

Outline of a Biblical Position  
On  
Demonization and the Believer

The Elders  
Wildwood Community Church

## Outline of a Biblical Position

On

### Demonization and the Believer

#### Introduction:

This outline is an initial attempt to answer the question, "What does Scripture say about the relationship between believers, Satan, demons, sin, and sanctification?" This question, once answered, will be seen to have many practical applications for the believer. For example, can a believer be demon possessed? Can a believer be forced to sin against his will by a demon? Can a believer be thwarted by evil spirits in his desire to live a holy life in obedience to God? Can a believer become demon possessed through participation in occult activities? Can a believer have his attempts at Christian ministry thwarted by demons? What weapons does a believer have at his disposal in counteracting demonic activity? Can a believer force Satan or a demon to stop its activity by "binding" Satan or the demon? How can a believer recognize that he is a victim of demons?

The preparation of this outline has been motivated by a conviction that Scripture must be the ultimate source of all doctrine and that human reason and human experience--apart from Scripture and the teaching of the Holy Spirit--will surely be used by Satan to lead us into errors in doctrine and practice. Our desire has been to follow the example of the Apostle Paul who wrote that "in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other" (1 Corinthians 4:6).

A. Some "givens" regarding the nature and activities of Satan and demons and how these activities affect human beings: we assume these givens need not be debated. They are clear statements found in Scripture that we must accept as true if we are to claim the Bible as our guide to doctrine. Any doctrine of demonology must conform to them:

1. Satan and the demons are real beings. (Mark 4:15--Jesus tempted by the devil; Ephesians 2:1, 2--Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air. . . the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.")
2. Satan and demons are active in the world today (John 13:30-Satan referred to as "the ruler of this world"), where they are engaged in warfare against Christians (Ephesians 6:11, 12--the believer's face-to-face wrestling match with "spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places") through:
  - a. The propagation of false doctrine (I Timothy 4:1--"doctrines of demons"..."[such as]..."forbidding marriage and advocating abstaining from foods").
  - b. The propagation of false thinking (2 Timothy 2:23-26--"held captive by [the devil] to do his will"; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4--"the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving"; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Matthew 13:19; James 3: 15--"this wisdom is...demonic").

c. Direct temptations to sin of various degrees of severity (Luke 22:31--"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat;" John 13:2--"the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot...to betray Him; Acts 5:3--"Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit;" 1 Corinthians 7:5--"and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control").

d. In some situations, physical attacks against believer's possessions (Job 1:6-19--"Behold, all that he has is in your power.") and health, even to the point of causing death (Job 2:1-10—"Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life;" Luke 13:16; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 12:7—"there was given me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me"; Revelation 2:10—"the devil is about to cast some of you into prison").

e. Disrupting the plans of believers (1 Thessalonians 2:18—"We wanted to come to you...and Satan thwarted us.")

3. Demons are more powerful and intelligent than humans (Mark 5:1-9--"the chains had been torn apart by him...and no one was strong enough to subdue him;" Acts 19:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10—"the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.")

4. Satan and the demons are always liars, deceivers, and propagators of what is evil (John 8:44--"He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him;" Acts 13:10, 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:14, Revelation 20:10). Nevertheless, they can be expected to disguise themselves so as to appear as messengers of the truth (2 Corinthians 11:14--"Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ")

5. Some people in the Gospels and Acts were demonized, a phenomenon which appears to have included the demon taking control of the victim's body; this also included in at least some cases the demon being able to speak audibly through the victim. (Mark 1:23-28--"And throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him;" Mark 5:1-17; 9:14-29)

6. Demons appear to have names and the name of a demon can be related to the physical manifestation of the demon (Mark 5:9--"My name is Legion;" Mark 9:25--"You deaf and dumb spirit;" Revelation 9:11--"They have as king over them the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon.") This is not at all unexpected; since demons are fallen angels and angels have names (Jude 1:9--"Michael the archangel. ")

7. The believer is to resist and to stand firm against the attacks of Satan and his demons in the power of the Lord by faith (1 Peter 5:8, 9—"Your adversary the devil.. .resist him, firm in your faith;" Ephesians 6:16--"taking up the shield of faith with which you will be

able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one"); he ought not depend upon his own resources.

8. Believers need spiritual protection to successfully resist demonic attacks. (Ephesians 6:10-13--"Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil;" John 17:12-17--"I...ask Thee...to keep them from the evil one:" I John 4:3, 4); they must clothe themselves in the spiritual armor described by Paul in Ephesians 6 if they are successfully to resist them.

9. Demonic activity is always with the knowledge and permission of God and is always used by God to perfect the believer in the image of Christ (cf. Judges 9:23; 1 Samuel 16:14; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Job 1:6-19; 2:1-10; Romans 8:28-39; Ephesians 1:11).

