not enter the church because elders were standing at the church door resisting the enemy. I told him who I thought it sounded like and he agreed. We immediately called her son to ask him to check on her. Sure enough, he found his mother bent over in pain and needing to go to the hospital. As far as I know she was never delivered and remained a thorn in our flesh.

An Evil Spirit in This Place

Luke 10:18-20

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 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. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Sometimes we as rational, logical, humanistic Christians tend to explain things away in natural ways. But often those things that are very strange to us, things that bring oppression, are really attacks from the enemy. We don't always recognize these attacks because we think they come from human beings. We think they come from people with attitudes. Perhaps we think people just don't like us. Instead we ought to see behind the evil. The Apostle Paul said, *"We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,"* so we ought to understand that we are not wrestling against human factors. Behind every human evil is a demonic spirit that is stirring up trouble. You can find this true all through the Scriptures.

That is not to say that everything that goes bump in the dark, everything that goes wrong, everything that is different or creating difficulties in our lives, is of the devil. But certainly behind the scenes there is an evil one that manipulates people and things. We see that's true in the book of Job. It was natural phenomena that came against Job, but Satan was using those things to discourage him and to get him to turn away from the Lord. There were diseases that afflicted Job, but behind the disease was the destroyer. Behind those scenes God "lifted the curtain" so we could see that it is the evil one who seeks to devour and destroy.

There was a situation in another church that really became very oppressive. It was another church filled with conflict and infighting. Most of the board members told me they hated their church and wanted to leave. There was a nasty split some years before. People were still upset about it. It caused great dissension in the congregation. Even after the people who caused the split left the church, there was left behind the residual effects of unforgiveness, anger and bitterness.

After the first year there we discovered a gross sexual sin that had been behind the scenes for 50 years. It became our responsibility to discipline a man who was involved in homosexual acts within the church and within the community. As you can imagine that did not make us very popular. It was not easy to do go to the whole congregation and expose his sin. Some did not agree with church discipline. Many of them thought we were overdramatizing it. So, in anger they left the church. In one week we lost thirteen families. Of those that remained behind there was certainly an attitude of hatred toward me and toward the elders of the congregation. We could feel it in the church. There was a palpable sense of demonic activity while I preached the word. Worship was stifled. The presence of God was not evident. People were not being saved. People were not getting right with God. . It was as if the word of God was being preached, but the words were falling to the ground and not going into the hearts of the people. I told my elders that there would come a day when we needed to deal with the oppression of the enemy that was prevalent in our church. That time came a couple of months later.

I was in the pulpit having the same kind of problem I'd experienced in other places when there was demonic activity in the church. I was stumbling over words and having difficulty focusing my thoughts. There seemed to be confusion in my own mind how to communicate effectively. As I looked up in the congregation I saw the angry faces of those that hated me. Those faces were hard, hateful, angry and defiant.

I had told the elders that if that would ever happen I would stop my preaching and allow about 10 seconds to go by in silence, then I would say, "Elders I need you now!" I had instructed them to go to the four corners of our sanctuary and stand as men on guard to prayerfully resist, rebuke and bind the enemy in Jesus' name. None of them had ever had experience with this so it was all theoretical up to that point.

When that day came I was impressed by the response of my elders. I stopped my preaching in the middle of a sentence. I was silent for at least 10 seconds. I looked at the congregation. I looked at every face. Then I said, "Elders I need you now!"

Immediately three of my elders got up and went to the three corners of the sanctuary. One elder was missing. Later I discovered he had been monitoring the hallways in the children's wing. There was no amplification of the message on speakers going back to those rooms. He told me later, "Pastor, I kid you not; I heard a voice say, 'The pastor needs you now!'" Then he added, "Pastor I am not a woo-woo person. I am not a Pentecostal. I don't

hear voices. I'm not even sure if I believe in that kind of stuff, but this morning I heard an audible voice say, 'Pastor Dick needs you now!' I ran to the sanctuary, took my place in one of the corners and stood there resisting and rebuking the enemy in Jesus' name."

That morning the evil spirit of bitterness broke. That evil spirit of anger broke. That evil spirit of oppression broke. The people who hated me left and never came back to church after that Sunday. God delivered us from the oppression of the enemy.

Angels Surrounded the Church

A few weeks before this I received a letter from a person in the community. In that letter she said, "Pastor you don't know me and I don't know you, but as I was I was praying God revealed to me that there is a great oppression in your church. I don't need to know what that is, but I wanted to tell you that as I was praying I had a vision, in that vision I saw angels surrounding the whole property of the church. Pastor the angels were there in warfare garments with sword in hand opposing the enemy. God has told me to write you and let you know that you are not alone. The battle is not yours, the battle is the Lord's and God will be the victor.

What a wonderful experience to know that God is listening to our prayers. God hears our cries. God knows what needs to be done.