

## **Stand and Withstand**

by Paul D. Norcross

Note this article is taken from Dining at the Master's Table: Learning to Hear the Voice of the Lord, by Paul D. Norcross, 1997

Recently at a prayer fellowship with some fellow ministers the remark was made that there wasn't a single person in one of the minister's particular church who didn't have a major crisis in their family at the moment which required extensive counseling. My heart ached to hear this, and realizing the impact evil spirits try to play in individual believer lives, I mentioned a minor incident in which one of my children had recently come home demonized after playing with some unbeliever friends. After the Lord showed me the problem, I cast out a lying and sultry spirit. End of problem – my child was back to being blessed, happy, and bubbling praises to the Lord again.

That brought an immediate reaction in the prayer group! Some of the people I was with were aghast at the thought that a believer could have a demon. I explained how it can happen that believers get possessed with a demon. That led to even more incredulous discussion – partly because I used the word "possessed" instead of the better term of "demonized". But nevertheless, the minister's doctrinal, wholesale rejection of the thought challenged me to take a look at New Testament incidents of demonized, born again believers.

The questions that perplexed the ministers were these: can a born-again believer become deomonized? How can holy spirit occupy the same space as an evil spirit? Why are there no records after the day of Pentecost which specifically mention believers becoming demonized/possessed of an evil spirit?

The answer to these questions is certainly easy to figure out, but documenting them properly from Scripture is not. I want to outline the process the Lord led me through to answer them because as believers reach out to do what Jesus did (preach, teach, and heal), these same questions will arise over and over again. Indeed, the specific reason why many Christian churches are problem-filled instead of holy spirit-filled is precisely because where there is lack of knowledge (including this area of demons and how they function against God's people today), people become destroyed (Hosea 4:6). People today are perishing right in Christian churches all across America, all across your community, and all across the world for lack of knowledge in this area!!

Let's start by answering these questions in reverse order. Perhaps this will help you help someone else who has been taught that demons can't afflict the born-again believers. (If you think this question is obvious, look again. There are millions of Christians held captive by this very issue. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lift the scales from the eyes of the Christian church!)

### **Why are there no records after Pentecost mentioning believers becoming demonized?**

Although there are no records applying the terms possession or demonized after Pentecost, there are three records which clearly show that believers were indeed demonized by evil spirits. The first one is Ananias and Sapphira in Acts.

*Acts 5:1-3*

*But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

*But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

Does this record say either Ananias or his wife were possessed or demonized? No. Were they demonized? Yes – Satan filling a person's heart certainly works for me to describe a demonized individual. Were these two people born again believers? It doesn't say, but why would they be giving money to the apostles if they weren't? What spirits were involved? At least a lying spirit, a deceiving spirit, and perhaps several others such as a spirit of death.

The next record to note regards Diotrephes.

*3 John 1:9-10*

*I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

*Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

Diotrephes was a leader in the church. He was also acting as a witch by controlling the walk of other Christians within the flock. Does it say he was possessed or demonized, in this case by a spirit of pride? No again. But was his behavior indicative of demonized behavior? Well, it certainly wasn't a walk with Christ nor

even the walk of someone weak in character who decided to sin due to a simple sinful nature. Diotrephes was the head Christian witch in the church!

*1 Timothy 4:1 and 2:*

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing (deceiving) spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons);*

*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Diotrephes had departed from the faith – not all of it perhaps, but certainly in this key area of his ministry. Ananias and Sapphira died because they were deceived by demons into thinking they could cultivate and manipulate the praise of other Christians by making a show of financial giving. The Christian church needs to know that demons actively try to afflict brethren this way in order to affect the entire local church. Jesus clearly taught how to get rid of the problem by casting out demons – it's a part of the healing ministry He gave us to operate. A shepherd over a flock must know about these things in order to help guard it.

The third record of a born again believer becoming demonized is noted in Acts 8:23 regarding Simon the sorcerer. Simon had become born-a again under the ministry of Philip the Evangelist.

*Acts 8:13*

*Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*

But Simon had a problem. Acts 8:23 declares he was poisoned by bitterness, and bound by iniquity (NKJV). What spirits cause (or influence) this type of behavior in believers? How about the spirit of bondage which affects believers, keeping them from having an intimate relationship with the Lord (Romans 8:15)? How do the false prophets of I John 4:1 whose spirits are to be tested get into the New Testament church in the first place? They first get born again like any other believer, then become seduced by deceiving spirits into false prophetic utterance which then upsets their local church.