B. Inferences from Scripture that provide other "fences" within which any doctrine of demons--and how they can affect the believer--must be contained. This is an application of the principle that Scripture must interpret Scripture; i.e., the clear must be used to determine the unclear. We are not really using Scripture as our guide to doctrine if we use unclear or controversial doctrines to "re-interpret" the doctrines clearly taught in Scripture. In fact, if we use the unclear to re-interpret the clear teaching of Scripture we will be in danger of making the logical error of reasoning in a circle. Without realizing it we may, in effect, be assuming our conclusions when we mean to be analyzing them. The following, then, are doctrines or passages which must not be compromised by any doctrine concerning demons if we are to remain in our beliefs on the strong foundation of Scripture.

1. We must first acknowledge that it is nowhere unequivocally stated that believers can or cannot be demonized.

Could a demon have entered into the Holy of Holies?? In this age believers are temples of the Holy Spirit.... what is the significance of this to conclusions we must draw concerning the indwelling of demons in believers?

Many teachers of the Word of God teach that true believers absolutely cannot be "demon possessed." One may legitimately and reasonably infer from the indwelling of the believer by the Holy Spirit that believers cannot be demon possessed. It must be acknowledged however that this is nowhere stated as an absolute truth in the New Testament. It is interesting to note that evil spirits, including Satan, apparently have access to God in the third heaven (Job 1--2; 1 Kings, 22:19-23). This implies that the mere presence of God is not totally incompatible with the presence of a demon or Satan.

Some teachers of the Word of God, such as Merrill Unger, distinguish between "demon possession" and "demon oppression." They base this distinction on the fact that the Greek term usually translated as "demon possessed" does not actually mean "demon possessed" but only "demonized." Though the Greek term "demonized" (daimonizomai--in the power of a demon) does not by itself mean "demon possessed," it is always found in a context in which the demon is said to be "cast out" (ekballo) of its victim. It appears

likely, therefore, that the Greek term "demonized" is a technical term for having a demon inhabit a human body.

Scripture, then, does not contain passages that allow us to be dogmatic on whether or not a believer can be in the power of a demon in the manner of some of the examples of demon possession we find in the Gospels and Acts. We find, however, that Scripture gives the believer assurances that make our inability to answer the question of whether or not believers can be demon possessed irrelevant. Demon possessed or not, Romans 3:23, 24, Romans 6:11, 17, Romans 8:28-30 and 1 John 4:4 remain true of every believer.

2. Scripture contains all the doctrine necessary for the believer to be equipped for every good work: 2 Timothy 3:16,17--"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

When scripture is combined with the teaching of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the believer does not need any human teacher to equip him for discerning the truth that he needs to know: 1 John 2:26,27--"These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing which "you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

We must refuse, then, any teaching that tells us that in order to be pleasing to God in our walk we must accept some truth that can be discerned only through some revelation or experience of a human teacher. This does not mean that we cannot look to human teachers to help us understand the Word of God; this is part of God's plan for the church. It does mean, though, that we must be careful not to allow any human teacher to add to the teaching of Scripture that which could not have been discerned without them or their experiences.

We conclude, then, that the complete absence of any biblical instructions to consider demonization (either demon possession or demon oppression) as the basis of a sin problem in a believer implies that:

a. The phenomenon, if it exists at all, is not common and can be dealt with by adherence to the instructions given to every believer for dealing with demonic opposition, as in Ephesians 6:10-20.

b. Biblical examples of demonization--all of which are examples of demon possession--and Biblical instructions regarding dealing with the attacks of the enemy are adequate to instruct the believer in effectively dealing with Satan and his forces.

c. Possible occurrences of demonization in believers must be recognizable as such on the basis of examples of demonization found in the Gospels and Acts. These examples include at least the following:

- 1) Uncontrollable bodily motions. Mk 1:26, Luke 9:42
- 2) Screaming. Mk. 1:26, Luke 4:33
- 3) Unusual violence. I Sam. 18:10, Acts 19:16, Mk 8:28
- 4) Deafness and muteness. Mk 9:25 (Note that in this example Jesus call the spirit a "deaf and mute spirit")
- 5) Superhuman strength. Luke 8:29
- 6) Speaking by the demon to the one casting it out. Mk 1:34, 5:12; Act 19:15
- 7) Persistent "crying out". Acts 16:16-18.
- 8) Other bizarre behavior. Luke 8:27

3. No doctrine of demonization can vitiate the clear teaching of Romans 6:2-11 that no believer is in bondage to sin--"Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." We must use the clear to shed light on the unclear, including our doctrine of demonization. This, then, implies that faith in the work of Christ on the cross is adequate to deliver the believer from any demonic attack that seeks to force the believer's will to perform sin. No sin by a believer can be without his willing participation. We can say, "Satan tempted me to do it," but we cannot biblically say, "Satan made me do it." Romans 6:17,18--"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." To the extent, then, that it is even possible for a demon to replace a believer's will with its will, this can only occur with the believer's consent.

