

DEMONIZATION OF THE BELIEVER¹

I. **INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS.** Today many are claiming the power to cast out demons. Many of these same people also claim that Christians can be "demonized" i.e. have demons residing inside of them that need to be cast out!

"BINDING & LOOSING"? One of the bases for their belief is a misinterpretation of the idea of "binding" & "loosing." One writer comments: "Verbally binding the enemy is... employed in attacking invisible spirit thugs of the dark world. One pastor I'm aware of opened every service saying, 'Satan, I bind you from hindering this gathering in Jesus' name.' A brother in Christ with good intentions is subtly led astray when Satan is the first one he speaks to in a service of worship to God (my emphasis). Such 'binding' is based on scriptures that were never meant to be applied as a formula of verbal rebuke. While Jesus did say the strong man must be bound in Matthew 12:29, this happens by the arrival of God's more powerful kingdom. This metaphor (figure of speech) in no way instructs believers to change the world through verbal rebuke." (Eric Villanueva, *Territorial Spirits & Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical Perspective.* CRI Journal, summer, 1992, p. 39) Mt. 18:18-20 which talks about "**binding & loosing.**" That passage is not talking about people running around commanding Satan & rebuking demons. Instead it is a passage that is talking about church discipline, and is assuring church leaders not to fear disciplining believers, that when they act in accordance with God's Word, forbidding or permitting something, that they can know that they are acting on heaven's behalf i.e. what they have "bound" (forbidden) or "loosed" (permitted) has already (that is the tense in Greek) been forbidden or permitted in heaven. Villanueva comments: "In 18:19 church discipline (dealing with professing Christians) is the subject of binding and loosing, not spiritual warfare (dealing with the demonic realm). In verse 20 this is done by agreeing in prayer to God, not talking to Satan" (Villanueva, CRI, Summer 1992, p. 39). Other verses misused include:

1. Eph. 6:12. This passage does talk about battling with Satan & the powers of darkness, but please notice that it is an external warfare. The armor is to protect you from the attacks from outside, not inside! Yes, Christians can be oppressed from outside, but they cannot be possessed from inside.
2. Dan. 10:10-13. In this passage we definitely see spiritual warfare, but it is not the kind being promoted today! "The battle in Daniel 10 was fought in heaven, not on earth. It involved two angels and one demon, no humans. When the angel needed help against the prince of the kingdom of Persia, what did God do? Did He ask Daniel to pray for that angel and bind the demon? No, Daniel didn't know anything about the cosmic conflict until it was already over and the angel told him about it. God's way of dealing with the situation was to send the Archangel Michael, not a trained believer, to provide deliverance (v.13). The Bible makes no mention of any other territorial conflict in the realm of spiritual warfare" (John MacArthur, Jr., "How to Meet the Enemy." Victor Books: Wheaton, IL, 1992, p. 43). Please notice that Daniel was not involved in the battle at all.
 - a. TERRITORIAL/REGIONAL DEMONS? This passage does give some credence to the general idea of demons being given specific areas or territories that they may be responsible for. "What about corporate demonization over regions, nations, cities, ethnic groups, and generations of families? First, we must acknowledge that there is some biblical evidence for TERRITORIAL spirits. (Jn. 12:31; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4)... A strong (?) argument for REGIONAL demonization can be found in the three-week delay of the angelic messenger to Daniel who was opposed by 'the Prince of Persia' (Dan. 10:12-13). This is understood by many scholars to mean an evil spiritual prince over the Persian nation, race and land... Interpretations of such passages may vary among sincere Christians, but one thing is certain: belief in territorial spirits should not be considered aberrant, as is, for example, the health and wealth gospel. The issue should never become a point of division among brothers and sisters in Christ" (Villanueva, Ibid).
 - b. GENERATIONAL SPIRITS? "But what about GENERATIONAL spirits? There are five explicit references in the Old Testament which promise that God will visit the father's sins upon the children with punishment (Lev. 26:39; Jer. 32:18), even to the fourth generation (Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18)... To support the doctrine of generational spirits one must infer that the visitation of punishment and the fulfillment of the curse consist in a demonic presence visited upon succeeding generations as a result of sin. This... does require an interpretive leap. Some evidence may exist in the fact that after Samuel's curse upon Saul 'an evil spirit' (I Sam. 18:10)

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tormented Saul. But this Scripture does not make conclusive an argument for a demon becoming attached to a cursed generation (or even inhabiting a believer! See II,A,1 below). Where teachers of these doctrines depart from Scripture more definitely is in the practice of trying to expel these spirits. The Bible does show Jesus and Paul verbally rebuking demons which PHYSICALLY POSSESSED individuals... It is important to note, however, that neither Jesus nor the disciples ever verbally rebuked (or taught others to do so) national, ethnic, behavioral, or generational demons. The (San Francisco) Bay Area demons have been thoroughly rebuked but the region is still not in its 'right mind,' while materialism, immorality, and irreverence are common behavior" (Villanueva, Ibid).

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS REGARDING "GENERATIONAL SPIRITS." (1) The statement in Scripture "the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation" **refers to a sinful lifestyle & bad habits that can be picked up by their children & grandchildren** (Ex. 20:5 cf. II Kings 17:40-41) "Verse 5 states the cumulative effects of sin (but responsibility is always on the individual; see...Ezek. 18:2" (Charles Ryrie, Ryrie Study Bible [NASV]. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1978, p. 123); (2) **The "visiting" of sins on later generations did not destroy individual responsibility for sinful actions or teach an outside source for sinful desires or behaviour** (II Kings 14:6 cf. Dt. 24:16); (3) **The evil behaviour & practices of earlier generations does NOT automatically pass down from generation to generation, nor can later generations blame their sinful behaviour on past sinful family members** (Ezek. 18:2-4) "A proverb was circulating in Jerusalem [Jer. 31:29] and Babylon that the children were suffering for the sins of their fathers. While there are cumulative effects of sin (cf. Exod. 20:5-6; Matt. 23:35-36), the Lord here declares that each individual is accountable for his own sin (v.4)... The people excused themselves by saying they were being punished for the sins of their fathers; in reality each person is punished for his own sins [cf. Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:2-4]" (Ryrie, Ibid, p. 1249); (4) **If there is anything that passes down from generation to generation, it is the guilt of sin (particularly on the Jews for their deliberate rejection of God's prophets & God's son)** (Matt. 23:35-36) **and the consequences of rejecting & crucifying Christ-** "His blood be upon our heads" (Mt. 27:25 cf. Josh. 2:19 & Acts 2:23 cf. Lk. 24:20 & Jn. 19:11; Acts 3:13-14; 4:10; 5:28)!

