

The BELIEVER & SPIRITUAL EVIL.

(Satan, Demons, Curses, Spiritual Warfare etc.)

And the Relative Importance of

its MORAL / RATIONAL

&

its SUPERNATURAL / MAGICAL Elements

As seen in Scripture.

What follows isn't simple, easy or effortless reading, but a framework to help those who want to find a FULL answer from God's Word. The SIMPLE answer is "Walk with the Lord in love, Jn 15:7-12 and no evil can harm you."

E. Read.

That we need to see what God has to say on this subject is obvious when the Editor of "LEADERSHIP" magazine started the Summer 1991 issue by stating that when scores of Pastors were asked "What interests you about the Supernatural?" most turned immediately to "Spiritual Warfare, Demonic influences, and Exorcism." Only later would they add "There's a lot more to the Supernatural than Demons, After all conversion, forgiveness, and changed lives are supernatural too."

night-clubs, having churchless week-ends, marriage break-ups, etc. They're snuggling up to the WORLD, and don't want to hear anything that might spoil the cosy relationship.

Such goddess living is unsatisfying, and becomes spiritually depressing, but they don't want to know that they are reaping what they are sowing. So preachers concentrate on blaming the unhappiness on the DEVIL, demons, curses etc as that idea leaves Christians comfortable in the world and in themselves. When a popular preacher is caught out in adultery, his admirers excuse it by saying that Satan trapped him because he was such a wonderfully spiritually gifted man!

To test the rightness of this new emphasis on the Satanic, and Demonic, and the correctness of current teachings, we need to examine ALL THE SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK OF THESE SUBJECTS so that with the help of God the Holy Spirit we may discover the NATURE of the Supernatural Opposition, and the ACTIONS we need to take to nullify and defeat these.

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- A SUPERNATURAL/MAGICAL one, in which INVISIBLE Cause and Effect operate, in ways beyond our rational understanding. God acts in SUPERNATURAL ways of Righteousness and Grace, for the good of mankind. All that He does is SUPER-RATIONAL, and SUPER-MORAL, as well as Supernatural.

As "God of this World" Satan confuses the situation with a fog of real SUPERNATURAL deceitful and destructive actions, mixed up with equally dangerous false claims of imaginary MAGICAL influences and actions. He does this among both primitive heathen tribes, and sophisticated, Western New-Age addicts.

As "Angel of Light," Satan introduces these same ideas and happenings into the professing Christian Church to compete with, and discredit, the work of God the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor 11. As a result, in the world at large, and within the Church, the credulous see themselves as surrounded by Supernatural happenings. The sceptical look for, and seem to find rational explanations of the same happenings. This adds to the fog of confusion, as it isn't easy to distinguish between the TRUE SUPERNATURAL, and the illusory magical.

We must beware of the basic Satanic, fallen-human-nature approach which starts with "I, Me, My," - what I've experienced, what I think, what I feel, what my spiritual leader teaches, our church believes and practices. This attitude is satisfied with quoting a verse or incident from Scripture which may SEE M to support it.

It's important that we FIRST clarify the meaning of what God's Word has to say, and interpret human experience in the light of that. It's dangerous to START with human experience and testimony, and then to look at Scripture to see if we can find something there that looks as if it might be similar. We must discipline ourselves to sit at the Lord's feet, listen to what He says, seek to understand it in its given setting, and with due humility set out to live by what we learn. We must demand of every teaching and practice that it submit to HIS Lordship, the Lordship of His revealed will, 2 Cor 10:3-5.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES
(Kinds of actions we must take)

In accordance with the nature of His Universe (Visible/Moral/Rational, & Invisible/Supernatural/Magical.) there are TWO kinds of actions which God has commanded His people to take against SUPERNATURAL EVIL.

- MORAL/RATIONAL/RESPONSIBILITIES - (Indicated in this booklet by the code-mark (MRR) ->) These are things that we know how to do, and can see are right to do. Often we can see why they work. The Bible gives us statements of fact about God/His will, and about man/his life as it is, and ought to be. They inform our MIND, appeal to our HEART, and challenge our WILL to choose, because it's in OUR OWN POWER TO RESPOND, and it's our major responsibility to do so.
- SUPERNATURAL/MAGICAL actions - (Indicated in this booklet by the code-mark (Sp) ->) The exercise of God-given power, Ritual etc. To the godless these appear to be "Magic." Like Simon of Samaria, Acts 8:18-24, they'd gladly buy it. Such actions are so rare in Scripture that they'll be written in italics for easy identification.

This division isn't between "Natural," and "Supernatural." BOTH responses are SUPERNATURAL in the sense that only the presence and power of God make them possible. Rational Godly living is "NATURAL" to no-one. It's possible only as we Christians place ourselves, and every situation, into God's hands in prayer. Then in humble obedience to the Word of God, illumined and empowered by God the Holy Spirit, set out to be and do what we know to be His will, Rom 8:1-16.

- The Bible also records GOD'S SOVEREIGN actions - (Indicated in this booklet by the code-mark (GS) ->) These record the sovereign, direct intervention of God in the situation.

(Any attempt to show which Scriptures belong to each of these categories can never be completely accurate. A single verse may

Serpent, Dragon, Accuser, Prince/ God of this world, etc, plus a few cases where their Hebrew or Greek equivalent is used in a way possibly linked to him. (Daimon- "DEVIL" in KJV, is listed under "DEMONS.")

Sometimes it may be his AGENTS acting on his behalf - there's no suggestion in Scripture that Satan is able to be in more than one place at a time. But as the SOURCE of their action, he's credited with it, as Joseph, Gen 39:22, was credited with all done in his prison.

Everything done by Satan's agents - angelic or human - or done by the "World" that he has set up, are in a sense "SATANIC interventions," but as God in Scripture has chosen not to call them such, we will not. While some Christians are quick to see any adverse situation as the work of SATAN and his AGENTS, we should keep our eyes on God. How different it would have been if Job had said "God gave, Satan took away," Job 1:21. Or if Joseph hadn't looked beyond the actions of his brothers, to God's action and purpose in what they had wickedly done, Gen 45:3-5. Or, in Acts 2:23 if what wicked hands had done to the Lord Jesus had not been seen to have been God's will. In each case, Godly Men in their suffering were encouraged in their godliness by keeping their eyes on the Lord. We too will be able to give thanks to God, no matter what Evil may cause us to suffer, 1 Th 5:18; Col 3:17, only as we fix our eyes upon Jesus, Heb 12:1-3.

What SATAN has done, or INFORMATION ABOUT SATAN, is given in 197 verses. This information makes dear the utter helplessness of mankind against Satan's Cunning, and his all-pervasive influence and power in this world. Equally it makes clear that Satan and his allies were utterly defeated by Christ's death on the cross, Col 2:13-15. And, that while for God's purposes his rebel stewardship over this world is allowed to continue, Satan has no power over Believers except to the extent that they choose to function in his territory - the World, and the Flesh.

(MRR) -> Is used to mark MORAL/RATIONAL/RESPONSIBILITIES - The ACTIONS God's people should take in response to Satan's interventions. These are given in 165 verses. They

- Being watchful, and thankful.

So, the Bible teaches that our part in countering Satan's working is almost entirely a matter of responding - with hearts, minds and wills - in obedient love to our Lord, and His revealed will. That is MORAL RATIONAL ACTION on our part. As seen in Naaman, 2 Ki 5:11, our fallen human natures want prompt action and a visible exercise of power by God, or God-gifted men, to counter Satan's efforts. But in God's Word there's no suggestion that any Believer is to go to any other Believer for help against Supernatural evil - except to ask others to pray for us, and for instruction in God's Word and promises, and encouragement to trust and obey Him, 2 Cor 1:11; Col 4:2-4; 1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1-2; Heb 13:18-19, etc. Every child of God has the right of direct access to the Father, and is urged to come directly to the Throne of grace for mercy and help in time of need, Heb 4:14-16. Our great need is the Fruits of the Spirit in our own lives, rather than the Gifts of the Spirit in the lives of others.

