

DEFEATING THE DRAGON

Since this is the last Sunday of 2008, and since I've been talking about the difference between putting the flesh to death and overcoming the power of the enemy for the last couple of weeks, I guess I'll end this year on that same note. As I said the other week, one of the reasons I keep bringing the attention of people back to the invisible demonic realm is because, for whatever reason, so many ministries outside the Church System are ignoring or downplaying it. There are certain kinds of attacks and temptations that we will face as we seek to live a victorious life, which no amount of denying the flesh can prepare us for or deliver us from. There are certain things we must learn, which cannot be learned *by* crucifying our flesh. This is why I have said again and again over the last year that denying the flesh is not a silver-bullet cure-all. It's only half the battle; and if you only fight half the battle, in the end you will lose.

Even though some give lip service to the reality that we are in a war against invisible spirits as well as our flesh, in their hearts, they really believe that denying the flesh is the only *real* battle we face. Deep in their hearts, they believe the way to overcome the enemy is *by* overcoming the flesh. The apostle James said: "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). You can't resist the devil *by* submitting to God. You resist the devil by resisting the devil. Neither can you submit to God *by* resisting the devil. You submit to God by submitting to God. Submitting to God represents the one battle front of crucifying the flesh. Resisting the devil represents the other battle front of overcoming the power of the demonic realm.

Another reason I keep bringing the attention of people back to the invisible demonic realm is because the Scripture warns us that in the last days, the power of the enemy will increase, and this increase of power will enable him to overcome believers who would, under normal circumstances, not be subject to defeat. The prophet Daniel spoke of this time; Jesus spoke about it; and Paul taught about it. But unfortunately, people don't want to live in this kind of a reality because they want to *feel* safe.

Another reason I keep bringing the attention of people back to the invisible demonic realm is because we need to understand that *one* of God's goals for His people is that we overcome Satan to such a degree in these days, that our victory will be *the catalyst* which dethrones him and once and for all.

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, **travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.** And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. **And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:** and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, **for to devour her child as soon as it was born.** And she brought forth **a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:** and her child was **caught up unto God, and to his throne.** And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. **And there was war in heaven:** Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast*

*out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: **he was cast out into the earth**, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down**, which accused them before our God day and night. .
.Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath **but a short time**.*

Revelation 12:1-10 & 12

There is so much in this portion of Scripture to understand and digest. First of all, it tells us that there are at least 3 general groups of believers living in the last days—four if you count the stars that were cast to the earth as *fallen* believers: There is: (1) the Woman clothed with the sun; (2) the manchild which comes out of her; (3); the remnant of the Woman's seed; (4) believers who have been defeated and overcome (the stars which the Dragon casts to the earth). I've discussed this before in more detail in other chat sessions, but I just want to touch on it again because of how it relates to what I want to share tonight. Also there may be someone in the room who believes the traditional church view that the woman and the manchild represent natural Israel bringing forth the Messiah. I don't believe this is the case, for several reasons.

~ ***The Woman travails in birth***. Where in Scripture do we find National Israel *travailing in pain* to bring forth Messiah? The simple truth is, we don't. In fact, we find that the Scripture states just the opposite in Isaiah 66:5-7.

~ ***The Woman is clothed the Sun***. This is symbolic of the Lord Jesus. He *Himself* is the sun. He is the light of the world. The sun also stands for the righteousness of Jesus—and it's the Church, not National Israel, which has been clothed with Christ and His righteousness. It's the Church, not national Israel, which has been given the revelation (light) of Jesus.

~ ***The Woman stands on the Moon***. The moon is symbolic of the Old Testament economy. Just as the Moon has no light of its own, but borrows its light from the Sun, so the Law and Prophets were not the light of the New Testament, but a mere reflection of it. All the types and shadows of the Law and the Jewish ceremonies are fulfilled in Christ and realized by the Church. The light of the Old Covenant is under the feet of the Woman; it is in subjection to her. But she covered with the light of Jesus and the New Covenant. This *cannot* apply to Israel, either now at the birth of Jesus.

