

DECEIVING AND RELIGIOUS SPIRITS

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**“I am the Lord; I have called you in
Righteousness; I will take you by the
Hand and keep you; I will give you as a
Covenant for the people, a light for the
Nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to
Bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
From the prison those who sit in darkness.”**

† Isaiah 42:6-7 ESV

Two of the most numerous evil spirits at work in the earth today are deceiving spirits and religious spirits. The year was 1985; it was 3 years before I went to Africa and began to really research the Dark Kingdom of Satan. We had just incorporated Christ Church in Texas the year before and I had quit a six figure income to pursue the will of the Lord in ministry. CCI had begun a radio teaching program titled *Kingdom Living* and back then we had to go to the studio Thursday mornings to record the program for air on Sunday. I normally wake up

early and made it a practice on Thursdays to spend much time in prayer prior to going to the radio station so that I would have the Mind of the Lord on what He wanted us to present since the program was heard throughout Austin, San Marcos and San Antonio.

This particular morning in April as I was praying I saw a vision of a huge board on the wall and on the board was a chart with the words USA above it and the line on the chart was headed down at about a 40 degree angle. I exclaimed loudly, “Lord, why is this happening to America?”

He answered me immediately and replied, “A nation is like a person. The more they open themselves up to the devil the more he comes in and occupies. The two greatest spirits in operation in the earth today are religious spirits and deceiving spirits.”

And like everything that the Lord’s ever said to me, first, it’s forever burned into my spirit so I remember it, and second, I always see it in the Scriptures.

Throughout the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, we see the operation of religious and deceiving spirits and, of course, I know a lot more about them now having cast them out of people now for over 30 years. We also see their operation very clearly today in the life of what the media refers to as “muslim extremists.” They will even sacrifice their own children at the altar of the religious and deceiving spirits.

If you haven’t read Mysterious Secrets (MSDK) you should because the hierarchy of the devil’s kingdom is given and discussed in this book; it will help you in spiritual warfare to defeat what the enemy brings. And if you’ve read it you know that there are 4 Principalities directly under Satan who are next in power in the Dark Kingdom. One of these, Apollyon, is in charge of false religion. So he is the reigning demon over all of the religious spirits whose job is to steer human beings away from Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Satan knows that

God created man with an innate need for God, a longing for what man lost through the original Adam. So Satan wants to give you a counterfeit religion to meet that need. This is Apollyon's only job.

Now directly under the 4 Principalities there are 8 Powers (the structure of the Dark Kingdom is just the way Paul depicted it in Ephesians) and 2 of these 8 Powers, Baal and Ashtaroth, names we see throughout the Old Testament, are in charge of false religion. Interestingly, religion is the only thing that 2 Powers are in charge of; everything else there is only 1 of the 8 Powers in charge such as Mammon, who is in charge of finances for the Dark Kingdom.

So we see that Satan has put a lot of firepower into taking people down the road to hell through false religion. But you must also understand, and you can see this in the New Testament, that religious spirits exist in all religions, even Christianity. And one of the surest signs of a religious spirit is a person who is unteachable. This is particularly dangerous for people who become legalists.

In 1997, the Holy Spirit shared an equation with me that I've written about in a few of my books that explains this perfectly and you will see it. Anybody can read the Bible and anybody can quote Scripture but that doesn't mean they know what it means and often what they think it means is wrong. Jesus demonstrated this over and over to the Pharisees of His day. He told them plainly, "You don't understand the Scriptures" and "You have substituted the doctrines of men for the Word of God and thus invalidated the Word."

The equation the Spirit gave me was this:

True Wisdom=True Knowledge+True Understanding

Where "True Knowledge" is the Bible, the Word of God, and "True Understanding" is only found and learned by the Holy Spirit. So without the Spirit, e.g., an atheist who is just reading the Bible to try and use it against Christians, a person cannot gain true understanding.

Therefore, according to this equation, only a person who has been born again and received the Holy Spirit can obtain true understanding since a non-Christian would not, by definition, have the Holy Spirit and could never possess True Wisdom. The Book of James talks about True Wisdom and contrasts it with worldly wisdom which is a far cry from God's wisdom.

We see the operation of religious spirits throughout the Bible as I said earlier in this article. Mainly we see their operation during the days of the prophets mentioned in 1,2 Samuel; 1,2 Kings; 1, 2 Chronicles and of course in the books of the prophets. We see them really clearly in the lives of the false prophets as well as most of the kings of Israel and Judah who were not godly, e.g., Ahab.

We see their operation during the ministry of Jesus, especially from both the Pharisees and Sadducees. And it's so obvious because they tout Moses, this and that, but the One who made Moses and spoke face to face with Moses was standing right in front of them speaking with them and they did not even recognize Him! Not only that, but the deceiving spirits and other evil spirits, such as murder that nearly always works with a religious spirit, wanted to put Jesus to death because He threatened their livelihood and positions of power and prestige among the people.