3. II Pet. 2:10-11 & Jude 8-10. Notice in these passages that only God rebukes Satan! Even Michael the archangel did not rebuke Satan, but left it to the Lord. Man is below angelic spirits & it is the height of presumption to think we can boss Satan & tell him what to do. Christ had that power & cast out demons often and for good reason. Christ also gave that power to His apostles who used it a few times. But nothing in Scripture anywhere says that Christ ever gave that power perpetually or to every believer!

II. ARGUMENTS USED BY CHRISTIAN DEMONIZATION ADVOCATES TO SUPPORT THEIR VIEW.

A. BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS.

1. I Chron. 21 & I Kings 22 (King Saul). Several observations are in order here:
 - a. "The first question to be considered is whether Saul was a genuine believer. Although at the time of his anointing as king it appeared as though he were a man of God (I Sam 10,ff.) his subsequent behaviour was not consistent with an authentic conversion (James 2:14). The fact that he was anointed and used by God does not prove he was a true believer: God used even pagan kings such as Cyrus as His anointed men to accomplish His purposes (Isa. 45:1)" ("Can a Christian be 'Demonized?' by Brent Grimsley & Elliot Miller. "Christian Research Institute [CRI] Journal," summer 1993, pp. 17-18).
 - b. "Even if we grant that Saul at one time was a genuine believer and later became possessed by a demon, it doesn't follow that the same is possible for genuine believers today. Although Scripture does not explicitly describe the nature of regeneration prior to Christ's atonement, it would appear that believers in the Old Testament did not have the Holy Spirit as a permanent indwelling presence, as do New Testament believers (e.g. Ps. 51:11)." (CRI, 1993, Ibid).
 - c. "Thomas Ice & Robert Dean, Jr., add an additional reason for rejecting the example of King Saul in this regard: 'The Hebrew text says that the evil spirit would come UPON Saul or depart from UPON him; it is never said to have entered INTO Saul, as would be expected if demon-possession was the intended idea.'" (Thomas Ice & Robert Dean, Jr., Overrun by Demons: The

Church's New Preoccupation with the Demonic [formerly A Holy Rebellion: Strategy for Spiritual Warfare], Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990, p. 125; quoted in CRI, 1993, Ibid).

2. Luke 13:10-17 (The woman bent double). She is called "a daughter of Abraham" & "had a spirit of infirmity." "There is no question that this sickness was demonically instigated, but is there enough evidence to suggest that the woman was a true believer indwelt by a demon? In *Demon Possession and the Christian*, C. Fred Dickason, the dean of Moody Bible Institute's theology department, affirms that the weight of the evidence points in the direction that she was a genuine believer. First, she worshiped at the synagogue. Second, she glorified God because of her healing (v.13). Third, the phrase 'daughter of Abraham' implies salvation when taken with the passage about Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9 (C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian: A New Perspective* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1987, pp. 124-125]; quoted in CRI, Ibid).

"The phrase 'daughter of Abraham' however, doesn't necessarily mean the woman was a true believer in God and Christ, for it was most likely used ethnically to mean she was a Jew (Thayer in his Greek lexicon says the phrase means 'a woman tracing her descent from Abraham.[Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977, p. 292)]. Jesus' statement about Zacchaeus being a 'son of Abraham' means that Zacchaeus should from that point on be regarded as truly a Jew and a member of God's covenant people, even though he was a hated tax-gather for a foreign power, namely Rome.

"That she was **a regular synagogue attender, and that she praised God** for her healing, are beside the point. One could attend synagogue without being a true worshiper of God--consider the scribes and Pharisees. There is no mention of her coming to faith in Jesus. But if she did, it could easily have been a RESULT of her deliverance rather than existing prior to it.

"Furthermore, **it is not at all clear that the woman bent double was demon possessed**. Modern translations render the literal Greek phrase 'spirit of infirmity' as sickness caused by a spirit' (NAS), 'crippled by a spirit' (NIV), and so forth. This would seem to be the intended sense of the phrase, as Jesus did not perform an exorcism on her (as He consistently did in clear cases of demon possession) but simply pronounced her cured.

"As even Dickason admits, 'we cannot conclusively say that the Bible clearly presents evidence that believers may be demonized' (Dickason, p. 127). (Thus) The strongest passages in support of the view are unconvincing. Since the church historically has not held that Christians can be demon possessed, and since the idea of a demon co-inhabiting a body with the Holy Spirit is naturally repugnant, the burden of proof should be on those who say that a genuine believer can be inhabited by a demon. Yet the most such scholars as Dickason can say is that the Bible does not clearly give evidence that believers CANNOT be demonized. This is to argue from silence at PRECISELY THE POINT where we would expect clear biblical teaching." (CRI, Ibid, p. 18)

3. OTHER BIBLICAL PASSAGES SOMETIMES ADVANCED:

- a. Eph. 6:10-17. Neil Anderson presents some faulty exegesis when he states: "*What is the purpose of armor? To prevent the enemy's arrows from penetrating the body and injuring the soldier. If it is impossible for Satan's arrows to penetrate us, there would be no need for us to put on the armor. The instructions regarding spiritual armor suggest that it is possible for the enemy to penetrate our lives and gain a measure of control.*" (Neil Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990, p. 175). First, it should be clearly noted that the attacks are from the outside, not the inside, such as demonization advocates declare. Secondly, for Anderson to state that those arrows can penetrate and gain a "measure of control," is ridiculous. Anyone who has ever been shot at by an arrow (or a bullet) will tell you that arrows don't penetrate your body in order to gain control of you! Arrows are outward attacks designed to kill you, not get inside of you to control you and change your behaviour! "To fight this war, Paul tells believers to 'stand' against them in God's power using His armor (Eph. 6:11-14). The weapons he lists for battle are: honesty, righteousness, witnessing, assurance of salvation, belief in God, and proficiency in the Scriptures. But wait, isn't this simply obedient Christian living? Where's the mystical mumbo jumbo--the direct encounter with the supernatural? It would appear that Christians who effectively live out their faith assault satanic oppression of a society with an onslaught that verbal rebukes cannot approach. After describing the Christian's spiritual armor Paul then emphasizes the importance of prayer... Victory over a demonic hierarchy involves persistence in talking to God... By praying for one another, Christians battle demons" (Villanueva, CRI, Summer 1992, p. 39).