(Sp) - > - Is used to mark SUPERNATURAL MAGICAL ACTIONS required of God's people. These are given in 16 verses. Nine of these concern the offering of a sacrifice in the OT. The equivalent action on our part is to claim forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Christ, 1 Jn 1:7-9. Four deal with the Apostles Peter and Paul proclaiming God's Judgment on Satan's human agents, and Three with the Apostle Paul delivering such people to Satan's sphere of action by expelling them from the fellowship of the Church. There is no record of others, apart from these Apostles, taking such actions, and nowhere are we told to copy Peter and Paul in this.

(GS) - > Is used to mark GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTIONS. These are given in 250 verses. These assure us that our willing obedience, placing ourselves in His hands, guarantees we can carry out His purposes. It also guarantees our safety and blessing.

(In addition to these, 4 verses deal with USE MADE OF SATAN.)

** NOTE ** The TOTAL number of verses - about 629- is about 1% of the Bible. This would suggest that we should spend a similar amount of our time thinking or preaching about

solves all our problems, and utterly frustrates Satan. God PERMITS temptation, so that we have the opportunity to OBEY/ Stand with Him at that point/on that matter, and so enjoy His fellowship. To OBEY is better than to Sacrifice, 1 Sam 15:22 Christ Jesus our Lord needs to be the centre of all our thinking - NOT, Satan, or our Circumstances and Feelings.

HOW CAN WE FOCUS on Christ? We need to bend Scripture promises and statements into all our prayers, otherwise our "praying" becomes merely an endless re-stating of OUR OWN hopes and fears. Bringing God into our ambitions and worrying, without trusting and obeying Him, is a foolish attempt at trying to "Sanctify" the sin of worrying by calling it Prayer.

While Satan has set up the world to tempt us, and programmed our Flesh/Sinful Nature to demand its "RIGHTS," (Equals our RIGHT to sin!) God says that we're to take full responsibility to deal with temptation morally and rationally, Jas 1:14-16; 1 Cor 10:13; Jude 20-21.

THE ABOVE FINDINGS ARE A SUMMARY OF ALL THE SCRIPTURES WHICH RECORD SATANIC INTERVENTION. All these Scriptures are listed below along with any MORAL/RATIONAL actions- (MRR) -> or SUPERNATURAL/MAGICAL actions - (Sp) -> men were REQUIRED to make. Also listed are GOD'S SOVEREIGN actions - (GS) ->.

Gen 3:1-7. Temptation to doubt, and disobey God. (MRR) -> Obey God's command, Gen 2:17. (GS) -> Gen 3:8-19, 21-24 God deals with the situation.

(?) 1 Chr 21:1-2. Temptation. As 2 Sam 24:1 says the LORD was responsible for this test, the word "Satan" here may refer to a HUMAN adversary - Satan, such as the Lord stirred up against Solomon, 1 Ki 11:14, 23 Or, the Lord used Satan His (rebel) servant.) (MRR) -> Before- David should have avoided pride, by listening to Joab, 21:3, or by obeying God's Law, Ex 30:11-16. Afterwards- He needed to Repent/commit it to the Lord, 21:8, 13, 17. (GS) -> God acts in discipline, 21:9-12, 14-16, 18-19, 27-28 To OBEY is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam 15:22 Putting things right with God, may cost US

Zech 3:1 Satan brought accusing opposition to Joshua the High Priest before God. (MRR) -> 3:5 Intercession by the Godly man given the insight to see what was happening. This patterns our privilege as priests to share in intercession with our Great High Priest in what the Lord is doing in sovereign grace, 1 Jn 5:16. Zech 3:6-10 God assured Joshua of secure blessings if he walked in God's ways. Obedience protects us from anything Satan can do to harm us. (GS) -> 3:2-4 God provided Joshua with clean clothes.

NEW TESTAMENT

In the Gospels, many verses concern the LORD HIMSELF directly, and us only indirectly in that they present an example to us of the Godly human life.

Mt 4:3, 5-6, 8-9; Mk 1:13; Lk 4:2-3, 5-7, 9-11. The Temptation of the Lord. (MRR) -> Mt 4:4, 7, 10; Lk 4:4, 8, 12. We're to KNOW God's will as revealed in Scripture, and to choose to obey it. The DESIRE TO DO God's will is vital. To take the initiative and claim Bible promises out of fellowship with God is FORBIDDEN "TEMPTING GOD" at Satan's prompting, Mt 4:5-7; Lk 4:9-12. (GS) -> Mt 4:1, 11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1. The Temptation was in God's Sovereign plan. And temptation may be so with us, Rom 5:1-11; 1 Cor 10:9-14; Jas 1:2-12; 1 Pet 1:3-7; Rev 2:10. Temptation IS scary, but as with facing the bowler at Cricket, or the pitcher at Baseball/Softball, it's our only chance to score for our side/our Captain!

Mt 9:34; 10:25; 12:24-35; Mk 3:22-30; Lk 11:15-23 The false accusation that the Lord was using Satanic power. No responses human or Divine are given, but three important points are made:-

Being freed from demon possession, by any means, is in itself no protection for the future. We need a STRONGER power, one to indwell us 1 Jn 4:4. When God comes into our lives, as He does at conversion, His Almighty Indwelling Power stops any Satanic power entering us.

God can come into lives only by His Holy Spirit, who witnesses to men and convicts them in regard to their SIN, the RIGHTEOUSNESS displayed in Christ, and offered in the Gospel, and the JUDGMENT which men must face in the future, Jn 16:8.

Mt 13:24-28 38-39 Satan sows evil doctrine in the church. (MRR) -> 13:29-30 It's impossible to root out of the church the "look-like Christians" who result. We're to leave them to the Lord of the Harvest. (GS) -> Mt 13:30 40-42 The Lord will order them to be harvested and burned.

Mt 16:18. Satan's opposition to Christ's building His Church. The Person of Christ, and His work on the Cross, as proclaimed by the Apostles and Prophets, and recorded in Scripture, Eph 2:20-22, is the foundation on which His Church is built, Acts 2:22-42, 1 Cor 2:1-2; 3:9-11. The important men of a city sat in council at its main gate, made plans, gave judgment, etc, Gen 19:1; 23:18, onwards. The combined cunning and power of Satan and his allies can never prevail against the Church Christ builds. Satan uses violence, as a ROARING LION, 1 Pet 5:8; and cunning, as an ANGEL OF LIGHT, 2 Cor 11:13-15. (MRR) -> Mt 16:24-28 We're to live and build on the basis of the Cross, with our eyes on the coming Glory. All that is built on the basis of the world and the flesh, is built in Satan's sphere, and is at his mercy. Even though it may seem successful, it will prove to be "Wood, Hay, and Stubble," when tested, 1 Cor 3:10-15.

Mt 16:22-23 Mk 8:32-33 Temptation of/ through Peter. Receiving spiritual revelations doesn't protect us from Satanic deceptions, based on what we think should result from Scripture. Eg As Satan prompted Peter's "You are the SON of GOD- therefore you must not be allowed to suffer," so today Satan prompts those who say "I'm a child of God, so He MUST heal me. He won't let me suffer if He loves me." (MRR) -> Mt 16:24-28 Mk 8:34-38 Our Lord says that suffering and rejection are God's will for His own in this rebel world. We must leave it to Him to choose what is best for us and hold to the truth we know. With Christ we triumph through the Cross.

Lk 10:18; Jn 12:27-33 16:11. The Disciples' ability to cast out Demons, and the Father's approval of the Son, voiced from Heaven, demonstrated to them that Satan was a defeated foe. The Cross is the basis of his total defeat, Col 2:15. (MRR) -> Lk 10:20 We're to be thankful for Saving Grace, NOT pre-occupied with the power we've received. (GS) -> Lk 10:19. The Lord gave them the power to obey His Commission given earlier in the chapter.