~ ***The Woman has a crown of twelve stars***. Stars are symbolic of the saints, and the number twelve is the number of government. A crown is symbolic of glory, honor, and spiritual authority. The twelve apostles hold a special place of honor in the Church, for to them was given the authority and the power (by Jesus and the Holy Spirit) to establish the Church.

~ ***The manchild is immediately caught up to heaven***. There is no gap here. Jesus Christ was not caught up to the throne when He was born. There was a considerable interval.

~ ***The Woman goes into the wilderness for 3½ years.*** This is a clear reference to the *last* 3½ years of this present age. National Israel has been in her wilderness for over 1900 years.

~ ***This whole vision is part of sixth trumpet.*** In Revelation 8:13 there are three “woes” spoken of by the angel. These three woe’s are the last three trumpets, and the vision of the Woman and the manchild is part of the sixth trumpet.

~ ***The result of the manchild’s ascension is that Satan is dethroned.*** We know this is a future event because after he is cast out of heaven, the angel says: “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time*”. That short time is 3½ years.

Since the Woman represents a corporate body of people, the child she brings forth also represents a corporate body of people. The two represent two different groups of believers in the last days. The place of one group is in the heavenly realm. The place of the other group is in the wilderness. The ascension of the manchild represents the fact that at that point, there has come forth in the earth a company of people who are able and worthy to fill the spiritual thrones vacated by Satan and his demons. There has come forth in the earth, a people who have been tested again and again, who have been scourged, who have suffered trial after trial, who have gone through the refiner’s fire, over and over again, until they have been completely broken and purged of all rebellion and self will. These saints are now ready to rule and reign with Christ from that heavenly realm.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 12:11

I would like to point out a few things about this passage. First of all, when John said “*they*” overcame the Dragon, he’s talking about the *manchild*. He wasn’t talking the Woman (who is in the wilderness being fed and protected), or the remainder of her seed (the outer court, given over to the Gentiles), or to the stars who were cast to the ground. Only the manchild actually overcame the Dragon.

The next thing I would like you to notice is that John said they *overcame* the Dragon. They didn’t ignore him; and they didn’t assume that God would automatically protect them from his power. They didn’t read *I. John 5:4*—which says whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world—and assume that they had already overcome the Dragon *because* they believed in Christ. The teaching that being a Christian *equals* being an overcomer is a doctrine of demons. If you think you are already an overcomer, then guess what? You will see no need to actually overcome things in your life.

Also, please notice that John said they overcame *the Dragon*. The issue is overcoming the Dragon, not overcoming “the flesh”. What God is looking for in this hour are people who have learned how to recognize the enemy and defeat him. It’s true, *one* of the ways we overcome Satan is by “not loving our lives unto the death”. But that’s not the only way. Moreover, there is a difference between *the goal* of overcoming the Dragon, and the way you reach that goal. People have made loving not their lives unto the death the goal without realizing it. I’m not just splitting doctrinal hairs here. It may not be apparent at this time why it’s such a big deal to keep the

goal, and the way you reach that goal, in their proper context and order, but it will become clear enough, soon enough. Finally, we see the way they overcame the Dragon. John said they overcame him by:

~ *The blood of the Lamb*

~ *The word of their testimony*

~ *They loved not their lives unto the death*

This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list. James told us we must *resist* the devil; Paul told us we must put on the whole armor of God and *stand* against him; and there are various *other* instructions in the New Testament on how to defeat the enemies power. But there are some things to consider regarding these three things. Keep in mind that John is *not* talking about our initial salvation experience. When he says this group of saints overcame the enemy by these three things, he's talking about more than a *past experience*. He's talking about how believers overcome the power of the enemy *after* they are born again. So let's consider the first thing John speaks of—the blood of the Lamb.