- b. James 3:14-16. Anderson says since the passage talks of fleshly wisdom as being earthly, natural, demonic, that this shows that a person can be demonically controlled. Does that mean that we can be indwelt by the earth or nature? The natural interpretation is simply when we allow our flesh to exhibit itself in jealousy & pride, we are displaying the fruit not of a godly walk, but of the natural man, as well as the type of sinful behaviour demons practice.
- c. I Timothy 4:1-3. Anderson states: "If Satan can deceive your mind, he must be working on the inside, where you are vulnerable" (Anderson, *Bondage Breaker*, Ibid, p. 176). Where Anderson every got the idea Satan has to be inside your body to deceive you, I have no idea. That's like saying a person can be pulled into a false cult only if the cult leader crawls inside your body to attack your brain from within. Such thinking is ludicrous.
- d. Acts 5:1-11. Anderson calls this "...perhaps the most definitive passage on Satan's ability to control believers...Ananias' problem was that he had allowed Satan's deception to fill (control) his heart. The word 'filled' in Acts 5:3 (*pleroo*) is the same word used in Ephesians 5:18: 'Be filled with the Spirit.' It is possible for the believer to be filled with satanic deception or filled by the Spirit." (Anderson, Ibid, pp. 177-178). The first question is whether Ananias & Sapphira were true believers. There is nothing definitive in the passage. Anderson believes they were. Even if they were, I'm afraid Anderson is reading far too much into Peter's comment, "*Why has Satan filled thine heart...*" Frankly, Peter was simply saying, why did you listen to Satan's deception and lie? There is no need to read anything "deeper" into it than that.
- "Were Ananias and Sapphira true Christians? Scripture doesn't say. In what sense did Satan fill their heart? Were they possessed by him? Again, Scripture does not spell the answers out for us. Satan surely filled their hearts with evil thoughts, lies, and covetousness. Whether he took up residence himself is not stated. Though some will point to Ananias and Sapphira as examples of saints who were indwelt or controlled by Satan, there is no warrant for that from the text"(John MacArthur, Jr., "How to Meet the Enemy." Victor Books: Wheaton, IL, 1992, p. 39).

B. THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

1. Demonization of Believers is God's Way of Chastising Them (sic). "One argument states that God allows demons to invade the bodies of believers as a form of chastisement if they continue to sin and give ground to Satan. One such sin often cited is lack of forgiveness (2 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 4:26-27; Matt. 18:21-35). But in Matthew 18:35 there is nothing to suggest that the tormentors (v. 24) are to be taken literally. They are an incidental part of the story (or are we to believe that demons torment us until we 'repay all' that we owe God?). Neither is there anything in the passage concerning demonic activity. "Second Corinthians 2:10-11 and Ephesians 4:26-27 speak of giving the Devil an 'opportunity' or an 'advantage' through anger and unforgiveness. But contextually this clearly means giving Satan the opportunity to hinder the church's unity and witness, not to take possession of believers" (CRI, 1993, p. 37).
2. Demonization of Believers is God's Way of Punishing Those who Seek Special Gifts or Powers (sic). "A second argument says that God may allow a demon to invade a believer if he or she seeks special gifts or power. But this warning can be carried too far: God's Word clearly tells us to seek spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 14:1; Luke 11:13). Of course we must avoid seeking occultic power. The Bible warns the believer against involvement with demons (1 Cor. 10:14-22), but it never suggests the danger of such involvement is demonic possession." (CRI, Ibid)
3. Demons & God Can Dwell Together (sic). "Jack Deere, until recently the chief theologian for the Vineyard movement, argues that '*Jesus dwells with sin anytime he (sic) inhabits the heart of a new believer. If He can dwell in a sinful person why couldn't he (sic) dwell in a demonized person?*'" (Jack Deere, *Healing '92 Conference: An Advanced Course in Healing with John Wimber*, Conference Handbook and Workshop Notes [Anaheim: Anaheim Vineyard, 1991], p. 3; quoted in CRI, 1993, p. 38). This analogy between demonic evil and the evil of fallen humanity is flawed. God stands in a different relationship to demons than to believers. He is the JUDGE of Satan and demons and the SAVIOR of believers. Demons are enemies of God; believers, despite their sin natures, are His servants and friends. God will dwell with His people; He will not dwell with His enemies. This argument fails to recognize the essential difference between evil persons (demons) and redeemed persons (believers) who have evil

within them (the 'flesh'), but also have a new nature (the 'spirit') which causes them to ultimately triumph over evil (1 John 3:9)" (CRI, Ibid).

4. Demons can live in a Christian's soul while not indwelling his spirit.(sic) "Yet another argument says that demons can reside within a believer's soul, but not within his or her spirit where the Holy Spirit dwells (Mark Bubeck, *The Adversary* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1975], pp. 88-89). But there is no ontological or fundamental distinction between the soul and spirit in Scripture. Indeed, the terms are used interchangeably, so this argument does not stand up to biblical scrutiny ("for detailed theological arguments against the trichotomists view of man see almost any work on systematic theology..."). Furthermore, the real issue is whether God and Satan can co-inhabit the believer's body (e.g. I Cor. 6:19), which would still be the case even if one inhabited the believers spirit and the other the believer's soul. Therefore, this argument is really beside the point" (CRI, Ibid).