The field of demonology in the church gets either too little attention, as in the case of many afflicted churches today, or it can get too much, especially during the learning curve when the subject seems repulsively overwhelming. But remember, Hosea 4:6 says that God's people become destroyed for lack of knowledge. The Apostle Paul's instruction in Ephesians strikes the proper balance – neither minimizing the seriousness of the problem, nor over emphasizing it.

*Ephesians 6:10-13*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

The evil day is already here. Satan and his demons have many more years of experience attacking through holes of sin, unholiness, generational curses, etc. in the believer's armor than I have in claiming the blood of Jesus. Clearly it is the individual believer's job to grow up and learn how to plug these holes under the instruction and tutelage of the Lord and the fellowship of the saints.

Jesus Christ delivered us from the authority of darkness (Colossians 1:13). Yet, like the healing He also provided through His stripes, believers must claim their deliverance. Just as Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land was not automatic, neither is a believer's deliverance automatic until he or she applies the revelation the Lord has given in the Scripture, and that He may give as rhema for the situation.

Praise God for His goodness to help us open our eyes to the power of His blood and the instruction of His Word to help us put on the armor He gave us!

Yours in Christ,

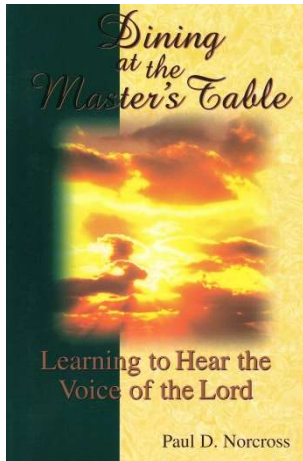
Paul and Rita Norcross

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## **Useful Notes**

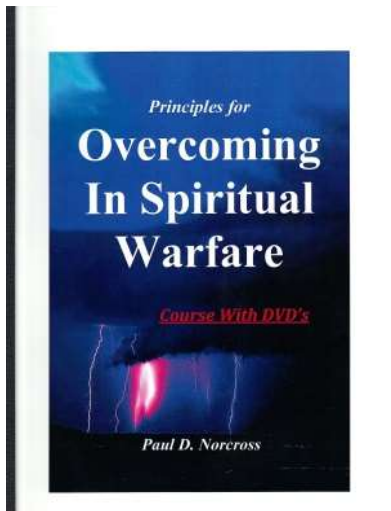
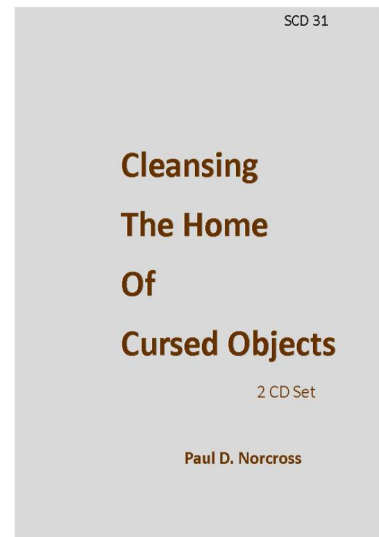
One of the ladies in our congregation at Maranatha Bible Chapel just saw a dramatic example of how important it is to clean our houses of objects dedicated to idols. After ministering to her son to take care of ADD and other related problems, his rage and rebellion continued. When the house was cleaned of Native American "dream catchers", and various religious books from groups that do not embrace Jesus Christ, the healing of the child was dramatic. Praise God! Watch your home, and be wary of what comes in on the TV and from friends at school. If you are led,

think about anointing your windows and doors with oil – you may be astonished at the difference in your home.



(Note: This article was cited from a chapter in a book by the author in *Dining At The Master's Table: Learning To Hear The Voice Of The Lord*. A copy can be obtained from the bookstore at [www.KingdomFaithMinistries.Org](http://www.KingdomFaithMinistries.Org) )

For additional understanding concerning the demonic effects of cursed objects and how to get rid of them, consider ordering this powerful CD teaching set *Cleansing The Home Of Cursed Objects*:



For powerful help with topics in Spiritual Warfare including casting out spirits, and overcoming witchcraft you may also want to explore *Principles For Overcoming In Spiritual Warfare*.