*And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and **have washed their robes**, and made them white **in the blood of the Lamb**.*

Revelation 7:14

In this passage, we see that after becoming a Christian, God's people can wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and make them white. Why would *Christians* have to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb? Don't our robes stay white and clean automatically? No, they don't. They can get soiled—and many times they *do* get soiled. They get soiled when we live and walk in the flesh; they get soiled when we follow after the things of this world; and they get soiled when we involve ourselves with demon spirits, either directly or through relationships. This is why Jesus said what He did to the believers in the church of Sardis:

*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which **have not defiled their garments**; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*

Revelation 3:4

When we come to Jesus, we receive a new (spiritual) robe that is clean and white. An important part of our Christian walk is learning how to keep that robe clean. When we allow our garments to get soiled, we must go to the Lord afresh, and cleanse them in His blood by confession and repentance. Most of the believers in the church of Sardis had defiled their garments and were not worthy to walk with Jesus in white. But there were a few people in that fellowship who had learned how to keep their garments clean. This is what John is talking about when he says they overcame the Dragon by the blood of the Lamb. When our garments get defiled, it's the blood that washes them clean again.

However, in order to have that blood cleanse our garments when they become defiled, we have to *realize* they are defiled—which also means we have to understand and accept the fact that they *can be* defiled. Did you ever wonder *why* the rest of the people in Sardis walked around with defiled garments? Do you think they realized their garments had been defiled? Do you think they realized they were no longer worthy to walk with Jesus? I

don't think so. I think they were people just like you and me. They loved the Lord and they were sure they were trying to serve Him faithfully. If they would have realized the condition they were in, they would have repented.

How is it possible to walk around, day in and day out, with defiled garments without even realizing it? Well, it's easier than you think. There are *many* doctrines of devils which produce defiled garments. One such doctrine says that your garments can't be defiled because Jesus' blood *automatically* keeps them clean. Another one says that all your sins—past, present and future—have already been forgiven, so there is nothing to defile your garment. Another one says the most important thing is love; and love is defined as having *spiritual union* with everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition. The list goes on and on.

Let me pause here and say something about walking free from the influence of spirits. Many people who spend their time making sure they are not walking in the flesh, walk under the influence of spirits without realizing it. It is fairly easy to come under the influence of a spirit through *interaction* with other people who are themselves under the influence of spirits, especially Christians. There is no quicker way to open yourself up to a spirit than to enter into *spiritual union* with another person who is walking under some kind of spirit.

When you *pray* with someone, you are having spiritual union with them. When you *worship* with someone, you are having spiritual union with them. When you are being ministered to by someone, and you are receiving it, you are having spiritual union with them. When you *take communion* with other believers, you are having spiritual union with them. Even sharing a meal with someone or entering into casual conversation with them, *can* turn into spiritual union. And when you have spiritual union with a person who is walking under the power or influence of another spirit, you are opening yourself up to the influence of those same spirits.

I don't want to delve into this whole area too deeply, but just let me say that when Paul said Jesus is coming back for a Church that is without spot or wrinkle, he's wasn't just talking about sin, or worldliness, or the flesh. He was also talking about being free from *any influence* of demon spirits. If we want to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes, we have to be completely free from other spirits. So I encourage everyone in this room to start asking God to give you wisdom in this area, and show you how to stay out from under the influence of other spirits, either in yourself, or in other people. It's very important, and it's a huge blind spot in most people's lives.

John also said they overcame the Dragon by "the word of their testimony". This entails much more than simply sharing their personal testimony of how God saved them. It's a reference to the *prophetic* message God gives them, to proclaim to a world that loves the Dragon and to a church that is following the False Prophet. It's not your basic salvation message. It's not the kind of testimony that tells people how much God loves them, and how much He wants them to belong to Him, and what a great plan He has for their lives. Rather, it's the kind of testimony we see coming from the Two Witnesses.