Lk 22:3-6; Jn 13:27. Judas was tempted to betray Jesus, and chose to. Jn 6:70. Judas was "a devil." (MRR) -> Jn 13:27. Judas should have chosen to renounce Satan in response to the Lord's love shown in giving him the piece of His own bread. (GS) -> Mt 26:21-25; Mk 14:18-21; Lk 22:21-22; Jn 13:18-26. A general warning to the disciples, and a specific loving appeal to Judas to choose.

Jn 14:30-31. Satan had no hold on the LORD JESUS as He was sinless, but the Lord Jesus showed His love for the Father, and for us sinners, by voluntarily surrendering to Satan's realm of death and sin - as the Holy One being made sin for us, 2 Cor 5:21.

Acts 5:1-4. Satan tempted Ananias and Sapphira. It doesn't SAY that they were Believers, but they were at least pretending to be. Sadly it isn't unusual for selfishness to motivate us. When that happens we're in tune with Satan. They lied to the Holy Spirit present in the church under whose guidance the money to help the poor was being collected. (MRR) -> Acts 5:11. We should fear the sin of deceit. (Sp) -> Acts 5:3, 9. Peter saw through their deception, and in the case of Sapphira, what God would do about it. (GS) -> Acts 5:5, 10. God took the lives of Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 10:38. The Lord Jesus when on earth healed all who were OPPRESSED/under the power of - Katadunasteuo **1 of the Devil. The OPPRESSION was visible and objective - sickness, demon possession, hunger. The DELIVERANCE as recorded in the Gospels was a visible reversal of Satan's oppression and power over people.

Acts 13:6, 8-10. Elymas was Satan's Child/mouthpiece, deceiving people and opposing the Gospel. (MRR) -> Acts 13:12. We're to Believe in Christ. (Sp) -> Acts 13:10-11. Paul announced God's judgment - Physical blindness (at least temporary) mirroring his spiritual blindness.

(Sp) -> 1 Cor 5:3, 5. Paul handed over to Satan a man whose sexual immorality was a public scandal. The Church was to join him in this. (MRR) -> 1 Cor 5:4, 11-13. The Church is to put this into effect by expelling him from Christian fellowship. He can no longer abuse its privileges of love and support. His behaviour belongs in Satan's sphere. The shock of hurt pride at being expelled, and the predatory friendship of the world, may bring repentance and spiritual benefit. (It did, if it's the same person in 2 Cor 2:7-11.)

- 1 Cor 7:5. Temptation to marital infidelity. Satan has programmed the Flesh, and the World, to make sexual temptations strong and they affect almost everybody at times. (MRR) -> 1 Cor 7:5. We're to marry and enjoy the marital relationship so as to avoid temptation to alternatives.
- 2 Cor 2:11. Temptation to despair for the excluded sinning saint, and self-righteous rejection of his repentance by the excluders, is one of Satan's devices. (MRR) -> 2 Cor 2:7-10. The now repentant Believer (who had been expelled, 1 Cor 5:5) is to be welcomed back into ungrudging fellowship, so that he will not despair of restoration. This should also save those who had rightly condemned him from their own temptation to pride and self-righteousness.
- 2 Cor 4:4. Satan, as God of this world, blinds men's eyes. (MRR) -> 2 Cor 3:18- 4:2, 5, 8-18. We're to concentrate our attention on CHRIST, and let Him transform us. As we BEHOLD Him we also REFLECT Him, making HIM visible to even those blinded by Satan. We're to concentrate on preaching HIM, because if they will only turn to HIM the veil/ their blindness will disappear. We're to live and preach Christ. (GS) -> 2 Cor 3:16-18; 4:6. When we turn to the Lord, God removes the veil so that we can see the truth, and His spirit transforms us. He shines into our hearts.
- 2 Cor 11:3-4, 13-15. Satan uses False/Deceitful Spiritual leaders to offer the church his seemingly higher/ more spiritual alternatives to the Gospel. This exposes the Church/Bride of Christ to such temptation as Eve experienced. (MRR) -> Acts 20:18-31. God's servants must teach the whole revealed will of God, and so live sacrificially as to commend it. Hearers must be watchful, on guard, honouring those who brought them the Gospel, and refusing the imposing claims/ attractive alternatives offered.
- 2 Cor 12:7. Paul, Saint/Servant of God, is preserved in humble fruitfulness because the terrible suffering, Satanically provided, balances the sense of exaltation associated with Heavenly revelations made to him. (MRR) -> 12:8-10. Prayer and "delighting in" this situation kept Paul/ will keep us from pride. (GS) -> 12:9. God promised Paul/promises us sufficient grace to triumph.

has given us. We're to Pray, and humbly stay close to God, cleansed from sin in heart and life. We're to trust and obey Him, and maintain loving fellowship with our fellow believers.

(A good rule in warfare is "Close ranks around the flag." We're in enemy territory and certainly can't afford to fight among ourselves!)

1 Th 2:18. Satan hindered contact between Paul and those converted at Thessalonica. (MRR) -> 1 Th 1:2-3; 3:2-3, 5. Paul prayed. He sent Timothy, and 2 letters that he had written to them, and they read them. This brought blessing to them, and blesses us right down to today as we read what Paul wrote. God has over-ruled Satan's action for our good.

2 Th 2:3-10. The working of Satan in this world, Eph 2:2, will come to a head in the future coming of "Antichrist" with counterfeit miracles, signs, wonders. (MRR) -> 2 Th 2:10. We're to love the truth. (GS) -> 2 Th 2:11. God co-operates with Satan by sending a delusion to punish those who have refused to love/accept the truth of the Gospel when they heard it.

(Sp) -> 1 Tim 1:20 Paul hands over to Satan two blasphemers who have abandoned the faith. (MRR) -> 1 Tim 2:19. We're to hold the faith with a good conscience so as to avoid such sins and punishment. (Presumably the Church is to support Paul's action as in 1 Cor 5.)

1 Tim 3:6-7. Satan is linked with the snares of PRIDE, and SCANDAL which tempt us. (MRR) -> 3:6-7. We're not to expose people to the first snare by making them prominent too rapidly, or to the second by not ensuring the man has a good testimony before giving him prominence/responsibility.

1 Tim 5:15. Younger widows are exposed to temptation to be idle, gossips, and presumably morally. 1 Tim 5:11-14. We're not to put them on our support list. Instead we're to encourage them to re-marry.

2 Tim 2:26 Eph 2:2. Satan has ensnared the minds of those holding and teaching error. (Whether within the Church or not, and whether the matters are big or small.) Satan controls sinners. (MRR) -> 2 Tim 2:22-25 We're to be Christ-like in our attitude when reasoning with such.

2 Tim 3:3; Titus 2:3. False Accusers (Diabolos = Satans) are doing the Devil's work for him. In Timothy the false accusers are Religious

Heb 2:14. Satan has enslaved mankind by sin, and death. (GS) -> Heb 2:14-17. The Lord shared humanity to deliver us.

1 Jn 3:8, 10. Continuing sinning, especially hating, marks out those who are Satan's children, not those born of God. (MRR) -> 1 Jn 3:11-20 We're to live in unselfish love towards our fellow-Christians.

1 Jn 5:18-19. While the whole world lies in Satan's power, those born of God are under God's keeping power. (MRR) -> 1 Jn 5:20-21. We're to live in the knowledge of our union with God, and let nothing become a rival to Him in our thinking and loving.

Jude 9. Michael disputing with the Devil. (MRR) -> Jude 8-10. We're not to speak rashly or abusively of Satan, or allied spiritual powers. To do so is the mark of the ignorant, and rebellious. God gave Satan etc their position and authority, and it is for Him to deal with them.

Rev 2:9-10, 13; 3:9. Slander and persecution through Christ-rejecting Jews. Satan's presence and power locally is mentioned. (MRR) -> Rev 2:10, 13; 3:8, 10. We're to trust and obey the Lord, and take any suffering patiently. (GS) -> Rev 2:10. God may take no action to defend us in this life, but our future reward, the crown of life, is assured.

Rev 2:20 24. Satan's agents introduce false doctrine. (MRR) -> Rev 2:25 We're to hold fast to the truth. (GS) -> Rev 2:21-23 God will punish those who persist in evil.