4. No doctrine of demonization can be allowed to vitiate the clear teaching of Scripture that God does not allow anything into the life of the believer that is not consistent with His purpose to make of that believer a brother of Christ: Romans 8:28, 32--"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" We must insist, then, that anything that God permits a demon to do to a believer will be consistent with God's purpose to conform that believer to the image of Christ.

C. Questions to be answered:

1. What are the direct commands given to believers in the epistles regarding the believer's response to Satan and the demons?

There are several passages that deal directly with how the believer is to combat attacks from Satan:

- a) 1 Peter 5:6-10 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

We make these observations:

- 1) The enemy's attack takes the form of undeserved suffering; specifically in 1 Peter, persecution from unbelievers.
- 2) The believer's response is to persevere and remain firm in faith.
- 3) The enemy attacks with persecution and suffering. The enemy's purpose is to "consume" the believer; God's purpose is to glorify the believer. The believer has victory when he resists the enemy through trust in a sovereign, loving God. This trust will appear in the form of the believer humbling himself before the sovereign will of God.
- 4) The believer is not instructed to address the enemy in any way, either to rebuke him or to bind him; instead he is instructed to endure until God brings deliverance. In fact, the apparent success of the enemy in being able to afflict the believer is consistent with God's plan to exalt the believer.

Summary: The situation seems exactly analogous to that of Job, who suffered unjustly at the hands of Satan--so as to accomplish the purpose of God. When that purpose was accomplished, God brought deliverance and exaltation. It would have been purposeless for Job to have rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord, as the Archangel Michael once did, because it suited God's purpose for Satan to afflict Job. The central response of the believer to suffering and persecution caused by Satan is to know by faith that such sufferings are God's will for believers everywhere, that the suffering which God is allowing is consistent with His love, and that the suffering is accomplishing God's purpose in the life of the believer.

These truths are to be used against lies of the enemy such as these: "God does not love you"; "You are unworthy of God's blessings"; "God is punishing you for your sins"; "God has abandoned you", etc. When the believer refuses to accept such suggestions of the enemy, he is successfully engaged in warfare against the demonic realm: he is cooperating with God in the process of producing Sons of God to be brethren of Christ, and he is thwarting Satan's desire to consume believers.

When the enemy whispers these lies in our ears we must refuse to listen to them. How do we refuse? By casting our anxieties upon God. We may find that we must do this continually and persistently, but we are promised that anxieties persistently taken to God will be replaced by the peace of God: Philippians 4:6, 7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- b) James 4:1-11 "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: 'He jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us'? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit therefore to God."

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 'Be miserable and weep: Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it."

Observations:

- 1) In the 1 Peter passage the enemy's avenue of attack was the world system that is antagonistic to God and His children. In this passage the avenue of attack is the desires of the flesh. Specifically, the enemy uses fleshly desires to foment divisions and quarrels between believers.



- 2) The believer is instructed to resist by drawing near to God, by mourning one's sin, by cleansing one's life from sinful thoughts actions, and by submitting oneself to the will of God.
- 3) Note that James implies that fleshly lusts are really solicitations to sin from Satan.
- 4) There are no instructions for the believer to resist the attacks of the enemy through the lusts of the flesh by in turn rebuking the enemy. Instead, the believer is instructed to resist by submitting to God and is promised that the enemy will flee in response. It appears then that there is no need to "claim the blood" or to verbally "rebuke" the enemy, as God promises that the enemy will flee in response to the believer's resistance to the temptation.
- c) Ephesians 6:10-20 "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, having done everything to stand firm. Take your stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with all prayer and petition praying at all time in the Spirit, and with this in view, being on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, also on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel...."

Observations:

- 1) The first two passages address the enemy's attacks through the avenues of the world and the flesh; here the passage is very clear that all believers are subject to direct, ongoing attacks from supernatural forces of evil. The passage pictures believers as being in a face-to-face wrestling match with evil spiritual forces--we must not engage in this struggle in our own strength. Further, we must take this passage seriously in both our personal walks and in our counseling of struggling believers. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood only, but is truly against supernatural forces of evil. We should pray with this knowledge of supernatural realities in view. We should depend upon God and God's provision for resisting our supernatural enemies with these realities in view: we must not seek to deal with sin as though spiritual forces of evil are not actively opposed to us