C. **"EXPERIENCE"-THE MAIN CAUSE OF BELIEF IN THE DEMONIZATION OF BELIEVERS.** Since the biblical & theological arguments of advocates of the demonization of believers do not hold water, they must look for their support elsewhere. And where they find it usually, is in the experiences they have had! Some of these people (such as Neil Anderson) have had tell of some of the most bizarre & incredible encounters they claim to have had. I don't doubt that they have experienced wild encounters and seen amazing things. But that doesn't prove something is true. Satan & his demons are liars (Jn. 8:44). Even what such exorcists see & hear can be demonic fakes. After all, when these folks supposedly talk to the demons inside a person, how in the world can they trust what the demon is saying to them? Their whole character is to lie & deceive! What makes you think they are going to tell you or me the truth, just because we ask them a question?! But let's examine the fallacies of these folks in more detail here:

1. Dickason employs an unusual logic here. "While Dickason makes it clear that Christians should not place experience above Scripture in determining doctrine, he attempts to demonstrate that Scripture is effectively silent on this matter. Thus he is able to conclude: 'We recognize the lack of conclusive evidence in the Bible on this issue and would not elevate our (experience-based) conclusion to the stature of biblical truth. But we have found factual (experiential) truth to be that Christians can be and have been demonized'(Dickason, p. 157).

"We find two problems with Dickason's reasoning. First, although he insists that he does not elevate this conclusion to the stature of biblical truth, for all intents and purposes that is precisely what he and the other proponents of Christian demonization do.(!) For they solemnly teach and defend, as a matter of some importance, a doctrine (i.e., an alleged theological truth) that is based on experience. We believe it is wiser for teachers to remain silent where Scripture is silent on theological/spiritual issues.

"Second, Dickason assumes that because Scripture is silent on the issue it is also neutral. Thus he never adequately deals with the argument from silence explained above; that is, it is not insignificant that a problem as serious as would be demon invasion of Christians is never clearly depicted nor even remotely discussed in the New Testament. Furthermore, as we've seen, the Bible is not entirely silent on this question; though it does not explicitly address it, it does implicitly point us toward a conclusion. Dickason and the others have erred by allowing experience to have a stronger impact on their thinking than the implicit biblical evidence against the view" (CRI, 1993, Ibid, pp. 19-37).

III. **THE BIBLICAL VIEW ON DEMONIZATION OF CHRISTIANS.** I have presented the purported (& completely lacking) evidence demonization advocates use, and have tried to answer it. Now I'd like to briefly give a number of biblical reasons why I believe no Christian can ever have a demon inside of them. I also wish to give a brief overview of the biblical teaching on the subject as well as some general observations.

- A. **THE MEANING OF "DEMONIZED," "DEMON POSSESSED," or "HAVING A DEMON."** The Bible clearly gives examples of non-Christians who were "demonized," or "have a demon" (the term "demon possessed" is probably not the best word to use). The Bible equally clearly gives no examples of Christians who "have a demon," or are "demonized." Those who teach that Christians can be controlled or "invaded" by demons try to create a third position. (Those who advocate this third, biblically unsupportable position) "...understand the Greek verb *daimonizomai* to be translated 'demonized' rather than 'demon possessed'... It is obvious that 'demonized' is a more attractive translation than 'demon possessed' to those who believe a demon can invade and inhabit a believer's body. This avoids the emotive connotations associated with demon possession... the issue is not the translation of the verb, but the location of wicked spirits relative to the believer. In other words we may ask: Can

demons control Christians from within or only oppress them from without? (The word *daimonizomai* means)... 'demon possessed' because (1) the Greek lexicons and theological dictionaries all translate *daimonizomai* as 'to be possessed by a demon' (e.g. Louw and Nida, p. 1:147; Arndt & Gingrich, p. 169; Kittel, p. 2:19; Brown, p. 1:453; Vine, p. 1:291); and (2) one of the English dictionary definitions for possess is 'to gain or exert influence or control over; dominate' (Am. Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed.). Thus, demon possession can be understood as 'possession to control.' W. E. Vine translates the verb this way: 'To be possessed of a demon, to act under the control of a demon'(W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Fleming H. Revell Co: Old Tappan, NJ, 1966 ed., p. 291). (This view)...better fits the etymological facts (i.e. the historical usage of the word) because: (1) the issue is not OWNERSHIP (as in the popularized myth that one can 'sell his soul to the Devil') but the LOCATION of a demon relative to the believer, for only if the demon is within the believer is it truly in a position to control (and thus POSSESS) him or her; (2) in Jesus' parable of the strong man (Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21-22), He compares His freeing the captives of demon invasion with someone first binding a strong man (i.e. Satan) and then plundering his possessions (Greek: *huparcho*, in Luke 11:21). Since the possessions on the parable represent the people Jesus delivers from demons, there is a biblical sense in which Satan can possess people; (3) in Greek the passive voice merely means that the subject is recipient of the action, a fact perfectly consistent with the term DEMON POSSESSED when properly defined as being inhabited, and thus controlled by, a demon." (Grimsley & Miller, CRI Journal, Summer 1993, p. 17).

Demonization advocates attempt to build an artificial (& biblically unsupportable) distinction between being "demon possessed" & being "demonized." They teach that Christians cannot be "demon possessed" but they can be "demonized" (i.e. have a demon dwelling inside of them-without being "demon-possessed"). Such teaching is false and has NO biblical support. There are approximately 21 places in the NT where people are said to have been "demonized" or "have a demon." In every instance they are unbelievers.

"Many try to draw a distinction between being demon "possessed" and being "demonized" or "having a demon," or between a Christian being "possessed" and a Christian being "invaded." This is based on experience, NOT SCRIPTURE." (Gil Rugh, Indian Hills Community Church, Lincoln, NE, from a taped message: "*Sanctification & Demonization*" 26 April, 1992). "In Scripture, to be demonized or have a demon means that he resides within you and he controls you. Period...In Scripture, to have a demon is the same as to be demon possessed. There are only 21 references in the gospels to being demonized or having a demon...There is no such 3rd category of believers being invaded and having a demon but not being demon possessed. That distinction is not found " (Rugh, Ibid).