*And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and **they shall prophesy** a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. . . And when they shall have **finished their testimony**, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

Revelation 11:3 & 7

The word of their testimony will be something *prophetic*. John is not talking about giving your testimony of how you got save. He's talking about a declaration of truth that will expose the lies of the Beast and the False Prophet, and also the wickedness of men's hearts, which cause them to love these two enemies of God. That prophetic word will cut across the grain of everything being said by the leaders of the world and the leaders of the Harlot Church. It will be a word that both secular and religious people will hate so profoundly, they will rise up and kill the one who is giving the testimony—just as they will murder the Two Witnesses when they have finished speaking the word of *their* testimony.

The third way John said these people overcame the Dragon was by loving not their lives unto the death. I have no doubt this death is *both* spiritual and literal. It is spiritual in the sense that we are required to lay down our self life or our flesh life. But it will also be literal. People will *actually* be killed.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

If we want to overcome the power of the Dragon in these days, our lives must become a sacrifice—either a living sacrifice, as Paul spoke of in Romans, or a dead one. And let me say again right here that I believe it is imperative that we embrace the message of the Cross (death to self) in this hour because God has given Satan the authority to take his seat in any vessel who has “self” on the throne. All I have been trying to say is that it is just as important that we learn how to recognize and defeat the enemy, as well as how to dethrone self.

I feel sorry for the ones who think they don't need to worry about the enemy as long as they are dying to self or walking in the spirit. Not only is such a view unscriptural, it doesn't work in real life. Have you ever had an experience where you were reading the Scripture, and all of a sudden a thought comes into your mind which has nothing to do with your Bible study and you have a hard time stopping yourself from thinking about that thing? What do you suppose your condition was when that happened? Were you walking in the spirit; or where you in the flesh? Have you ever been meditating on the Word, or just meditating on the things of the Lord, and all of a sudden you realize that you are no longer meditating on the Lord or the Word, but that you have been meditating on something else for some time? What do you think your spiritual condition was at that time? Do you think you were walking in the spirit; or in the flesh? How many times have you been trying to do something in the Lord, and you find all kind of things happen to distract you and take your attention off of what you were doing.

Listen my friends, I don't care how spiritual or mature or holy you think you are; and I don't care how much you think you are “walking in the spirit”; God has given Satan the authority to shoot *thoughts* into our minds. We don't have to accept them; and we don't have to continue thinking on them; and we don't have to act on them. We have the power to reject them. But there is nothing you and I can do can prevent him from shooting them into our minds at times. God has giving us the authority to overcome them. But he has not given us the authority to stop Satan from doing that. We can be walking “in the spirit”—we can be singing and praising the Lord, or in deep prayer, or in the middle of a Bible study—and the enemy *still* has the ability to shoot thoughts into our minds in order to try and distract us. And if you are not aware of what is happening; if you don't understand it's the enemy doing that and not your flesh, you are going to be very confused.

Last week I mentioned the fact that when it comes to being kept from deception in this hour, the issue is not God's *ability* to protect us; the issue is God's *requirements* for protecting us. I said the question is not: "*Can God keep us?*" because He certainly can! The question is: "*Will God keep us?*"—and the answer depends on whether or not we meet the requirements He has laid out in the New Testament. I also said the reason so many *believers* are not being kept by God in this hour is because they are not doing their part—and the biggest reason they are not doing their part is because of the *many* doctrinal errors they have learned down through the years. These errors were specifically *designed* by seducing spirits to keep them from doing their part.

You all remember the account of Balak, the king of Moab, and Balaam? Israel had just defeated the Amorites and the Moabites were frightened. So the king of Moab called Balaam to "curse" Israel so the Moabites could defeat them in battle. At first Balaam didn't go because God told him not to. But his greed finally got the better of him and he went. But when he tried to speak against Israel, all he could do was bless them. He did this several times, until finally the king of Moab got so angry, Balaam was afraid he would be killed. That's when he came up with the idea to show Balak how to get the Israelites to *defeat themselves*. He told Balak to "send in the dancing girls", so to speak, because he knew that if the men of Israel went a whoring after them, and became involved with their gods, Israel's God would remove His protection from the nation and it could be defeated.