- 2) We understand these forces to consist of Satan and the demons.
- 3) We must recognize that our struggles with sin, discouragement, temptation, and opposition in ministry are not struggles against merely human forces or against nothing more than our own fleshly weaknesses. They are struggles against Satan and his angels, who are far superior to us in both power and intelligence. If we will recognize this we will not be so quick to resist in our own strength--we will more quickly turn to God for His strength.
- 4) Verse 13 makes clear that if one takes up the full armor of God he will be able to resist and to stand firm against the onslaught of evil supernatural forces. God's provision, God's armor, is adequate!
- 5) The nature of the armor indicates the nature of the attacks: Truth to combat the enemy's lies; righteousness to combat the enemy's temptations to sin; the gospel of peace to combat the enemy's provocation of quarrels and dissensions; faith to combat doubt (the enemy's invitation for you to disbelieve the word of God); salvation to combat dependence upon self; and the Word of God that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work, bringing every thought into captivity (2 Corinthians 10:3-7).
- 6) The believer is to resist and stand firm by praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and petition, on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. An example of the type of perseverance and petition required is found in Paul's request that God grant to him through their prayers boldness to proclaim the gospel. We understand prayer in the spirit to be praying in fellowship with God; it is praying that emphasizes one's personal relationship with a God Whom one knows. It is a practicing of the presence of God. It is an expression of utter submission to the will of God and utter dependence upon the power of God. Every element of the armor should be put on and wielded with prayer in the spirit. We must not try to stand against the enemy--in any area--without prayer!
- 7) All of these elements of armor indicate that the nature of the attack will be in the form of lies and half-truths, temptations to sin, temptations to rely upon self, and invitations to doubt, just as illustrated for us in the Biblical accounts of Satan's temptations of Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:17) and of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).
- 8) There is no indication in any of this that the believer is to be directly concerned with the enemy himself. Instead, the believer is to focus on God's provisions through the Scriptures, the work of Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and prayer. These provisions certainly include God's control over the enemy.
- 9) We further note that nowhere in this central passage concerning the believer's weapons for spiritual warfare are there instructions for the believer to directly address the enemy, to invoke the blood of Jesus, or to "bind" the enemy. Rather,

the enemy's attack is to be dealt with at the point of attack with truth, faith, and obedience. Specifically, the believer is instructed to pray to God, not to address the enemy. This does not mean that we can say that addressing the enemy is wrong or unbiblical; we must say, however, that it is unnecessary. When we cry out to God it is unnecessary to cry out against the enemy.

10) If we deal with the enemy the way Paul tells us to in Ephesians, we will find ourselves being drawn near to God, being trained in the life of faith, and being taught to walk by the Spirit and not carry out the desires of the flesh.

- d) Ephesians 4:25-27 "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil (slanderer) an opportunity."

Observations:

- 1) Anger is an open door of opportunity for the enemy.
  - 2) The believer is to deny the enemy this opportunity by not letting his anger lead to sin and by not leaving his anger unresolved. We must not let anger fester; to do so is to invite the enemy to "pin" us, to score a point in our wrestling match.
- e) 1 John 4:1-6 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 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. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

Observations:

- 1) The context of the books of 1 John, 2 John and 3 John indicates that there were traveling teachers going among the churches who were teaching heretical doctrines about Jesus Christ. Their teachings about Christ were to be tested against the clear statements in 1 John that Jesus, a real man--in the flesh--not an apparition of some sort, was the Christ, the promised deliverer and coming world ruler, sent from God.

2) John sees these false teachers as emissaries of Satan. Thus, we have here a clear example of what Paul calls "doctrines of demons." This appears to be an attempt by the enemy to introduce a lie about the Person of Christ into the beliefs of the church as the basis for leading believers into sins based upon that doctrine.

3) Since the instruction is "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God," the passage may be referring to the reception of a message from God to a local church through a believer with the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10). It is apparently possible for the enemy to imitate this type of communication between God and the church for the purpose of confusing or misleading the church: 1 Corinthians 12:3, 1 Kings 22:19-23, 1 Samuel 18:10 and 19:23 (the same Hebrew word is translated "raved" in the first reference in Samuel but "prophesying" in the second). The instructions in 1 John would then be to test the nature of the spirit by which the prophet had received the prophecy. There are no clear instructions on how this testing is to be carried out. Two possibilities suggest themselves: 1) Testing the doctrine of the prophet, as per John's instructions. 2.) Addressing the spirit of the prophet while the prophet is in his prophetic state (compare 2 Kings 3:14-15) somewhat in the manner in which Jesus spoke with the demon in the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-15). In either case, we are warned that there are spirits who may attempt to present a message of their own as a message from God.

2. Are there any situations in which the believer can follow scriptural example in rebuking Satan or a demon?

a) There are no instructions per se in Scripture for the believer to rebuke or bind Satan or a demon in any situation. This is highly significant.

b) There are several examples of a servant of God addressing Satan directly and giving him a command:

1) Zechariah 3:1,2--"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? ""

2) Matthew 4:10--"Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. ""

3) Mark 8:33--"But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.""

4) Luke 4:41--"Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ."

5) Jude 1:9--"But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you.""

Observations: These cases all seem to be examples of servants of God, acting under direct instructions from God to carry out a particular assignment, who are directly opposed by Satan in carrying out their task. They invoke the authority of the One who sent them in commanding Satan to step out of their way so that they can complete the assignment.