1. Mt. 4:23-24.
2. Mt. 8:16. Demon possessed i.e. they were in that person and Christ cast those demons OUT of him. "Note: Some parallel accounts have 'demonized' in one place and 'having a demon' in the other" (Rugh, Ibid). They are clearly one and the same thing!
3. Mt. 8:28-31. (2 men who were demon possessed). "The demons are to be cast out of them and into something else and they will take possession of that (i.e. the pigs)" (Rugh, Ibid).
4. Mt. 9:32

CLEARLY, SOME OF THE DEMONIZATION ADVOCATES ARE TOTALLY CONFUSED IN THIS AREA! For instance, Neil Anderson presents a totally unbiblical definition of demonization: "It is important to understand that demonic influence is not an external force in the physical realm; it is the internal manipulation of the central nervous system" (Anderson, Bondage Breaker, p. 111).(!) Anderson tries to walk a tightrope in trying to differentiate between demon "control" & demon "ownership." He writes: "Let me quickly add that demonic control does not mean satanic ownership...(He quotes Merrill Unger here) 'The demon enters...as a squatter and not as an owner or a guest or as one who has a right there. But he comes in as an intruder and as an invader and enemy. But come he does if the door is open by serious and protracted sin.'" (Anderson, Ibid, pp. 172-173). WHY DOES ANDERSON FEEL HE HAS TO INVENT THIS THIRD CATEGORY OF DEMON "INVASION" OR "CONTROL?" Answer: He feels it's easier to blame someone else for our sinful behaviour as a Christian. Let me quote: "Those who say a demon cannot control an area of a believer's life have left us with only two possible culprits for the problems we face: ourselves or God. If we blame ourselves we feel hopeless because we can't do anything to stop what we're doing (false-MWE). If we blame God our confidence in Him as our benevolent Father is shattered. Either way, we have no chance to gain the victory which the Bible promises us." (Anderson, Ibid, p. 174). Basically, Anderson is saying we can't blame God for our sin, and who wants to accept the blame himself? So let's lay the blame on a third party, a demon of lust (or pride, or anger, or whatever) who is influencing us and causing us to sin. That makes it so much easier you see. Then we can just go and have that demon cast out of us, and have a quick, easy way to holiness (sanctification). But such an idea is false and totally unbiblical. The Bible makes it clear that such sins are not due to demons inhabiting believers, but are products of our own sinful flesh

which is still with us. Read, for example, Galatians 5:19-21 & Romans 7:18. That old nature mentioned in the New Testament (e.g. Mt. 15:19; Rom. 1:29-32; I Cor. 6:9-10) does not magically disappear after salvation. Now we need not despair, since every person who has been born again has been given anew nature as well as the indwelling Holy Spirit to enable us to walk in victory over our sinful flesh. But the battle will rage until we get to heaven, and it's not due to indwelling demons!

B. **THE BIBLICAL PROMISES TO CHRISTIANS.** Believers need not fear demons or anything else. The Bible gives us many wonderful promises & verses of comfort! The following are a few examples:

1. "The Plundering of Satan's Possessions. As we saw above (Mt. 12:29; Luke 11:21-22) those inhabited by demons are considered Satan's 'possessions' which Jesus came to plunder through the establishment of His kingdom. By faith, all Christians are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into 'the kingdom of His beloved Son' (Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18). It is therefore no coincidence that every occurrence of the word *daimonizomai* and related terms in the New Testament, and every exorcism recorded, appear to involve non-Christians, usually in the context of evangelism."...The assumption throughout Scripture is that one might have God dwelling within, or Satan, but not both. For example, the apostle John assures his Christian readers: 'You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is IN YOU than he who is IN THE WORLD'(I John 4:4). It is reasonable to infer from this that he who is 'in the world' cannot also be 'in you.'" (CRI, 1993, p. 18).
2. "Temples of the Living God. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes the believer a temple of the living God...and harmony between light and darkness, Christ and Belial (Satan), and the temple of God and idols (which Paul associates with demons in I Cor. 10:19-20) is impossible (2 Cor. 6:14-18). How then would God, who is greater than Satan, allow a demon to reside with Him in His temple?" (CRI, Ibid).
3. Our Position in Christ! "Sealed and Kept by God. The indwelling Spirit also means that believers are sealed by God as His possessions and kept for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14). Although the believer is in spiritual warfare and therefore is still subject to the influences and assault of Satan (Eph. 6:10-18), his or her status as a child and possession of God sets definite limits as to what the powers of darkness can do. I John 5:18 states that 'He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. No evil angel can separate the true believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38-39).'" (CRI, Ibid).
4. Christ's Work. Heb. 2:14-15. Satan is still "buzzing" around like a bee, but his stinger is gone!
5. Precious Promises. I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14; II Thess. 3:3; II Tim. 3:17; James 4:7; I Pet. 1:5; I Jn. 2:13

C. **THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF DEMONOLOGY.**

1. Old Testament- A few glimpses is all we see (e.g. Gen. 3; Job 1-3; Isa. 14; Ezek. 28). You don't find OT prophets running around casting out demons.
2. Gospels- At this time demon activity and demon possession is at its greatest height. Why? Because Christ was on earth. And His total domination of them demonstrated that He was the Messiah (cf. Isa. 35:5; 61:1). For example: Mt. 8:16-17; 12:22-ff cf. v.28.
3. Acts- There is very little demon activity (Acts 8; 16:19), and what exorcism is done, is done by the apostles, who Christ endowed with extraordinary powers. "Exorcism is a messianic and apostolic sign gift (Mk 16:17-18; Rom. 15:19; II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). If we adopt the Lord's methods of exorcism, should we then follow the Lord's example of: Feeding the needy? Calming the weather? Raising the dead? Paying taxes? Fishing? Healing the sick? Calling his disciples?" Jim Berg, Biblical Counseling, Bob Jones University, 1993, p. 18).
4. Epistles- "From Romans 1:1 until Revelation 22 there is NOT ONE WORD of instruction or command to engage in exorcistic ministry. Why didn't Paul teach Timothy, the Ephesian elders, Titus, etc. these things? Why didn't Paul use them himself to bind the 'messenger of Satan that buffeted him' or to 'bind over' the evil spirits that hindered his coming to Thessalonica (I Thess. 2:18)? Why does Paul instead continually call us to engage in the 'normal' things of sanctification--look again at Romans 6-8 where Paul underwent very difficult struggles. Why didn't Christ Himself teach these procedures to the Seven Churches of Asia who were in the heart of pagan, occult influences?" (Jim Berg, Biblical Counseling.