Now who do you think gave that kind of wisdom to Balaam? Do you think that kind of wisdom came from his "flesh"? I don't. I think it came from the spirit realm—and the same spirits that gave that greedy prophet the wisdom to know how to defeat God's *Old Testament Church*, are giving today's greedy prophets the wisdom to know how to defeat God's *New Testament Church*. It's the same exact trick—only it has been re-packaged in a 21st Century cultural context. Preachers and teachers fill the minds of God's people with doctrines (of demons) which cause them to *ignore* the requirements God has laid out in the Scripture in order for us to remain under His protection. The result is, multitudes of people who think they are being protected from the power of the enemy, are not being protected at all. They are completely deceived; yet they have no idea they are deceived. They walk around in a state of delusion, boasting about how safe they are because they are trusting in God's keeping power. This is such a *pathetic* situation, and you can be sure, Satan is laughing.

I also said last week that our enemy has many kinds of wiles and strategies that he uses to try and deceive us. He has a strategy for every kind of believer, and for every level of spiritual maturity. The more truth we acquire, or the more understanding we gain of God's will and purposes, or the more we mature in the Spirit, the more subtle and dangerous the enemies tactics become. This is a reality that the some people have not come to grips with yet. Most of us still think that the more mature you get in the spirit, the less of a threat Satan becomes. Well, I'm here to tell you that ain't true. I personally know mature men and women who have been deceived. Of course, that's just my own personal testimony. You don't have to accept it or agree with it if you don't want to.

I also said last week that the strategies Satan uses on those who are coming to spiritual maturity are not the same kind of tactics he uses on baby Christian, or on carnal Christians. They are much more subtle and deceptive. I think I've said this before, but I want to say it again because it's so important for our spiritual survival in the coming days—there is a big difference between darkness and counterfeit light. Darkness is not light; darkness it's the absence of light. Counterfeit light is not darkness. It's light—it's just not genuine light. Genuine light and counterfeit light can be compared to the light that comes from the Sun and the light that comes from a 60 watt light bulb. Both kinds of light are "light". But only one is genuine; only one comes from God (God created the Sun). The other light is man-made.

It's the same with spiritual light and spiritual darkness. Spiritual darkness is the absence of spiritual light. In the realm of doctrine and teaching, spiritual darkness is the absence of *truth*. It is false doctrine or false teaching. Counterfeit spiritual light is much different. Counterfeit light is light. Counterfeit light is truth. However, it's not *genuine* truth in so much that it's not coming from God. It's coming from another *source*. This is a concept that God's people are ignorant of. We are only accustomed to looking at things in black and white. We view what people say as either true (light) or false (darkness). We judge what ministers teach as either true (light) or false (darkness). We have not yet become skilled at discerning the difference between genuine light (truth from God) and counterfeit light (truth from another source).

I have been trying to warn people for a over year now in this chat room that some of the religious spirits we are facing in this hour can tell the *absolute* truth. They can minister *correct* doctrine. When a religious spirit speaks or ministers truth to us, we are no longer dealing with issues of light and darkness, or truth and untruth. We are dealing genuine light verses counterfeit light. In this kind of a situation, the yardstick so many of us have been using all our lives will fail us miserably. If your standard of discernment rests *solely* on whether or not something is "true"—and this includes being *Scripturally* true—I can assure you that you are headed for trouble. You will have no way of judging between genuine truth and counterfeit truth because they are *both* truth. Counterfeit truth is not falsehood or error. It is truth! But it's truth from the wrong source. That means, we must become skilled at discerning *the source* of a thing.