Rev 12:3-4, 9-10, 12-13, 15-17. Satan's opposition to the birth of Christ, and his persecution of the Jewish race, has been obvious down through the centuries. Rev 12:11. (MRR) -> Reliance on/ faithful witness to Christ's atoning death provides the only victory over Satan's attacks, for Christians now, and for Jewish witnesses in the Tribulation. (GS) -> Rev 12:5-10, 14, 16. Christ was preserved. Satan and fellow rebel angels cast out of Heaven. Satan's efforts were frustrated. **2

Rev 12:17; 13:2-4, 11. (Nestle Text/NIV,) Satan/Dragon involved in the appearance of the BEAST, and his mouthpiece. Nothing is said of any action being required.

Rev 16:13-14, 16. Evil spirits are sent out to deceive the nations and gather them to Armageddon. (MRR) -> Rev 16:15. God's people are to be watchful. (GS) -> Rev 16:15, 17-21; 20:1-3. God preserves His people and destroys His enemies. Satan is bound.

Rev 20:7-9. Satan again deceives the Nations and gathers them against God's people. (GS) -> Rev 20:10. God casts Satan into the Lake of Fire.

INFORMATION ABOUT SATAN

(This may not concern God's people directly, but as with all Scripture, it's given to help us live for God, 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:16-17.)

(?) Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17. These verses seem to look beyond the fall of the Rulers of Babylon, and Tyre, to the fall of their Master, Satan.

Mt 25:41; Jn 8:44. Eternal fire is prepared for the Devil and his angels. Men who choose to follow the Devil here, will follow him there. Their present behaviour shows their parentage. (MRR) -> Mt 25:34-40, 42-46; Jn 6:70-71; 8:31-43, 46. Those who wish to please God must treat others in a Christ-like manner. Unless men receive Christ and His teaching they are Satan's sons, and their behaviour shows it. Christ-like living requires the freedom that He alone can give. (Mt 25 refers specifically to the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom, but the principles apply in a measure today.)

(GS) -> Acts 26:17-18. God's SOVEREIGN action. Paul was to preach so that Gentiles might be turned from power of Satan to God. No response mentioned, though his prayerful obedience was obviously needed.

(?) Rom 11:29. Although Satan is not directly in view here, the general statement that God does not take back His GIFTS and CALLINGS

DEMONS

(A SUMMARY of what God in His Word says about Demons/Evil Spirits and their activities. This includes ALL Bible verses where they are mentioned.)

DEMONIC INTERVENTION & INFORMATION ABOUT DEMONS is given in 92verses.

(MRR) - > MORAL/RATIONAL/RESPONSIBILITIES - The ACTIONS required of God's people in response to demonic activity is given in 112verses, almost half of them being in connection with the exercise of Spiritual Gifts.

(Sp) - > SUPERNATURAL/MAGICAL actions required of God's people are given in 15 verses. Mostly these are the casting out of demons.

(GS) -> GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTION in these situations is given in 49verses.

(In addition to the above (GOD'S USE OF DEMONS is given in 24 verses, all in the OT. A further 52 verses give BACKGROUND information.)

The TOTAL number of verses involved is about 354 This suggests we should spend even less time thinking or preaching about Demons, and what to do about them, than we do with regard to Satan.

Countering Demonic powers follows the same pattern as for countering Satanic intervention. Our general responsibility is Moral/Rational - to walk in intelligent, informed obedience to Scripture, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Demonic Oppression doesn't exist in the Bible, except possibly in 1 Sam 16:14-23, where it is the Lord Himself who sends it, and music cures it!

> Lev 17:8-9. They must offer sacrifices only to God, at the Tabernacle.

Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deu 18:11. Spiritism- Ob, is defiling. (MRR) - > Lev 20:27. They were to stone the offender.

Deu 32:17. Israel turned from the LORD, to worship idols and sacrifice to Shed/Demons. (MRR) -> Repentance was required. (GS) -> God acts in Chastening and ultimate restoration of the offender - these verses aren't counted as demonic activity as the demonic element was merely associated with the major sin of idolatry.

2 Chr 11:15. Jeroboam set up high places and priests for Sair/Demons. (MRR) -> 2 Chr 11:16. God's people should sacrifice only at Jerusalem.

Dan 10:13, 20 The Angelic/Demonic "Prince" of Persia resisted/delayed the angelic messenger until the Archangel Michael came to help him get through to Daniel. A separate Angelic/Demonic "Prince" of Greece, was about to appear. (These may be included under the name "Principalities" in the NT - Rom 8:38 Eph 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; Titus 3:1.) (MRR) -> Dan 10:2-3. Patient prayer and fasting that God's will may be done (GS) -> Dan 10:13, 21. Michael sent to assist the messenger angel.

GOD MAKING USE OF DEMONIC ACTIVITY

(?) Judges 9:23-24. God sent an EVIL SPIRIT- Ra Ruach, between Abimelech and the men of Shechem to punish their murder of Gideon's sons. [This could equally mean human bad feeling.] No required responses mentioned.

1 Sam 16:14-16, 23; 18:10-11; 19:9-10. God sent an EVIL SPIRIT- Ra Ruach, to plague Saul, and make him uncomfortable and inefficient in his backslidden state. [Again the words could equally mean a depressed and irrational state of mind brought on by a guilty conscience in relation to God.] REQUIRED RESPONSES - None given. [He should have turned to the Lord in repentance, and perhaps

HUMAN USE OF DEMONIC ACTIVITY

- 1 Sam 28:7-20; 1 Chr 10:13. Saul and the WITCH- Ob of Endor. It seemed to work, whether by the witch's art, or God's intervention. It changed nothing except to unfit Saul for battle. Saul had already forfeited any right to expect help from God, but showed little inclination to seek it. (MRR) -> 1 Sam 28:3. Put away all witches/ don't consult them.
- 2 Ki 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6. Manasseh encouraged those with FAMILIAR SPIRITS/Mediums- Ob. (MRR) -> 2 Ki 23:24. Josiah removed them, in obedience to the Law of God, Lev 19:26
- Ps 106:37. Children burnt in sacrifice to idols were said to be offered to Shed/ Demons. No response or Sovereign intervention given except general judgment on idolatry.
- Isa 8:19; 19:3. Israel and Egypt seeking Spiritist guidance, in vain. (Plus (?) Isa 29:4, Whispering like a spiritist.) (MRR) -> Isa 8:19-20 Israel should seek guidance from God's Law. Seeking to know God's will revealed in Scripture is a constant need in all ages, for all His people.
- (GS) -> Zech 13:2. God Himself will remove UNCLEAN SPIRITS- Tumah Ruach associated with idolatry and false prophecy. (MRR) -> Those who deal with unclean spirits will be killed.

DEMONIC ACTIVITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

the power of Messiah. Perhaps it was because obedience to God's LAW as a thing EXTERNAL to man was about to be replaced by an INTERNAL relationship with God incarnate/LAW WITHIN, Heb 10:15-17. In a sense EVIL came to a head with Christ's Coming, and will do so again just before His return in Judgment, Mt 24:31; 2 Tim 3:13; Rev 12:12. Nothing is said specifically about any increase in demonic activity BEFORE the Church is called home, and only Rev 16:13 mentions it happening after that.

As the Lord DEFEATED all principalities and powers on the Cross, Col 2:15, nothing Demons can do is a threat to an obedient Christian. Being indwelt by the STRONGER THAN SATAN keeps demons from entering anyone who has been born of the Holy Spirit, Jn 1:12-13; 3:5-8, and indwelt by Him, Jn 14:15-18; Rom 8:9-16; 1 Cor 12:13. We've simply to turn to Christ in everything. If Demons are involved in our situation, our walking in the light with Christ, 1 Jn 1:5-7, will rob them of any power over us. The increased wickedness of our age is that it involves not ignorance, as in the past, but DELIBERATE TURNING FROM THE LIGHT, 2 Th 2:9-12.