Before one concludes, however, that because Jesus rebuked Satan then believers can rebuke Satan, he should observe that Jesus also rebuked the wind and the sea; these also obeyed him. It is easier to test one's authority to control the wind and sea--which one can observe to see whether or not they have obeyed--than to test one's authority over an unseen demon, whose compliance cannot be observed.

- c) There are several passages that speak of a delegated authority for "binding." These passages are sometimes taken as a basis for the believer having authority to bind Satan or a demon.

1) Matthew 16:15-19--"[Jesus] said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjonas, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Observations: The context of this passage is critical to its interpretation. It follows a series of confrontations with the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, which ends with the Pharisees and Sadducees asking Jesus to give them a sign from heaven to prove His messiahship (Matthew 16:1-4). After Jesus leaves them, calling them an evil and adulterous generation, He warns the disciples to beware of the leaven (the teaching, Matthew 16:12) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

In Matthew 16:13-20, which immediately follows Jesus' warning about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus first reveals His plan to build a new "assembly" (Greek "ecclesia", a word used of the people of Israel in the OT and of the church in the NT), with Peter's confession as a foundation stone (compare Ephesians 4:11, 1 Peter 2:4-10). After Jesus states that Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah is a revelation to him from God the Father (Matthew 16:17), Jesus says, "And I also say to you..." This phrase is emphatic in the original, making the emphasis of the verses that follow another revelation. As

the Father had revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, now Jesus reveals to Peter that Christ is going to build a new assembly, the Church, to replace the old assembly, Israel, with her Pharisees and Sadducees. The emphasis of the passage, then, is Jesus' revelation that He is going to build a new assembly, the Church.

To interpret the passage correctly we must also understand how the words "bind" and "loose" were used by the Pharisees and Sadducees. In rabbinic language, to loose (luseis) was to permit something; to bind (deseis) was to forbid something. The rabbis, whose teaching Jesus has just warned the disciples to beware of, had forbidden many things God had not forbidden, and had permitted many things which God had not permitted (Matthew 23:1-39). Jesus now states that in the future (note the use of the future tense: "whatever you shall bind" and "whatever you shall loose"), in the new assembly that He, Jesus, was going to build, Peter would forbid and prohibit that which had been (note the use of the future perfect tense: "shall have been bound" and "shall have been loosed"; the future perfect is used of actions completed before the future event with results which are still in effect at the time of the future event) already forbidden or prohibited by God (in heaven), not by men. The passage contrasts, then, the old assembly, Israel, and the new assembly, the Church. At the time of Christ the old assembly had been taken over by men and was being ruled by man-made rules (Matthew 23:1-3). Jesus is prophesying that His new assembly, the Church, would in the future be governed by God's rule. Peter, then, would be like a rabbi in that he would make authoritative declarations regarding what would be permitted or forbidden within the new assembly, the church (see, for example, Acts 9, 10). The teachings of Jesus, and not those of the leaders of the old assembly, would be the standards in the new assembly.

This passage is not, therefore, teaching that the believer has authority to command Satan or his demons to stop any activity, but is teaching that the Church which Jesus was going to build would not be subject to the man-made rules of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2) Matthew 18:15-20--"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private.... Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Observations: Note again the context: Here, the church must decide whether or not to exclude from the assembly (that is, the church) some member because of that member's behavior. Jesus instructs them that what they will forbid is to be what God has already forbidden, and that what they permit is to be what God has already permitted, again in contrast to the ways of the Pharisees and Sadducees (see, for example, Matthew 18:4-14 and Matthew 19:3-9). In other words, this passage extends to the church the same prophecy as was given to Peter in Matthew 16:13-20.

Conclusion: When the context of these passages is taken into account and when the rabbinic usage of the terms "bind" and "loose" is considered, it is clear that the passages are primarily drawing a contrast between the church and Israel at the time of Christ, especially in how they were ruled. The passages do not teach that believers have the authority to command demons to cease their activity. Even if the binding and loosing were to be taken to refer to demons (to which they do not apply), it would have to be noted that the authority of Peter and the Church to bind and loose on earth is based upon that which had already been bound or loosed in heaven. Peter and the Church could not, then, be taken to have been given carte blanche to bind or loose anything they might choose to bind or loose, but only that which they would know had already been bound or loosed by God. Once again, one can test experientially his interpretation of this passage by applying it to rebuking the winds and sea, as Jesus also did.

- c) Besides the fact that these two passages cannot be taken to delegate to the church authority to prohibit Satan or his demons from certain activities, there are several examples of Paul identifying Satanic activities but not dealing with them by rebuking Satan, by binding a demon, or by forcing the enemy to stop the activity by "claiming the blood." These passages further indicate that the believer does not have authority to proscribe demonic activity.