I don't know how to make it any clearer than to say that there are people *out here* who are having spiritual experiences, who are getting spiritual revelations, who are preaching and teachings things which are coming from the wrong source. But because we are so used to using only the yardstick of true and false, the fact that much of their doctrine is true, blinds us to the fact that *the source* of that true doctrine is *not* God. Once I realized what was happening with these religious spirits, I stopped judging things the same way I used to and I began asking God to reveal the source of the things I was hearing. When I did, I was even more shocked by what I discovered. So much of what we accept as coming from God, is actually coming from religious spirits.

I can't tell you how many times somebody has sent me an article that they thought was great, and that I would enjoy, but which had as it's *source* some other spirit. I mean, what are you supposed to do when someone sends you a teaching that is true, which has blessed them, but which you know came from a *polluted* source? Good grief, people hardly pay any attention to my warnings as it is, even though I am always careful to produce the evidence that a certain person is teaching false doctrine. How much *less* will anyone believe me if I try to tell them that a person who is teaching *correct* doctrine, is getting that correct doctrine from a religious spirit?

In one recent article I read, someone brother was decrying the fact that so many people in the churches are trying to live the Christian life in the flesh, and that's why they are failing. At one point this writer gives his view of why the Early Church had so much life and unity. He said: "...*the lives of the early Christians were supercharged with a joyous consciousness of the Presence of their living Lord. Because He was so real to them, all their thoughts and affections rested in Him*". Then he asks the reader:.

- ~ *Has this spiritual Presence of the living Lord become a reality to you?*
- ~ *Are you completely occupied with the indwelling life of Christ?*
- ~ *Are you truly satisfied in Him, or do you keep turning back to the natural world for your source of spiritual sustenance?*

Now there is nothing wrong with what this brother wrote. Everything he said in the article was true. The only problem is, his answer for all that is happening right now is simply that people are trying to serve God out of their flesh, and not through the spirit, which takes a crucified life. No doubt this is true for many people. But this cannot account for *all* the deception we see.

Sometimes I wonder if those who focus on the battle with the “flesh” have any real understanding of what’s happening right now. Trying to serve God in the flesh isn’t something that just started 20 years ago, you know. Serving God in the flesh has been the *main* problem in the Church System for hundreds of years! I’m not trying to belittle what this brother wrote because it’s certainly true. What he is talking about is a problem that needs to be addressed. But it’s certainly not the *main* problem we face. Paul didn’t say: “...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith because they will be living in the flesh or trying to serve God out of the flesh”. He said they would depart from the faith as a result of “*giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (I. Tim 4:1)*).

While it’s true, many are trying to serve God without going to the cross, there are just as many, if not more, who are caught up in something much more insidious than trying to serve God in the flesh. It’s time to wake up and smell the coffee people! I could point this brother to a half a dozen people that I know personally, and many more that I am very familiar with, who would answer “*Yes*” to his questions without hesitation—and every one of them is as deceived as you can possibly be.

We are not simply dealing with people who are doing Christianity in the flesh, or with people who feel good about themselves because they are religious. We are facing a situation where people are meeting, and establishing a very deep relationship with, a *living* person who they think is Jesus Christ! Multitudes are falling in love with another Jesus. They are serving this Jesus day and night. They eat, drink, and sleep this Jesus. They believe they have turned their backs on “the flesh” and “the world” in order to get *more* of this Jesus. Their life with Him is everything. They are as committed to him as anyone in this room is to the real Jesus. Their Jesus is just a *real* to them as the true Jesus is to you and me. Their Jesus talks to them; he leads and guides them; he empowers them; he provides for them; he does *all the things* for them that the real Jesus does for you and me.

This issue God’s people face in the last days goes so much deeper, and is so much more dangerous, than people failing to put the flesh to death. When I first started this chat room, a lady came into the room who had been out of the Church System for many years. She had also been alone for many years. During those years she had developed a very deep and strong relationship with a person she believed was Jesus Christ. I didn’t know who she was when she came into the room; but later I found out that she had been on my mailing list for some time. In the room that night, I was talking about the fear of the Lord, and how one of the reasons so many are being deceived right now is because they have no fear of God. Doctrines like Eternal Security have destroyed that fear. This woman got very upset because she felt she had been delivered from any fear of God long ago, and that no one should “fear” God. We should only love Him.