- The Lord initiates most of the action, confrontation on the demonic side being limited to proclamation of who He was.
- Human initiative is limited to two parents of demon possessed children, the friends of a deaf-mute demoniac, and "They" in Mk 1:32-33
- As the background to the action is INDIRECTLY relevant a new category is introduced - BACKGROUND which includes the setting of situation, and reactions to the Lord's action.

GENERAL STATEMENTS that the LORD healed the sick, CAST OUT DEMONS, etc.

(For overlap between Sickness and Demon Possession See **4

There's no suggestion in the NT that SIN, (Lying, Drunkenness Sexual immorality etc) is caused by demon possession/

Footnote **4 There's an overlap between Healing sickness and Casting out demons in that Deafness, Dumbness, Blindness, and Epileptic symptoms were cured by the latter. The EFFECTS of Demon possession noted in the NT are limited to such obvious PHYSICAL symptoms, or equally obvious violent, destructive/ anti-social behaviour, as with the Gadarene. There's no suggestion that measles, appendicitis, cancer, feeling depressed etc are caused by demonic activity. The idea that disease in general is caused by evil spirits is one of the devil's lies that enslave primitive people and other animists.

No faith was ever required from the one from whom the Demon was cast out. Faith was required of the one casting out the Demon, and Faith to ask on the behalf of child victims, or deaf-mutes. The Lord rectified the only failure of the disciples in casting out demons.

Multiple Demon Possession is referred to in the case where they entered the swine, and in Mary Magdalene. (We read of few women being demon-possessed.) There's no suggestion that the different spirits had different effects on those possessed. There wasn't anything complex about the Gadarene's behaviour, and the swine showed a single-minded purpose!

Mk 3:11; Lk 4:41 Demons witnessed to the Lord. (GS) -> Mt 4:24; 8:16; Mk 1:34; 3:12; Lk 4:41; 6:19; 7:21. BACKGROUND - Mk 1:32-33; Lk 6:18; 7:22-23; 13:32

GENERAL STATEMENTS delegating power to DISCIPLES to CAST OUT DEMONS, and reporting results.

(See Appendix 3. for its relevance today.)

(GS) -> Mt 10:1, 5-8; Mk 3:14-15; 6:7; 16:17; Lk 9:1. (Sp) -> Mt 10:8; Mk 6:13; Lk 10:17. Their casting out demons. This becomes important from here on Plus unsent but approved disciples using His power/ Name, Mk 9:38-40; Lk 9:49-50 BACKGROUND - Lk 10:18-20

Mt 7:22-23 The Lord "NEVER knew," some who claimed to have cast out demons in His Name, and were sure that they had. That is He had never KNOWN them in the sense of having fellowship with them, approving of them and their actions. They used His Name, but had no association with Him/no authority from Him

Mk 9:20-26; Lk 9:42 After the Transfiguration. A Demon-convulsed child as he was being brought to Jesus. (MRR) -> Mt 17:14-16, 19-21; Mk 9:17-18, 22-24, 29; Lk 9:38 The Father needed to have faith to bring his boy and to ask. The Disciples needed to have faith to exercise their "Gift." And needed to pray and fast. (GS) -> Mt 17:17-18; Mk 9:19, 21, 25, 27; Lk 9:41-42 BACKGROUND - Mk 9:14-17, 28; Lk 9:37, 39-40, 43

(MRR) -> Mt 9:32, 12:22 Faith was needed to bring along the Deaf, Mute, Blind. (GS) -> Mt 9:33, 12:22; Lk 11:14.

Mt 12:27; Lk 11:19. The Pharisees' Disciples (Sons) cast out Demons.

Mt 12:43-45; Lk 11:24-26 DEMONS are restless except when indwelling humans. Relief for HUMANS, (whether spontaneous as the words used suggest, or when the demon has been cast out, as association with the previous incident suggests) will not be permanent, but lead to a worse state, unless God the Holy Spirit/The Lord Jesus is welcomed into the life.

Mk 1:23-24; Lk 4:33-34. The Demon acknowledged that Jesus was the Holy One of God. (GS) -> Mk 1:25-26; Lk 4:35 BACKGROUND - Mk 1:27; 16:9; Lk 4:36-37; 8:2.

Jn 7:20, 10:20-21. The Lord was accused of being demon-possessed. (The accusation that the Lord cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, is dealt with earlier under "SATANIC INTERVENTION.") Cp Mt 11:18; Lk 7:33 John was accused of having a demon.

Acts 5:16; 8:7. Peter, and Phillip cast out demons, as predicted Mk 16:17. (MRR) -> Acts 5:16; 19:12. People made this possible by bringing demoniacs to Peter.

Acts 16:16-18. Persistent "advertising" of Paul, by girl with a "Spirit of Divination." (Sp) -> Acts 16:18. Paul cast out the Spirit. (GS) -> Earthquake later. BACKGROUND - Acts 16:19-24.

Acts 19:11. Handkerchiefs were taken from Paul to the sick who were then healed, and evil spirits left those who'd been possessed by them. (GS) -> This was an unusual way for God to work.

exercised there was that of "Tongues." Some of the Christians at Corinth had been carried away by spirit powers to do so, before their conversion.

Footnote **5 It's natural to take our Lord's words about the impossibility of Satan working against himself, Mt 12:24-37; Mk 3:22-30; Lk 11:14-26 as denying the possibility of godless people casting out demons. Yet Satanic power is capable of impressive "Lying Wonders," 2 Th 2:9. Too, in many lands/ ages, "Exorcists/ Witchdoctors/ Shamans" have had sufficient success to become powerful and wealthy. It seems that the Lord was saying that THE REALITY of what He (and his empowered disciples) were doing proved that it was not of Satan. It doesn't deny that for his own purposes Satan could put on a convincingly faked show.

God-given "Spiritual Gift"; can be recognised by the fact that the Gift functions under the Lordship of Christ by conforming to His Word, the Scripture, and so confesses that He is the Lord to be obeyed. Merely repeating a form of words is not meant, Lk 6:46-49. (I once met a "Jesus is the Only God" heretic who tested his statements by repeating aloud "Jesus is Lord," after each, and then claiming that it proved they were true!) (MRR) -> 1 Cor 12:4-7; 13:1-7; 14:1-38 Understand the purpose of God's Gifts, and ensure that what was done glorified God, and edified the Believers. (?) (Sp) -> 1 Cor 12:10. Use the gift of discerning spirits. (This is included as such a gift is listed, and Peter presumably exercised such a gift in dealing with Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5. But here, Paul goes straight to the test given by the Lord Jesus "By their FRUITS you will know them," Mt 7:16-20 There is no suggestion that the gift of discerning spirits would be available at Corinth, or should be used.)

2 Th 2:2; 1 Tim 4:1-3. Demons are a source of false teaching. See 2 Cor 11:13-15. (MRR) -> 2 Th 2:5; 1 Tim 4:3-5. Test all teaching by Word of God. Cp Acts 17:11. Ask for and take with thankfulness what God provides in Creation, and enjoy it in conformity with His written Word.

Jas 3:14-16. Demons are a source of worldly wisdom. (MRR) -> Jas 1:5-6; 3:17-18. Seek Wisdom from God, and use such Heavenly Wisdom.

Jas 2:19. Demons believe and tremble, so belief in God without commitment to Him, does not equal Salvation.

or advice as to identification, formula to be used etc. Neither the Lord, nor the Disciples, used any exorcising formula, but simply gave a command. [One Christian told me that his casting out demons was temporary only, until he learned the correct formula, which included banishing them to the abyss etc. The almost identical formula - using the names of Heathen Deities - I'd already met in a book as a formula for Exorcism used in Egypt 1900years ago.]

Rev 9:20 Demons are associated with Idol worship.

Rev 16:13-14. Three frog-like spirits, working miracles to lure nations to attack the city of God, and be destroyed. No responses mentioned.

Rev 18:2. Mystery Babylon/False Prostitute Church is a home for demons. (Including such Demonic teaching as the holiness of Celibacy, etc 1 Tim 4:1-3.)