Deceiving Spirits

Most of you have heard of "shape shifters." These are in various cultures such as Native American throughout the world. In Africa they are never called this though the operation—being able to transform into something else such as a cat or a deer—is where the term "shape shifter" comes from. Witches normally change into an owl and fly to their coven high in the tops of trees. How do they do this? They do it through satanic power that he gives to them. Some humans, normally magicians, can travel in their physical bodies around the world or into

the second heaven through a magic cape. Again, it's all through the power that they "earn" by serving Satan and his evil government.

But deceiving spirits are "low level" devils and they can exist in several types—all servient spirits (for more see MSDK)—whose purpose is to *deceive* a person. By speaking through a psychic they can convince a person that they are your mother. By speaking through the false prophets of King Ahab (cf. 1 Kings 22), they deceived Ahab many times and cost him his life at the battle for Ramoth Gilead when they spoke through the false prophets as a lying spirit.

The lying spirit is the most profuse of the deceiving spirits because one of the easiest ways to deceive a person is by lying to them, especially if they trust you or they are vulnerable to lies because they are pure such as little children. Jesus used "little children" quite often in His teachings because they are a model for having a "pure" heart. Most adults and most Christians in fact do not have pure hearts and if you don't you should work on this aspect of your character. I've found that most Christians don't keep their word; this is not God's nature and it should not be yours either. Work on your character traits; develop the Fruit of the Spirit in your life; it's your responsibility to do this, not God's.

Deceiving spirits operate through witch doctors and quack doctors throughout the world to finance the work of hell and also take people to hell. They often work on Christians in the churches by deceiving them into thinking they can provide a job or money if the person follows their direction and through Satan's finances a person is led away from the Lord Jesus into perdition.

And when deceiving spirits team up with religious spirits they form a deadly combination which we see in the Bible, especially in the life of Saul (Paul) before he was converted. It's also quite interesting, if you know what to look for, to see how they operate and what happens when they are cast out.

In Acts 9: 10-19 we find the testimony of the Lord speaking to a disciple, Ananias, whom He sent to lay hands on Saul so that he might receive his eyesight back (he had been blind for 3 days, God's perfect number). Notice that through the "laying on of hands" Saul's eyesight was restored and the Bible says that something like "scales" fell from his eyes and he was able to see.

I wrote in MSDK about a particular evil spirit, Arcarine, which possesses a spiritual knife and is able to "put out" the spiritual eyes of a person. This spirit is another in the class of deceiving spirits. It is able to "blind" people so that they cannot see spiritually what is going on. I've come across it when attempting to minister salvation to people and let this be a lesson you should learn that the Church has not taught you.

Often people do not receive the gospel when you witness to them because of the presence of a deceiving spirit that has blinded them. Again, as in all ministry, we teach at CCI that you must develop spiritual sensitivity and be able to listen to the Holy Spirit. When you are witnessing to a person or praying with them or over them be listening to the Spirit with your spiritual ears. He will tell you whenever there is a spiritual blockage. It may be in the form of a deceiving spirit such as Arcarine or it may be the fact that the witches have stuffed cotton into the person's spiritual ears so that they cannot hear. If you do not know this, you can still get a person saved through prayer—prayer is our greatest weapon and if you are persistent you can always bring a person to the Lord through prayer but like Brother Littlefield's sister, it might take 28 years.

If you are sensitive to the Spirit, you might sense the presence of a deceiving spirit blocking the person from receiving what you are saying to them. If so, then cast it out by speaking to it and commanding it to go "in the Name of Jesus." I've done this many times as my wife and others will attest and the person's countenance will

change and they will immediately accept what I am saying, receive Jesus and pray the sinner's prayer.

DECEIVING AND RELIGIOUS SPIRITS WORK TOGETHER

I went to Chicago under the Lord's direction in 2007 to pray for a cardiologist who was in the hospital with terminal cancer. He was a friend of a friend of ours who had phoned the ministry. Now this man was in perfect health 2 months before. He had gone on a medical mission's trip to help the poor and had undergone a complete physical before he left to go to South America. Upon returning he became ill. Now you don't develop terminal cancer in 2 months so this was an unusual case and I knew immediately that it was a result of witchcraft and somebody putting a curse on him. His wife was there during my visits and after a few days she showed me a bite mark from a demon on her arm and she knew what it was because she had been fighting the devil with prayer for the life of her husband.

As the Lord always does when He sends you some place there were some other divine appointments there in the Chicago area. Moody's Bible Institute is there and the woman who had phoned us had asked me to counsel a pastor and his wife who were graduates of Moody's and pastored one of the largest churches in the community. The pastor had a Masters degree in divinity from Moody's and when he and his wife rang the doorbell I was sitting on the living room sofa about 50 feet away but I felt the entrance of a religious spirit as soon as they came into the room; it was coming from the pastor's wife and I could feel a huge barrier and resistance coming right out of her spirit.

Now like a lot of people I get comments on Facebook and an occasional message or email about this: "A Christian cannot be possessed by an evil spirit." Of course if you've read MSDK I discuss this quite a bit throughout the book and prove that this teaching is false. But now, *why* is it false? And how can you *prove* that it is false?