I was very gentle with her, but I did ask her a few questions that she could not answer; and apparently that made her even more angry at me. The next day, I got an very sarcastic email from her. She told me who she was and informed me that if I feared God, I didn’t know Him. She also said I had not yet entered the kingdom of God; that my writings were just head knowledge; and that she had thrown them all away.

Most people would look at that situation and conclude that this woman is a believer, but that she just needs to get some of her doctrine straight. But I believe it’s much more *serious* than that. She has developed a very deep

and strong relationship with a false Jesus over the years; and one of the things that Jesus has done is take away any fear of God from her life. She not only has no fear of God; she has no fear of being tricked or deceived. In her email, she made it clear that she is living such a victorious life, she doesn't worry about Satan at all.

Aside from the bitter attitude she displayed in that email, no one would ever suspect that anything was wrong with her. She talked a great talk; and you could tell by what she said about her relationship with this Jesus that she was *totally* committed to him. She had no love of the world in her heart because he was everything to her. The only problem is, it's the *wrong* Jesus—and all the preaching in the world about putting the “flesh life” to death, or about not “loving the world”, or about putting God's will first in her life, won't ever help this woman because living in the flesh and loving the world and not being able to choose the will of her God over her own will isn't the problem. The problem is, she's got the wrong Jesus!

One of the strategies Satan uses on people who are pressing on towards perfection, is to offer them the very thing they know God wants to bring them into, before the God-appointed time, or without paying the God-appointed price. This is one of the most difficult tactics to deal with because I and others like me, preach that it is possible to “go onto perfection” (*Heb. 6:1*). We preach that Jesus is coming back for a church that is “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (*Eph. 5:27*). Now what do you do when you run across someone who claims to have reached that point? What do you do when you run across someone who claims to love God so deeply, or to be living such a victorious life in the spirit, they simply do not have any desire to sin anymore? What do you do when you run across someone who claims they have gone so far in God, they will no longer sin?

The first time I ran across this tactic was in the mid-1980's, when an old family friend and his wife came to visit us, after many years of being out of fellowship. As we discussed the things of the Lord that evening, he informed us that God had “circumcised his heart”. I didn't know what he meant, so I asked for some clarification. He explained what had happened to him in the context of killing a deer during hunting season. He said the when you gut a deer, you can see a very thin layer of film around its heart. You can actually take that layer of whatever it is, and separate it completely from the heart. He then told me that this is what God had done to him. He said that we all have a spiritual film around our hearts which represents the “flesh nature” or the sin nature, and that God had cut that nature completely off his heart. Therefore, he was convinced that he would never sin again because he could no longer sin, not having a flesh nature.

Well, I started asking him questions that he didn't like. I also started bringing up passages of Scripture that flatly contradicted what he had just said. After a while he started losing his cool. He was sitting on our couch and there was a glass table in front of the couch. I got him so frustrated, he went to bang his fist on the table, but he caught himself in time and only tapped it with his hand. I said: “*Oops; I think I just saw the old man there, brother!*” Soon after that I let the subject drop because I knew it was pointless to keep talking about it. Even if he would have totally lost it and punched me in the face, he would still have walked away believing his flesh had been circumcised—that's how strong the deception was.

Some years later, while I was living in Alaska, the same basic thing happened again. A brother I had met at Art Katz's community a few years prior, had met some guy from Canada. He and his wife and six kids moved in with this guy. Both of them had left the church system. The brother who I knew, called me one day and asked me if I would come out to their house and have some meetings with them. I prayed about it and eventually felt the Lord released me to go. Four of us went. We drove all the way to the East Coast of Canada, from Alaska, which took about 6 days.