BJU, 1993, p. 18).

"It is never addressed in the epistles where we are told how to live sanctified lives...Anderson says...'we have taken Christ's authority over the demonic world. That's a lie. Christ was demonstrating His power over the spirit world and He didn't transfer it over to anybody. He alone is the Messiah. He gave that power to the apostles, but even then they were only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. There are no references to casting out demons, demon possession, or anything like that in the epistles addressed to the church. You DO find a lot on dealing with the flesh and sin within." (Rugh, Ibid). "In light of the clear scriptural fact that Satan is limited in what he can do to believers, it is significant not only that we find no possessed Christians in the New Testament, but also that there is no practical instruction on exorcism within the church. The epistles are certainly not lacking in teachings on spiritual warfare. But though we are frequently warned of the dangers of satanic attack, the method of dealing with the Devil is always the same: 'RESIST him, firm in your faith...' (I Pet. 5:9; cf. Eph. 6:10-14; James 4:7). As Ice points out, 'Never are believers said to respond to Satan or demons by casting them out, which is always the remedy in the New Testament for a demon possessed person. Instead, for the believer the command is always to stand or resist, which is the counter to an external temptation by Satan and the demonic.'" (Thomas Ice, "Demon Possession and the New Clinical Deliverance," Biblical Perspectives, May-June 1992, p. 4; quoted in CRI, 1993, p. 19).

"This is a valid argument from silence. For if deliverance is as important to victorious Christian living as its advocates would have us believe, we can rightly expect the New Testament to deal with it. Ice and Dean make this point forcefully: 'We believe that such silence speaks volumes...the Bible clearly claims to give us EVERYTHING PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS (2 Peter 1:3) and is ADEQUATE TO EQUIP US FOR EVERY GOOD WORK (2 Tim. 3:17)...those who teach Christian possession are by implication denying the sufficiency of Scripture and are going beyond its authority by promoting their own. They have forgotten the warning of Paul: "...that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written..." (I Cor. 4:6)." (Ice & Dean in CRI, 1993, Ibid). "Biblically, several objections can be made to this doctrine, including the fact that Christians are always taught to resist satanic forces, never to cast them out of each other" (CRI, 93, p. 37).

5. Why Wasn't Exorcism practiced in the OT or NT?

- a. Job. 1:19-22 (Job). When Job had all of his troubles, he wasn't told to "bind Satan."
- b. II Cor. 12:8 (Paul). Paul who was suffering from a severe thorn in the flesh, did not rebuke some sort of demonic power who had brought it. Instead God gave Paul the grace to endure it.
- c. Luke 22:31-34 (Peter). Jesus said that Satan desired to sift Peter. Notice that Jesus didn't tell Peter, "When Satan attacks you, bind him and order him to leave."

6. Revelation- "Now we begin to have demonic activity again. But even then there are no instructions on how to cast out demons, etc. The Thyatira church was in the throne of Satan. No instructions are given to them or any other church there. We are given a glimpse of the demonic world and what is taking place behind the scenes, but we don't find any situation where believers are supposed to be running around casting out demons...You mean there are demons of lust, hate, gluttony, etc., and the Scripture doesn't even address it in the letters to the churches! Now not everyone identifies demons that way (because it's all experiential). Some think there are demons of lust (Anderson says he talked to one), but Bill McCloud says they are not identified that way. And John Wimber is different again. It's because there is nothing in Scripture about it and so it's all based on experience! So you get EVERY KIND OF TEACHING or idea. (e.g. Neil Anderson published a follow up book called "Released from Bondage-True Stories of Freedom." It sold so fast it was in its second printing after only one month! Basically it's a book full of stories of people telling every kind about every kind of filthy sin you've ever imagined. Much of it could never be read publicly in a mixed audience, let alone a church! [cf. Eph. 5:11]. In it, Anderson says that if we could see Satan appeared in our presence as he really is, Anderson thinks "he would be 90 percent sex organ" (Released From Bondage, p. 125). That's the kind of vulgar nonsense you get when you create your beliefs from your experiences, rather than from the Word of God! There are some Bible verses in the book, but basically it is just a bunch of wild, often perverted stories that Anderson uses to try and support his unbiblical theology. But when you are basing your whole theology on experience, there is no limit to what you dream up...or convince others is true!).

Churches in Revelation. Several of the churches mentioned in the book of Revelation were in declared Satanic

strongholds! But they weren't told to bind the territorial spirits in their town or area. Why? Because such a practice is unbiblical. Note the following:

- a. Rev. 2:1- Ephesus-Home of the temple of Diana, one of the great idolatrous centers of the ancient world!
- b. Rev. 2:13. Pergamus-Home of the temple of Zeus, as well as the center of the worship of Asclepius. Those who worshipped this "god" of healing, would enter that temple where the floor was covered with non-poisonous snakes. Individuals would then lie on the floor and let the snakes crawl & slither all of over themselves, believing that every touch of the snake would aid in healing of their sickness!
- c. Rev. 2:24-25. Thyatira-We are told that this town is where Satan's very throne dwelt! In none of these churches are they taught spiritual warfare, the practice of casting out territorial or generational spirits, or to bind Satan! The silence of Scripture in such passages is deafening!

D. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. In another sense, "The ENTIRE Bible (with the exception of the first two and the last two chapters) is about spiritual warfare--not just a few passages here and there. The question is, 'How do the Scriptures say we are to war against him? ...We can't take our understanding of the spirit world from experience (Isa. 8:20)... The Scriptures are the only valid source of information about the spirit world. We can't trust a demon to tell the truth, even if you command him to! ... There is nothing in Scripture that says our prayers empower angels... *'Warfare Praying.'* Bubeck, Anderson and Dickason provide many sample prayers of renunciations and forgiveness.

1. "Prayers of Rebuke (to clear demonic 'strongholds')
2. "Prayers of Cancellation (of 'ancestral spirit' influences, of 'transference')
3. "Prayers of Recovery (of 'lost ground')
"It's kind of like us putting hexes on those who put hexes on us." (Jim Berg, Biblical Counseling. "*Crisis Counseling II.*" Master's Degree Course, Bob Jones University: Greenville, SC, 1993, pp. 16-18 plus some direct quotes from the class lectures).

E. BIBLICAL METHODS OF DEALING WITH SATAN.

1. "It has been demonstrated... that the Bible provides no tests that can be used to determine demon possession. Nor is there a gift of discerning spirits that gives certain individuals supernatural knowledge to know if a person is demonized. Furthermore, it is unbiblical to test people who are not CLEARLY demonized to find 'hidden demons.' The only recorded cases of demon possession that Jesus and the apostles dealt with were obvious ones--cases so clear that even the unregenerate could recognize the malady" (Alex Konya, "*Demons: A Biblically Based Perspective.*" Regular Baptist Press: Schaumburg, IL, 1990, p. 112).
2. "In dealing with people who have demonic problems, including suspected demonic possession, the proper course of action is to challenge them to put on Christ. The connection of Ephesians 6:11 with Romans 13:12 and 14 makes it clear that this is the meaning of putting on the armor of God. For the unbeliever, Christ must be put on positionally; this means his turning to Christ as his personal Savior. This is the only true and ultimate solution for his problems with demons. Apart from putting on Christ, the unbeliever remains in Satan's realm and has no ultimate defense against renewed demonic attack..." (Konya, Ibid, p. 114).
3. "If in rare cases efforts to witness to a demonized person are impossible due to the severity of the demonic attack, the mature believer may pray, calling upon Jesus to forcibly expel the demon (Such prayer would not include dangerous practices such as talking to demons or probing for 'hidden demons.') It has been shown that deliverance from demon possession could be regarded as a kind of healing, since the primary manifestation of Biblical demon possession was physical malady. The GIFT of healing was associated with the apostles as a sign-gift. Every believer today, however, has the privilege of praying for healing. Thus if the fact of demon possession has been clearly established in a victim, godly, consecrated believers may fervently pray for divine compulsion" (Konya, p. 114, quoted by Berg, Bib. Counseling, BJU, 1993, p. 19).

- F. **RECOGNIZING DEMON POSSESSION (A PERSON WHO "HAS A DEMON" or is "DEMONIZED").** "The historical record in the Gospels suggests three main symptoms of demon possession. In rare cases where a demonized person is confronted, he may display: (1) a combination of the symptoms of physical malady (often extreme), (2) the distinct presence of another personality--displayed by speaking in another voice in an intelligent and coherent way (which is NOT true of so-called mental illnesses such as schizophrenia), and (3) clairvoyance, meaning supernatural knowledge, particularly in spiritual matters. One must be careful, however, not to brand people recklessly as demon-possessed. In cases of real Biblical demon possessions, the problem should be obvious" (Konya, Op Cit., pp. 112-113).
- G. **WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE?** "An inner struggle for personal holiness, not personal confrontation with demons. Ephesians 6, James 4, and I Peter 5 are not describing paraphernalia or strategies for an exorcist, but resources for 'resisting' and 'withstanding' the evil one. The themes of this 'resisting' are the same themes for the doctrine of sanctification. 'Resisting' Satan and being sanctified are one and the same... Revelation 12:11... And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb (not referring to an incantation calling on the blood, but referring to salvation by blood), and by the word of their testimony (personal holiness); and they loved not their lives unto death (personal faithfulness)... They overcame by 'normal' means of salvation and sanctification." (Berg, Bib. Counseling, BJU, p. 20).

IV. **ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE EXPERIENCES "SPIRITUAL WARFARE" LEADERS**

ENCOUNTER. No one doubts that people like Peter Wagner, the late John Wimber, Neil Anderson, C. Fred Dickason, and others have seen and encountered fantastic & even bizarre situations and individuals. As one has stated: "We don't doubt the reality of many such experiences, but the interpretation these teachers give them is not called for" (CRI, 1993, p. 37). But there are other explanations for what they are running into. Here are a few possible alternatives:

- A. **"Psychological Sources.** Many of these occurrences could be attributed to psychological sources-not only mental illness (which is no doubt a factor in some cases) but also the power of suggestion. In our (cult experts CRI) long-term research of religious movements and phenomena, time and again we have run into a curious fact: intelligent people can become persuaded of improbably beliefs when striking manifestations issue from their own psyches or the psyches of others, or are experienced as external events. These beliefs range from elaborate conspiracies involving satanic ritual abuse of children, to UFO encounters, to past-life recall, to apparitions of Mary or signs in the heavens produced by Mary. In many of these and other cases a common denominator is contagious anticipation-often set into motion by the leaders of the event-that such manifestations very well may occur" (CRI, 1993, p. 37).
- B. **"Satanic Deception.** ...Just as it is possible that demonic as well as psychological factors could be involved in alleged UFO encounters, past-life recall, apparitions of Mary, and so forth, so in the case of Christians being delivered of demons. Of course this is exactly what the proponents of Christian deliverance argue to be the case. But just as deception would be Satan's true objective in the sensational phenomena cited above, so might it be exorcisms of Christians. Clearly, the Devil would like us to believe he has more power over us than he actually does.