INFORMATION ABOUT ANGELIC/ DEMONIC PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS:

The terms PRINCIPALITIES - Arche= Beginning, Government, etc. AND POWERS- Exousia= authorities, are used of HUMAN ones to whom we should be obedient, Titus 3:1. They're used also of ANGELIC/ DEMONIC powers apparently exercising significant, unseen rule. The general impression is of enormously powerful beings hostile to God and His people, with a measure of freedom to act that was greatly limited by the Cross which assured their final defeat.

Rom 8:38 They can't separate us from God's love.

Eph 1:20-22 The risen Christ is far above them.

Eph 3:10. The Church is designed to demonstrate God's wisdom to them. [We are onstage, as Job was!]

power, but exist/consist/hold together in His power. See also Heb 1:3.

Col 2:10, 15. Christ is Head over them all, and has given us fullness in Himself. Christ has disarmed them/made a public spectacle of them by His cross.

Jude 6 Some Angelic powers left their FIRST ESTATE/Principality- Arche, and are already chained in darkness.

CONCLUSIONS

PERSONALLY, Human beings are no match for Satan, or Demons, who are angelic beings. The mere SIGHT of an angel on the resurrection morning was enough to lay the guards out cold, Mt 28:2-4. Too, since Adam and Eve cut themselves off from God, and joined Satan in his rebellion, everyone of us are by nature BORN ON HIS SIDE, our natural instincts and minds are warped against God, Col 1:21. As the PRINCE/GOD OF THIS WORLD, he has organised its system so as to hold us captive. And the world has "programmed" the computer of our Sinful Nature/Flesh to instinctively claim its self-worshipping "RIGHTS." Re-programming it from Scripture is a slow process, Rom 12:2.

Although there are unsaved people living fine, clean lives, the essential root of sin - a life centred on SELF, WHAT I THINK, FEEL, WANT," not centred on God and His purposes - is the core of their being.

We're born addicted to sin. Like any drug it proves a hard master. In the end pleasantly or painfully, all are doomed to perish by it, unless they Repent. Only when we realise this can we appreciate the wonder of Jn 3:16. God so loving this rebellious, self-preoccupied world, as to give His only Son, that whoever commits themselves to Him (In Greek, Believes in, is Eis = into, Our "believing in" Christ moves us INTO Him) will NOT PERISH but have eternal life. When we do that, the whole scene changes.

Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Righteousness, and Love of the Lord, the greatest created being fades into insignificance. And the life of each of us Believers is "HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD," Col 3:3. Does that sound safe enough? But better still, while living in this frail body, with its fickle heart and shallow mind, and its nature ever drawn towards the bait on Satan's hooks and traps, our hope/ confident expectation of Glory is no folly, for CHRIST HIMSELF IS IN US ALREADY, Col 1:27, to guarantee future Glory with Him!

We're not sent out into this world to work and do battle for the Lord, in any doubt as to the outcome. The "Marching orders" of Mt 28:16-20 are issued not on the basis of the strength of our faith, but on the assurance that "ALL Authority/ Power in Heaven and earth" are in the Lord's hands, and HE Himself is always with us. The cruelty and cunning of Satan, that Liar and Murderer, is beyond imagining, but if we choose to attempt to obey the Lord, he is utterly powerless to harm us spiritually with either persecutions or pleasant offers of infected pleasures, infectious religious ideas, or invitations to smart short cuts through life, Jas 4:7. He is under the Lord's control, permitted to do only what we can respond to positively, and be eternally benefited by, if we keep our eye on the Lord and choose Him in it, 1 Cor 10:12-13; Jas 5:11.

Our situation in this world is set out for us dearly in Romans 8. Verse 28 throws out the challenge- ALL/ EVERYTHING, that comes to us Believers at any time, is good for us/ comes for our GOOD. That takes our breath away! Then with a rush some will say "But what about Believers crippled with arthritis, young mothers dying of cancer, gifted preachers going insane, or committing adultery - And MY loneliness, MY frustration, MY distress - do you call THAT Good! Well YES, that's how life IS as far as the best and wisest of us can see it here and now. BUT are we wiser, or kinder than God? Can we see as far and clearly as HE can? Can we say to Paul who wrote the words "It's all right for YOU Paul, you don't know what it's like to suffer the injustice and cruelty of life?" The whole matter is clarified, when we ask two simple questions.

GOOD OF CHRIST-LIKE NESS - "That we should be conformed to the image of His Son."

With this in view He's already made every Believer a partaker in the Divine Nature, 2 Pet 1:3-4. This GOOD is so good that God the Father purchased it for us at the cost of His Son, of the cross. And now He is our loving Father in Heaven to whom we come freely with all our cares and requests - One who, knowing our limitations, deals with us compassionately, Ps 103:13-18, not as a Taskmaster dealing with servants. BUT, with all that, One who never loses sight of the purpose and goal of that Sonship which requires that we should be united with Christ crucified, buried, and risen, Gal 2:20 The GOOD for which all things work together, including all that Satan can do is a COSTLY GOOD.

WHO ARE ASSURED OF THAT GOOD ?

God states this dearly. He, knowing beforehand all about everyone, couldn't make any mistakes, or start the process with anyone for whom it wouldn't work out. He selected the individuals, and selected the role of Christ-likeness for them, and the form it would take.

When in due time they were born, and lived, He CALLED them by the Gospel message, and they responded, Rom 8:28-30 When this happened, they were JUSTIFIED/ made personally righteous in Christ/right with God. With that, the work was as good as done. Their presence in Glory was assured, Jude 24 so the past tense is used "He also GLORIFIED." It doesn't suggest we FEEL glorified/ LOOK Glorified, though a measure of Christ-likeness should be obvious to others. How we feel/look isn't our concern. Our "ministry" is to be preoccupied with Christ, and so reflect Him, 2 Cor 3:16-4:18. The more we give ourselves to this, and value the "Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ," the less we'll be concerned with the earthenware pot of his body and life. We'll accept patiently the failing of our outward man and its comforts, rejoicing in the constant renewing of the inner man, 2 Cor 4:16-18.

questions:

1. Is there any possibility that at any time, anyone could challenge our righteousness and charge us with sin? Answer, there is only one Judge, Jesus Christ, who KNEW ALL that we would ever be and did and took it all on Himself on the Cross, and He has acquitted us.
2. Can anything separate us from God's love/ loving care? Answer. There are potential enemies, and awful things may be done to us, but EVERYTHING/EVERY PERSON in the universe is powerless to separate us from God's Love, and loving purposes. Our security is watertight. Some, goaded by the tempter to torment themselves into helplessness and hopelessness, have imagined that while no outsider could cut them off from the love of God, THEY THEMSELVES could have done so by having chosen to place themselves outside His love, by some thought/word/action.

Of course we're responsible to "keep ourselves in the love of God" Jude 20:21, in the sense that ENJOYING the light and warmth of His ungrieved fellowship does depend on our choosing to please Him. But to illustrate our position - The wisest/strongest of us are but infants in our Father's care. What infant would really choose to cut himself off from his parents? WHAT PARENT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO DO SO IF HE CHOSE TO!

As Parents we may have travelled home by train with children after a day at the beach, and had to extract a fractious sleepy infant from the carriage, carry him home and put him to bed AGAINST his violent struggles and demands to "Let me go" We heard what he said, but didn't drop him, or leave him in the carriage. We were strong enough to keep him under our care. Under the stress of tragedy, or boredom, or.. a Believer may act similarly, but our Father is strong. His purpose eternal, changeless. His love un failing. Illustrations may deceive us, but His word abides for ever. We are created beings. He says nothing in all creation/ no created thing or being, can separate us from HIS Love, AND THAT INCLUDES US AT OUR WORST AND MOST WILFUL - for certainly we are created beings. May we rejoice in, and make full use of God's Triumphant grace, set out in Col chapters 2 and 3

against EVIL.

SECTION II - CURSES & SORCERY

CURSES and CURSING

A SUMMARY of what God in His Word says about them. You may find, as I did, that it isn't easy for us to drop our own ideas and prejudices, but we must do this if we're going to see things from God's point of view. As with the study on Satan and Demons what the Bible has to say can be summed up as:-

INFORMATION ABOUT CURSES is given in 197 verses.