1) 1 Thessalonians 2:18 "For we wanted to come to you,--I, Paul, more than once--but Satan thwarted us."

Observations:

(a) Though we are not told how Satan thwarted Paul nor how Paul sought to resist Satan, it is clear that there was no formula or secret known to Paul by which he could overcome Satan's opposition.

(b) This is consistent with the teaching in 1 Peter 5 that Satan is to be resisted by casting our anxieties upon God and trusting our situation to Him.

2) 1 Thessalonians 3:5 "For this reason when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain."

Observations:

(a) Paul feared Satanic attack upon the new believers at Thessalonica, but was prevented by Satan from going to -be with them himself.

(b) There is no indication that he rebuked Satan on their behalf or claimed the blood on their behalf.

(c) Paul's defense against the attack of the enemy was to send Timothy to them to strengthen and encourage them in their faith (3:2).

(d) This is, again, consistent with the instructions in 1 Peter 5 that Satan is to be resisted by trusting in God and affirming the truth taught in God's word. Timothy's message to the Thessalonians 'was not "rebuke the enemy" but "stand firm in faith in the midst of persecution."

3) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelation, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me--to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that It might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecution, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Observations:

(a) This passage is widely taken to refer to a bodily ailment which afflicted Paul. Whatever the nature of the "thorn in the flesh," Paul clearly attributes it to Satanic activity. "Messenger of Satan" is literally "angel of Satan," a demon.

(b) We note Paul's response to this Satanic activity: he petitioned God about it. We have no indication that he rebuked the messenger of Satan. His method of dealing with the messenger, prayer to God, is consistent with his own instructions concerning spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:17-19 and with Peter's instructions in 1 Peter 5:6-10.

(c) When the "thorn" was not removed by God, Paul's response was to submit not to the enemy, but to God, who in His sovereignty allowed the enemy to afflict him, so that Paul would remain a faithful servant of Christ and not fall into sin because of pride and self-reliance.

(d) If Paul had been able to force Satan's angel to desist from afflicting him by ordering it to do so, he would have been able to thwart God's purpose for Satan's messenger: to make Paul have to depend on God.

4) Revelation 2:10--"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."



Observations:

(a) Faithful believers of the church in Smyrna were to be imprisoned because of Satanic activity.

(b) They are not told to oppose Satan directly in his activity.

(c) They are told to be faithful--in this case even unto death.

Summary: The doctrine of believers having the authority to force Satan or demons to cease from any activity or even from some specific activity is not taught in any passage of Scripture and would conflict with the observed behavior of Paul, with the revealed use by God of Satanic and demonic activity to test and train believers, and with instructions in Scripture to believers experiencing Satanic activity.

3. Is there any biblical evidence of anyone having been demonized without there being obvious manifestations of it?

If we mean by "demonized" the Greek term *daimonizomai*, (though it literally means only "in the power of a demon,") it is always found in a context in which the demon is said to be "cast out" (*ekballo*) of its victim. It appears likely, therefore, that the Greek term "demonized" is a technical term for having a demon inhabit a human body. There are a few occurrences of this term in the New Testament that are not clearly associated with one or more obvious external manifestations of the presence of the demon (see section B.2.c of the outline). One of the possible examples is found in Luke 4:33, where there was a man in the synagogue who was demonized; it is clear that his behavior became "demonic" when he saw Jesus, but it is not clear that his behavior would have been so recognized before that point. In Matthew 9:32ff we find reference to a man whose only listed manifestation of being demonized was his being mute. In Matthew 12:22 we also have reference to a man whose demonization was manifested through muteness and blindness--no other manifestations are referred to. In Luke 13:10-17 we find a "daughter of Abraham" having had "a sickness caused by a spirit;" Jesus says the woman had been "bound [by Satan] for eighteen years." There is no indication of any other manifestation of the presence of the spirit beyond the fact that she was bent double and could not straighten up. We are not told, however, that she was demonized nor is it said that a demon was "cast out." Instead, Jesus simply says, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness," and lays his hands on her.

There are, however, clear examples of individuals who were influenced by demons or Satan himself to the point that they could be said to be under the "control" of the evil spirit without necessarily being technically "demonized"; i.e. without having had their bodies inhabited by demons:

a. I Timothy 4:1, where some are said to follow "deceiving spirits and things taught by demons." Here the individuals involved, though not demon possessed,

are misled by demons into unbiblical behavior through their having not adhered to the word of God.

b. 1 Chronicles 21:1, \_ where "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel." David, in taking a census of the number of fighting men in Israel, was, in effect, and apparently not realizing it, obeying Satan. (Taking a census to find the number of fighting men in the country was forbidden to keep the king from depending on the size of his army rather than on God.)

c. Matthew 16:23, where Peter, in seeking to oppose Jesus' purpose to go to the cross, was actually acting as a representative of Satan.