I called these guys several times while on the way out there, and each time I did, I got more uneasy about the whole thing. The brother I knew, told me the guy he was living with had a really intense spiritual experience that they would tell me about when I got there. Well, we arrived in the town and they met us at the local gas station, then we followed them back to their house. From the time we walked into the house, this other guy that I didn't even know told me his whole story about how he came to the Lord, and what they intended to do with the house there. Finally he got to this religious experience he had while shaving in the bathroom. As soon as he started telling the story, I knew where he was headed. When it came time for the big punch-line, he said: "And do you know what God showed me this experience was"? His mouth dropped open when I said rather casually: "*Sure, I know what happened. God circumcised your heart*". Then I said, "*And now you can no longer sin, right?*" He was a little irritated that I stole his thunder, but he went right on explaining the experience again.

I had a brother with me who was pretty sharp in the spirit, and together, we had a bit of fun, tag-teaming this guy into a theological corner. We got him to admit that, according to his own doctrine, the next time he sinned, he will not be able to be forgiven and would certainly go to Hell. We did this to expose this guy's delusion to the brother who was living with him, who had invited us there to begin with. The story gets even more bizarre, but I'll spare you. The point is that this guy had a very *real* religious experience. He said he actually felt like somebody was cutting his heart out. After it was all over, the voice he had been following told him that he had just had his heart circumcised and that he would no longer sin.

Those of us who have to fight guilt and condemnation on a regular basis because we are very aware of our shortcomings and problems, will find it difficult to believe that people can get so deluded as to think that they can no longer sin. But I assure you, they do.

The message I am trying to get across tonight is this. If you want to be part of the manchild, then understand that one of the main requirements to be part of that group is that you *completely* overcome the power of the Dragon in these days. Now, most of his power is in the realm of deception, and he can easily utilize *truth* as a avenue of deception. So I am asking you all to go to God, tonight, and ask Him not just for more discernment in general, but more specifically, for the kind of discernment that can detect the **SOURCE** of the things you hear, or read, and especially experience. Many people are being deceived *by truth* that's coming from religious spirits in these days. Many are being deceived by experiences that are not coming from God.

In closing I would like to say a little something about the way I move, because I know more and more people are getting offended at what I am saying, and the people I am exposing. I am gaining a reputation for being a nit-picker and someone who spits doctrinal hairs.

The sister I was talking about the last two weeks has a web site. I went to that to read some of what she had to say. I was not looking for trouble; I was looking for edification. The first few articles I read were right on, doctrinally speaking. But even so, I felt very funny or uneasy after I was done reading them. She also had a book that she had written, and I read through some of that. Again, everything I read was very good. But still, that very uneasy feeling would not go away. After a while I realized I was feeling the presence of *another* spirit.

Finally I started reading the articles where she was saying we do not need to ask for forgiveness. Then, I read almost everything she wrote, in order to get an overall feel of what she is teaching. When I did, other things that were wrong became clear as well. The error I saw simply confirmed what I had already been shown by the Lord. Another spirit was writing these things.

The point is, I don't judge whether or not a person is involved with spirits by what kind of doctrine they hold. There are people who disagree with some of my views, and I don't assume they disagree with me because they are under the influence of another spirit. This isn't a *doctrinal* thing. The Spirit of God was *checking* me about this sister long before I ever realized she had any error in her teaching. Even if I would have found *no* error, even if every single thing she wrote was true, I would *still* be convinced that she is walking under the influence of another spirit because of what I felt when reading her material.

All I am trying to do is warn God's people that we are in a time where that the measuring line of truth and error is no longer good enough. We can and should still use that kind of a measuring line because there is still plenty of error and false doctrine being spread around. But we **ALSO** have to start **DISCERNING THE SOURCE** of a teaching or an experience. When you do, you will be surprised at how many things you assumed were coming from the Holy Spirit, are actually coming from religious spirits.