(MRR) -> MORAL/RATIONAL ACTIONS people are required to take in response to this are given in 211 verses.

(GS) -> is used to mark GOD'S SOVEREIGN ACTION. There are 160 verses covering these.

** NOTE ** The TOTAL number of verses - about 568 - is about 1% of the Bible. This would suggest that we should spend a similar amount of our time thinking or preaching about curses and cursing.

from false ideas about the "Spirit World," that have enslaved them in fear. Now in the Western World, the New Age movement is promoting ideas of tuning in to natural/spiritual powers to avoid "negative influences." Satan as an Angel of Light is feeding these Heathen Superstitions into the Christian Church.

In the OT the subject of Oaths and Curses is a complicated one, 12 different words being used, with 6 different meanings often merging into one another. We'll look for the meanings of these words one group at a time, concentrating on those OT words and incidents from which we can gain a message for us today. All NT references are covered.

GROUP A. THINGS GOD DECLARED CURSED- Cherem

Cherem is from Charam= utterly destroyed. Cherem is used of any thing or person CLAIMED by God for Himself: -

(a) for its complete destruction as under His total condemnation, His patience having been exhausted, and further delay causing only added guilt - eg. JERICHO in Joshua's time, and AMALEK in the time of Saul. IF anyone took for his own use such a thing he himself became a CURSE - Cherem, Deu 7:26

(b) because DEVOTED/ Dedicated as a gift to God for His service, Lev 27:25-29. (Verse 28 uses the word Cherem.) (This may link with what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. They took back part of what they had dedicated to God. God took them!)

Anathema/ Katanathema- Is the NT equivalent. Handing over to God for Him to deal with a person who has chosen to go obviously and deliberately beyond the bounds of doctrine or behaviour permitted by God, Gal 1:8, etc. (Sometimes Anathema may simply mean CURSE.)

Ex 22:20 Deu 13:12-14. Those who worshipped other Gods were to be UTTERLY DESTROYED- Charam. (MRR) -> Ex 22:20 Deu 13:15-18. The people and property were under God's CURSE / Cherem and so were to be destroyed.

No redemption price could free anyone under God's Cherem.

Josh 6:16-17 God would GIVE them the city of Jericho - it was Cherem- to be totally destroyed. (MRR) -> Josh 6:18-21, 24 The people were to be destroyed. The treasure was to be purified by fire to go to Tabernacle Treasury.

Josh 7:1; 22 20 1 Chr 2:7. Achan took some Cherem property. Israel was punished by being defeated. (MRR) -> Josh 7:22-26 When Achan's guilt was proved, Israel had to dis-associate themselves from his action by destroying him with his family and property. (GS) -> Josh 7:2-5; 10-18. Having defied God's Cherem on the loot, Israel had been defeated. God set up the detective process to show who was to blame.

1 Sam 15:1-9. The Amalekites and their property were to be Cherem. Saul saved the King, and the best animals from this destruction. (MRR) -> 1 Sam 15:17-35 Samuel proclaimed the truth of the matter. He then killed Agag, and dis-associated himself from Saul. No prayers, sacrifice or ritual could undo Saul's disobedience. (GS) -> 1 Sam 15:10-11. God rejected Saul as king.

1 Ki 20:31-34, 42 Ahab failed to obey God in destroying Ben Hadad. (MRR) -> 1 Ki 20:35-42 God's judgment was proclaimed.

Isa 34:1-17. God's Cherem on the nations that have afflicted Zion/ Israel. (The word Cherem is used in Isa 34:5.)

Isa 43:14-28 God pronounces a Cherem on Israel for their unfaithfulness. (The word Cherem is used in Isa 43:28) For the effect on Israel of their being Cherem - set apart for God in a Covenant relationship, and their breaking His Covenant, see Appendix 4

Ezek 44:29 Echoing Num 18:14, things DEVOTED- Cherem to the Lord are to be the property of the priests.

(GS) -> Zech 14:9-11. There will be no more UTTER DESTRUCTION- Cherem when Messiah comes to reign.

Mal 4:6. The whole earth is faced with God's Cherem. (GS) -> Mal 4:5-6. God will send Elijah, to prevent this.

around us. An African witchdoctor must destroy his fetishes. A Japanese, his household shrine. Many in our Western World are equally enslaved to the idols of Success, Wealth, Possessions, Col 3:5, Self-Indulgence, etc, and so have an equal need to make a clean break with some aspect of their past, or they will be enslaved again.

Hard words such as Mt 19:21, are said in love, and designed to lead us into fruitfulness and fellowship with the Lord. In our Western materialistic world some businessmen may be called to give up their business. Some Houseproud, may be called to give up a luxurious home and move to a poorer suburb. Some may need to give up a sport, or hobby. Some shouldn't read the stock market report, others the entertainment pages. Nothing, no matter how lawful, must be allowed that will master us, 1 Cor 6:12. Each must decide this for himself before the Lord.

As always, our carnal, religious natures want to trivialise and ritualise this handing over of things to the Lord. Instead of facing the need to be crucified with Christ, we may soothe our conscience by giving up sugaring our tea during Lent, and feel we're being virtuous. Instead of facing the realities of idolatry in our society, and in our lives some may settle for destroying souvenirs associated with heathen religion.

(A Missionary collecting a Witch Doctor's fetishes as souvenirs, would be misunderstood. As for tourists' souvenirs see Appendix 6.)

The OT teaches that the "Curse," associated with idols etc is the attitude that treats them as an alternative to God. When anyone gave in to that, the only Biblical remedy was to stone the sinner to death. There was no sacrifice or ritual to deal with it.

GROUP B. SWORN OATHS & CURSES RESULTING FROM BREAKING THEM

Shebuah- an OATH, SWORN- Shaba voluntarily, or under pressure, to solemnize a testimony given as a witness. Usually this was a SWORN declaration of innocence in the face of accusation or SWORN to make a binding agreement. IF that testimony was false witness, or that agreement wasn't kept, it brought a CURSE on the person who made the OATH. Clearly the consequences of

Horkos- is the NT equivalent "An OATH confirms what has been said," Heb 6:16. Horkos, seems to be from Herkos, a fence - an OATH "fences in" the statement. Horkomosis, Horkizo, Exhorkizo, and Enhorkizo are all used for the swearing of an oath, as in Mt 26:63 Heb 7:20 etc.

Omnumi- Is also used for the swearing of an oath, as in Mt 5:34 "SWEAR not at all." But Omnumi sometimes translates Arar- see below.

B1 - OATHS USED TO CONFIRM THE TRUTH OF HUMAN TESTIMONY

(Where it was obviously to the witness's present advantage to lie he might be required to confirm his testimony with an OATH. This reminded him of God's knowledge, power, and future judgment. This offset eternal consequences against any short-term advantage. Eg the custodian of missing property must support his claim to innocence with an OATH-Shebuah, Ex 22:11.)

Num 5:21-27. is the only time when lying under oath is said to bring a CURSE - Arar, but Solomon's prayer, 1 Ki 8:31-32, 2 Chr 6:22-23 utters the desire/expectation that God will punish all false swearing.

B2 - OATHS SWORN BY GOD TO CONFIRM HIS PROMISE / COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE

(While human nature and behaviour is the foundation for our understanding of God, the CONTRASTS are at least as obvious as the PARALLELS. Because men know the frailty and deceit of human nature they demand that other men face God and His future Judgment by swearing an oath that what they say is true. It's sheer grace that in order to reassure men and make it possible for them to believe Him, and respond to Him confidently, God who cannot and will not lie, stoops to guarantee His promises by swearing by Himself, that He will do what He says, Heb 6:13-20)

(GS) - > Gen 15:7-18; 17:1-8. God's Covenant with Abraham and his descendants, based on the promises of Gen 12:1-3. The deliverance from Egypt, giving of the Law at Sinai, and Israel's possession of the land (and all the rest of the OT) is based on these PROMISES and COVENANT. While in the NT the Covenant of Law is CONTRASTED

curse is involved in His Sworn promises, Ps 132:11- Acts 2:30 Ps 110:4- Heb 7:20-28

(GS) -> Gen 26:3-4. God confirmed the OATH- Shebua to Isaac that He had SWORN- Shaba to Abraham. (MRR) -> Gen 26:2, 5-6. Isaac is reminded that Abraham obeyed God. Isaac obeys and stays in the land.