d. Luke 8:12, where Satan takes away the word of God from the hearts of those who hear God's Word but do not believe it.

e. John 13:2, where Satan had prompted Judas to betray Jesus. Later, however, as the time of betrayal came, Satan actually entered into Judas (Luke 22:3, John 13:27).

f. Peter was "sifted by Satan" during the night of Christ's trials when he was led into a denial of Christ through intimidation (Luke 22:31). It is worthwhile to analyze Peter's defeat in terms of which pieces of the Christian's armor he failed to use.

g. Acts 5:3, where Ananias' purpose to deceive the church by appearing to have given all of the money from a sale of land to the church while actually keeping some for his own use is said by Peter to have been placed in his heart by Satan.

h. 2 Timothy 2:23-26, where some, in believing "ignorant, foolish speculations" were taken captive by Satan to do his will.

4. Is there any evidence that a person can be demonized without having opened himself up to interactions with the demon or participating in occult activities?

Scripture does not tell us how individuals become demonized. We learn from Deuteronomy 18:9-14 that occult activities of all kinds are an abomination to God:

"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire [human sacrifice to a demon--see Psalm 106:37ff.], one who uses divination [obtaining information normally beyond human ability to know through communicating with the spirit world by any mode], one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer [one who uses magic to control spirits to do his wishes], or one who casts a spell [using magic to cause spirits to harm or help anyone], or a medium [one who allows himself to be used by spirits to speak to humans], or a spiritist [one who communicates with the spirit world by any other

mode], or one who calls up the dead [for example in seances]. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. - You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For those nations which you shall dispossess listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so."

Along this line, submitting oneself to heavenly bodies is also forbidden: Deut. 4:19-- "And beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away [from worshiping the LORD] and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven [for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Gen. 1:14]" Astrology, therefore, should also be avoided by believers, as it is both an occult source of knowledge about the future and is a demonstration of a lack of dependence upon God.

The Scriptures are very clear that no one who wishes to please God will have any contact with spirits by any means or in any form. This should be enough for believers, even though there is no explicit teaching that one can become demonized through participation in such activities. It is a principle, however, that "whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). If you don't want to get burned, don't play in the fire.

There are several examples of children who were demon possessed (see Matt 15:22, 17:15, for example). In at least one case demon possession had first occurred when the child was very small (Mark 9:21). Scripture simply does not tell us how one becomes indwelt by a demon. We can be certain, however, that it can occur only when it is consistent with the will of God (Ephesians 1:11--"Who works all things after the counsel of His will") and with God's purpose to conform all believers to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-30).

5. Is there any example of a demon so associated with a specific deed of the flesh that it is named after the deed of the flesh?

There is absolutely no New Testament example of a demon possessing a name based upon the type of sin that it engenders in the one it possesses. There are no examples of demons with names such as "Lust", "Bitterness", "Fear", "Depression", "Envy", "Theft" or "Fornication." There are, however, examples of demons having names related to the type of physical infirmity they inflict upon the individual (a demon of deafness and muteness, for example). We should not therefore, base any doctrine of demonization upon assuming that demons are associated with specific sins or temptations. We should especially be unwilling to add to the teaching of Scripture any teaching garnered from so-called conversations with demons, who are not only liars but are also extremely clever and devious.

6. Is there any justification for dealing with a believer's moral problems by casting out a demon associated with that moral problem?

There is no example of this in the New Testament. There are no instructions for us to engage in any such practice as part of our struggle against our spiritual enemies. Every New Testament instruction regarding sin and temptation is for the believer, by faith, to rely upon the work of Christ in freeing him from sin, to rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit, to rely upon God's power through prayer to experience victory over spiritual opposition, and to base his life on the truth of the Word of God. We should be wary of any teaching that would de-emphasize our dependence upon the Christian's spiritual armor and prayer in resisting the enemies' attacks. If the enemy can get us to use his substitutes for the teaching of the Word of God, he will have prepared us for a fall in our spiritual struggle. Prayer, righteousness, and truth cannot be replaced by casting out a demon.

On the other hand, Scripture is clear both that Satan can use the desires of the flesh to tempt us to sin, and that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of this-darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." If we take these teachings seriously then we will participate in our spiritual wrestling match "with all prayer and petition, praying at all times in the spirit, and with this in view, being on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." We will also make our petitions with the realization that spiritual forces of wickedness are opposing us and that only God has the power to deliver us from them. In other words, we must not make the reverse errors of substituting teaching and exhortation for the power of God available to the believer through prayer or of acting as though demonic forces are not involved in our struggles and we are dealing only with flesh and blood in those struggles.

7. Are believers ever instructed to ask a demon its name, to "claim the blood" against Satan, to command a demon to come out of a person, or to pursue a "deliverance ministry"?

There are no such instructions in the New Testament.

8. Does demonization still occur today? If so, how is it to be recognized and how is the believer to respond to the demonized person?