Let's face it. As I've shared in many writings things aren't much different now than they were in the days of Moses, David, Jesus or Paul. The devil is still the same; God is still the same and so is Jesus (Heb. 13:8); and mankind is still the same—we have a tendency to be rebellious and rebel against the Word of God. This makes us susceptible to religious and deceiving spirits. Remember how Satan himself tried to use the Word to deceive Jesus into turning stones into bread or jumping off the pinnacle of the Temple and killing himself. And how did Jesus answer Satan? He answered by correctly reciting the Scriptures.

If I teach you math wrong then you are going to believe incorrectly. The same is true for spiritual principles. If a pastor or minister tells you that a Christian cannot have a demon or that the days of miracles passed away then it's normally because they were taught that and they've not studied it or asked the Holy Spirit to correct their false doctrine. If you will read the Bible with the objective of both asking and allowing the Holy Spirit to "guide you into all truth" and pray this way before you read the Word each day He will bring you revelation.

For example, I was taught to water baptize people "in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19) and most ministers water baptize this way. I never thought much about it but when the Lord had me study the prophets and William Branham's life back in the '80s I learned that Branham preached quite a bit in UPC churches and believed much of their doctrine. One of their doctrines is that water baptism "in the name of Jesus" is essential for salvation. Branham didn't talk about the salvation part in his messages but did harp on baptism being performed "in the name of Jesus." So I studied water baptism throughout the New Testament and learned an important fact from the book of Acts—the apostles and ministers in the early Church baptized in the name of Jesus and not "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

Does that mean you're not saved if you're not baptized in the Name of Jesus? I don't think so but this is the way the early Church baptized new converts. And I've shared the importance and emphasis of water baptism in Acts as well as in MSDK because it is an important spiritual sign that the demons recognize—when a person is water baptized by immersion. And while on the subject of baptism, I feel led to give my own testimony which I've written about before. I accepted the Lord as a young 8 year old boy in the Methodist church back in the days when they gave an invitation for salvation in Methodist churches. I was water baptized that very day but Methodist's practice baptism by sprinkling with water and not immersion which is the New Testament correct form of water baptism.

When I was in college I was preparing for seminary and was a youth leader in the Methodist church in Lubbock, Texas, but became disillusioned with some of their doctrine. My mom's parents were Methodists but my dad's parents were Southern Baptists and I'd always attended their church, First Baptist Church of Eastland, Texas, when I spent the summers there with them. So when I left the Methodist Church in Lubbock—and I hated to leave because I also sang first baritone in the church choir and we had the most beautiful, anointed choir that I've ever heard—I started going to First Baptist Church in Lubbock. That's where I first met James Robison.

I had led a young man in my chemical engineering class from Dallas to the Lord by taking him to church. He was to be water baptized at the church that Sunday night and the Lord dealt with me about being water baptized by immersion, the correct way, that day so that I actually followed my friend in water baptism that night at church. Now I tell you this in case you were baptized by sprinkling or pouring; you might want to pray and ask the Lord about being baptized the correct way. We need to always be sensitive to the Lord's Spirit because He will deal with us if He wants us to do something or to repent of a sin we are committing such as gossip.

Now according to the equation I gave you for True Wisdom above, if you are a legalist—and we get emails, arguments, etc., from them all the time—and don't know the Holy Spirit whose primary job is to guide us “into all truth” (John 16:13) then you will have a very difficult time with these concepts. You should also understand that the Holy Spirit is called by name “The Spirit of Truth” by Jesus—that's the opposite of a lying spirit from Satan. So without knowing the Spirit of Truth to “understand” the True Knowledge of the Word from that equation you will not be able to possess God's wisdom; you will be a legalist like the Pharisees who wanted to stone the woman caught in adultery. Why did they want to stone her? Because they hated her? No! Because they had something to gain by killing her? No! Because they were legalists and as the Apostle Paul learned himself because he was there giving sanction to the killing of Stephen, after John and James one of the first martyrs of the Church, “the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:6).

And it was the Apostle Paul, after his conversion, who got the Eye of the Eagle and could see spiritual truths. He wrote in what William Shakespeare declared to be the greatest literary piece in the history of the world, the book of Romans, “circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ...” (Ro. 2:29) so Paul began to see legalism very clearly and devotes much of the first 7 chapters of Romans to discuss its evils.

So one of the greatest theologians of his day, “a Pharisee of Pharisees” as he described himself learned that he was dead wrong! He thought he was serving God by killing Christians but he was deceived by religious and deceiving spirits. And if we understand what Paul said, that “the letter killeth,” we can better understand the work of religious and deceiving spirits. I've seen their destructive work over and over again on ministry assignments where the will of the Lord was thwarted through their efforts to keep a person from receiving Jesus or a miracle, healing or receiving the Baptism of Power.

I hope this teaching article will help you to recognize and deal with religious and deceiving spirits in your family, church and those whom the Lord has you minister to. Understanding their operation will allow you to “free the captives.” De oppresso liber! Maranatha!