"It seems that demons would be capable of producing certain audible, mental, and bodily phenomena from a position external to the Christian in order to create the illusion that the Christian is, in fact, possessed. If they can convince believers that they have the power to control them, then such believers, though ACTUALLY in control of their own wills, will grant the powers of darkness a degree of control by default. A Christian who resorts to deliverance sessions to gain spiritual victory rather than standing firm in the promises and provisions Christ has already been greatly neutralized by the enemy" (CRI, 1993, Ibid).

- C. **"Possessed, but not Regenerate.** A third possible explanation is that individuals truly were demon possessed, but were not truly believers. How does one determine who is and who is not a genuine Christian? Only God knows for sure the identities of His elect...(see, e.g. 2 Tim. 2:19; I Sam. 16:7; and the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. 13:24-30, 35-43). In some cases the manifestation of wicked spirits could be one step along the way to genuine conversion.

"We must conclude that it is impossible to ascertain for certain who is truly demon possessed and who is truly a Christian, since these questions have to do with the interior, unobservable conditions of individuals. It is therefore folly to base one's view on the APPARENT condition of Christians being demon possessed when the weight of New Testament theology (regarding the kingdoms of Christ and Satan) leans against that view" (CRI, 1993, p. 37).

V. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

A. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE MOVEMENT.

1. **BASING TRUTH ON EXPERIENCE.** "This doctrine is dangerous because acceptance of it opens the door to accepting other doctrines based on experience, and because it teaches Christians a false approach to spiritual warfare...Perhaps the greatest danger lies in its methodology in determining truth. For...those who teach that a Christian can be inhabited by a demon place their experience above the teaching of Scripture and deny the sufficiency of Scripture in the process. Once the church allows subjective experience to replace the objective test of Scripture on one issue, a precedent will be set for future issues. A theological Pandora's box will have been opened, leading to an epidemic of superstition and doctrinal deterioration" (CRI, 93, p. 37-38).
2. **IT TEACHES A FALSE VIEW OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE.** (See #1 above). "Sensationalistic teachings are replacing traditional evangelical doctrine regarding the Christian's battle with the Devil...Evangelicals consistently taught that a Christian defeats Satan by submitting to God and resisting satanic temptation. Spiritual warfare was thought of as MORAL warfare-the armor of God consisting of those moral qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in a believer's life. The Christian was understood to be 'victorious' over Satan by remaining faithful to God despite all satanic oppression and temptation" (CRI, 1993, p. 38)
3. **IT CAN REMOVE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SINFUL BEHAVIOUR.** "There is a grave danger in the syndrome which sees a demon behind every problem in a believer's life. This mindset obscures our moral responsibility to walk in righteousness, and to 'mortify the deeds of the body'(Rom. 8:13). The Bible never identifies sins such as lust, anger, and pride as spirits ("See Robert Lyle, 'Assessing the New Books on Spiritual Warfare,' CRI Journal, Fall 1991, p. 38) but rather as 'deeds of the flesh.' It instructs us to 'put them all aside' (Col. 2:8), never to cast them out. If we 'walk by the Spirit' we 'will not carry out the desire of the flesh'(Gal. 5:16). "Certainly, the demonic realm works in concert with our flesh and serves to exacerbate its desires in an attempt to provoke us to sin. But this is demonic temptation or oppression, not demonic possession. It is an assault from outside that the believer is well equipped to resist and overcome (Eph. 6:10-18)" (CRI, Ibid)
4. **EXPLAINING THE "GLOWING" TESTIMONIES.** "What about testimonials of Christian lives being made victorious through deliverance ministry? Even as Christians who believe in the erroneous 'healing in the Atonement' doctrine might still be healed because they trusted Jesus for their healing, so Christians who learn to trust Jesus for victory over the Devil can experience victory, even if they erroneously believe they were delivered of demons. But we have often found such misinterpreted victory to be fleeting...thus leading to a troubling dependence on deliverance ministry" (CRI, Ibid).
5. **IT CAN MISDIRECT A CHRISTIAN'S PROPER FOCUS.** "The teaching that Christians can be demonized turns our attention from God to Satan. It can inspire fear in the believer where he or she should experience confidence in Christ. As noted, it often makes believers dependent on those with deliverance ministries to protect them from demons. It fosters a spiritualistic superstition that distracts the believer from both proclaiming the gospel and from personal growth in sanctification" (CRI, Ibid).
6. **IT LEADS TO MISGUIDED THINKING & MISDIRECTED PRAYERS.** "Victory over a demonic hierarchy involves persistence in talking to God... Prayer empowers the preaching of the gospel. Maybe this is what happened in Northampton, Massachusetts where a monument states that there Jonathan Edwards (the great American theologian & human instrument in the starting of the Great Awakening) encountered the Devil and defeated him. In Ireland, Patrick encountered the druid witches, and the Celts recognized God's power as superior. History notes that following both events, multitudes turned to Jesus Christ. These men spent considerable time with God, but I've never seen any record of their talking to the Devil. Biblically and historically then, spiritual battles are won by living for God and talking to Him in earnest intercession rather than by talking to Satan" (Villanueva, Op Cit., p. 39).
7. **IT CAN PRODUCE PRIDE.** Those involved in this "ministry" can sometimes exhibit a genuine pride in their ability... and produce a covetousness in those who are not involved in such activities: "Dealing with territorial spirits is major league warfare and should not be undertaken casually. I know few who have the

necessary expertise, and if you do not know what you are doing, Satan will eat you for breakfast" (C. Peter Wagner, "Territorial Spirits and World Mission," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* [July 1989] :286; quoted in MacArthur, p. 42)... Can we simply name the streets in our city and evict a demon from his geographical dominion by invoking Jesus' name? Certainly not. Those kind of incantations have no biblical basis...Will Satan have us for breakfast? Should we fear being made into toast? That's not the picture we get from Paul, who declared that God 'ALWAYS leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him IN EVERY PLACE' [2 Cor. 2:14, emphasis added]" (MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, Op Cit., p. 43).

- B. **MY WISH FOR ALL READING THIS PAPER HAS BEEN WELL STATED BY ANOTHER:** "May God deliver us from this specious and divisive teaching, and may we use our spiritual resources in Christ and retain the sound teaching of our... heritage" (CRI, 1993, p. 38).