Demonization was somewhat widespread in Israel at the time of Christ. There is no statement in Scripture that demonization is no longer possible, and we must therefore consider it a possibility. Even though it is true that Satan has suffered an irreversible defeat at the cross, Scripture is clear that demons remain active in the world, that they are successful in deceiving many into believing false doctrines, in enticing many into sins of the flesh, and in thwarting Christians in their lives and ministries. It is also true, however, that there are no examples of demonization in Scripture after the book of Acts.

We are confident, however, that Scripture contains all the information about demonization necessary for us to be able to adequately deal with any incidents of demonization God should bring into our lives (2 Timothy 3:16,17; I John 2:27). We must assume that if we encounter a demonized person, the demonization will be manifested in

one or more of the ways in which Scripture illustrates the results of demonization. We should not base a conclusion that someone is demonized on unscriptural speculation or "evidence." Further, our knowledge that we are engaged in a spiritual battle should lead us to pray, whatever the level of demonic influence Satan is able to exert on a particular individual.

For example, the first and greatest need of anyone—demonized or not—is to be born again. If we suspect someone is demonized, we should begin by making sure that that person knows the gospel. In the process of seeking to explain the gospel to them, we should remember that it is also true that Satan is actively involved in blinding the eyes of the unbelieving to the truth of the gospel. We should, therefore, pray that God would not allow the enemy to continue to blind their eyes. To the extent that we believe that a demon has been able to substitute its will for the will of the individual, we should pray that God would deliver that person from the demon. We must depend on the willingness and power of God to defeat the enemy. These actions are appropriate for any unbeliever, no matter how sure or unsure we might be of their demonization.

For any believer struggling with a problem of fear, of immorality, of drunkenness, or of any other sin of unbelief or disobedience, or for any new believer that we suspect has been deeply within the power of the enemy: we should pray for that person to be delivered by God from the power of the enemy. Further, we should help them to put on the armor of God with all prayer and petition. We should be certain, for example, that their loins are girded with truth. If they have been rationalizing sinful behavior we should exhort them to confess this to God, calling the sin by what it is, that which is abhorrent to God. We should help them put on the breastplate of righteousness. If they have been practicing sin we should exhort them to repent of that sin and to call upon God to deliver them from it. To participate in the spiritual battle while practicing sin is to go into battle without a breastplate, which is an open invitation to the enemy to "run us through!" We should make sure that their feet are shod with the gospel of peace. We should encourage them to ask God to show them if they have bitterness, envy, or any other such sin toward anyone. Then we should encourage them to repent of that sin, to ask God to deliver them from it, and to ask God for wisdom to know what they need to do to resolve the enmity. We should also help them to take up the shield of faith, pointing out to them the promises of God with which they may by faith "extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one." The appropriate promises should also be acknowledged by that person before God through prayer.

All of these activities are appropriate for anyone demonized to whatever extent!

Finally, if an individual is demonized to the extent of some of those manifestations of demonization in the Gospels and Acts, so that it is not possible to deal with them in the manner just described, it seems appropriate to follow the example of Jesus (Mark 9:25), the Apostles (Luke 10:17; Acts 16-:18), and the early deacons (Acts 8:5-8) in ordering the demon out of the person.

There are several examples in which Satan or demons are rebuked in the name of the Lord. This phrase apparently means "as standing in solidarity with the Lord" (Luke 9:42, Mark 9:38, Luke 10:17, Zechariah 3:2, Mark 8:33, Jude 1:9). Along these lines we should note that demons apparently were cast out by some other than Jesus and his deputies (the 12 as in Matthew 10:1 or the 70 as in Luke 10:17), the Apostles (as in Acts 16:18) or the proto deacons (as in Acts 8:4-8); see Mark 9:38,...possibly even by nonbelievers (see Matthew 7:22, 12:27). Apparently, if a believer is directly and obviously confronted with a demonic being he can exercise some amount of control over the demon by virtue of his union with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6--"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"). This could be done by speaking "as one with Christ," that is, "in [Jesus'] Name" (John 14:14). This teaching must not be taken in such a way as to contradict Jesus' statement that some demons can be cast out only with prayer (Mark 9:29) or Paul's own experience of being afflicted and thwarted by Satan (see above). Again the lack of commands and directions in the epistles regarding "casting out" demons is highly significant.

#### D. Conclusions

There is much about demonization where Scripture is silent. The Bible does make clear, however, that the believer is engaged in a continuing warfare with spiritual forces which seek to overcome him. It gives examples of the type of attacks to which the believer is subjected. The believer is also equipped by Scripture to deal with all spiritual attacks to which the believer might be subjected. We should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and not be lead away from this by human teachings that cannot be established from Scripture. On the other hand, if we neglect the spiritual nature of our struggle, we should expect to not fully experience all that God has provided for us in His Son.