Deu 7:7-8; 9:4-6. Israel is reminded that their deliverance from Egypt was neither EARNED by their past actions, nor OCCASIONED by anything inherent in them. It was an act of GRACE by which God kept the OATH/Shebua He had SWORN/Shaba to Abraham. Apart from Jer 11:5, and Dan 9:11, Shebua doesn't seem to be used again for this oath. Instead Alah, associated with the curse of a broken oath is used, eg 5x in Deut 29. (MRR) -> Deu 7:1-6, 11-19, 23- 9:3. These give solemn vivid warnings of what would happen if they failed to keep the covenant. (GS) -> Deu 7:9-10, 20-22 God would be directly involved.

Deu 26:16-19, 27:1-8; 28:9-11; 29:1-15 The Covenant renewed. (MRR) -> Deu 27:9-26 28:1, 13-15, 45-47, 58 62 29:16-29 30:1-2, 11-20 Blessing/Cursing, Life/Death, are assured according to whether they CHOSE TO OBEY-KEEP THEIR SIDE OF THE COVENANT, or not. Appendix 4 deals with this more fully. (GS) -> 28:2-12, 16-44, 48-57, 59-61, 63-68 30:3-10.

B3 - OATHS USED TO SOLEMNISE A BINDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN MEN

Gen 24:8. The OATH/ Shebua Abraham's servant SWORE/ Shaba regarding the fetching of a bride for Isaac. Agreements were SWORN-Shaba with Rahab in Josh 2 with Gibeon in Josh 9:15. The deceit of the Gibeonites brought the curse of servitude, 9:23 Israel had sworn to serve Babylon, and God would bring judgment on them for breaking their oath, Ezek 17:13-23 Only in the case of Israel's oath to not intermarry with Benjamin, Judg 21:1-18, is the specific word CURSE - Arar used of the breaking of the oath. God may be called on to enforce the OATH/punish breach of it, as in Gen 24 Elsewhere as in Shimei's OATH to Solomon, 1 Ki 2:43 only human action is involved.

C1 - PERSONS OR THINGS CURSED BY GOD

Before considering this, we must pause to remember Who, and What God is, and that He is all this in ALL that He says and does. "As high as the Heavens are above the earth so are His ways above our ways," Isa 55:8-9, whether in blessing or in cursing.

(GS) -> Gen 3:14-15. The Serpent was CURSED- Arar, and his doom proclaimed.

(GS) -> Gen 3:17-18. The Ground was CURSED- Arar, and it would produce thorns, etc. This is used as a warning to those unresponsive to God, Heb 6:8. (MRR) -> Gen 3:17, 19. Because Adam disobeyed God he will have to work harder. **6

Footnote **6 These are God's Sovereign actions, but they also involve people reaping what they'd sown. Neither the Man, nor the Woman, are said to be cursed. But their rebellion had in fact cursed them FROM God, INTO independence, and placed them and their world at the mercy of Satan. Their sadly changed circumstances are the best that God can do for them now. The harshness involved will be a restraint from carefree godlessness. The promise of the Seed of the Woman gives hope. Those who accept and make the best of God's provision will be the best off.

(GS) -> Gen 4:11-12. For murdering his brother Cain was CURSED- Arar into a wandering life as the ground would no longer be fruitful for him.

(GS) -> Josh 6:26 1 Ki 16:34 Joshua SWORE - Shaba that the rebuilder of Jericho was CURSED- Arar. Joshua expressed God's verdict. The city was rebuilt by a follower of Jericho's idolatry, and he sacrificed two sons, as the Canaanites did, to bring "Good Luck" to the city.

(GS) -> Deu 27:15-26 28:16-19. CURSES - Arar, are pronounced on a list of sins, as part of God's covenant with Israel for their life in the land. These CURSES would cling to the disobedient.

(GS) -> Jer 48:10. Half-heartedness in destroying Moab is CURSED- Arar.

(GS) -> Mal 1:14. Those not giving their best to God are CURSED- Arar.

ask according to it.

(GS) -> Gal 3:10, 13. Those who depend on Law-keeping are under God's CURSE - Katara for their failure. Christ was made a CURSE - Katara for us. (MRR) -> Gal 3:6-9, 11-12, 14, 24-29 To avoid this curse People must stop trusting their own goodworks and accept Salvation by Faith in Christ.

2 Pet 2:14 Bold deceivers are CURSED- Katara children. (MRR) -> 2 Pet 2:15 To avoid this curse People must not leave God's path.

Heb 6:8 People who hear the Gospel and make no fruitful response, are near to CURSING- Katara. (MRR) -> Heb 6:1-7 To avoid this people must make a positive, continually-growing response to gospel.

(In Job 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9, CURSE GOD, and in 1 Ki 21:10, 13, BLASPHEME, is in fact Barak- to Bless. For any Godly Israelite to write CURSE GOD, or to read it publicly in a Synagogue would have seemed disgraceful. It seems likely that they devoutly wrote and read BLESS GOD, knowing that readers and hearers would be aware that the opposite was meant.)

GROUP D. CURSING as SLANDERING, RIDICULING, etc

Qalal/ Qelalah- The word used in Gen 88, of the flood being ABATED. It's used generally of cursing in the sense of despising, slandering, ridiculing, weakening, frustrating, etc. It's used in Ex 21:17 "He that CURSES Father or Mother shall be put to death."

Kakalogo- To SPEAK EVIL OF is the NT equivalent- Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10. These are used along with the more usual words for curse and cursing, OT Ara, and NT Ara /Katara)

This is the CURSING children may be tempted to indulge in, and are strictly forbidden to, Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9; Prov 20:20 are all Qalal, Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10, are Kakalogo. Hagar DESPISED- Qalal Sarah, Gen 16:4-5. Rulers must not be cursed, Ex 22:28 (REVILE/blaspheme-Qalal thy gods/judges who enforce God's Law, nor CURSE /Arar- the Ruler of your people.) Ecc 10:20 Qalal, Acts 23:5, Ereo Kakos. (Ecc 10:20 adds the rich to kings, and is more concerned with the safety of the thing, rather than the morality of it!) Authority figures aren't automatically wiser, or more virtuous, but the passing on of knowledge, and the orderliness of family and community life depend on their being treated with respect.

Behind their authority is the authority of GOD who in His wisdom, and for His purposes, has ordered life as we find it, Rom 13:1-8; 1 Pet 2:13-14. Ecc 7:21-22 whimsically warns against eavesdropping on your servant's conversation - he's just as likely to say something "qalal" about you, as you are of other people. Children/ those under our authority DO IMITATE US!

Lev 24:15. God must not be CURSED / SNEERED AT, etc- Qalal. We must not provoke others to CURSE - Qalal God, (As they will if those known as God's people treat them badly.) Lev 24:11-23 Rom 2:24 (Blasphemeo.)

D3 - GOD'S VERDICTS ON MEN CURSING (Arar, Qalal) MEN.

(Such cursing is a natural human reaction when feeling wronged. God's Word shows it having no effect, UNLESS IT EXPRESSED GOD'S VERDICT.)

Gen 12:3; 27:29, Num 24:9. Those who CURSE / SNEER AT / DESPISE / FRUSTRATE - Qalal Abraham, God will CURSE - Arar, and this is repeated in Gen 27:29, but there it's men CURSING - Arar Abraham's descendants. Those who resist, reject, despise, work against God's SERVANT/ servants do themselves a far greater, more permanent

Gen 49:7. Jacob CURSED- Arar the anger of Simeon and Levi and says he will scatter them in Israel. They WERE in fact scattered - Simeon to be lost in being absorbed into Judah, Levi as a blessing to all Israel. (MRR) -> Ex 32:27-28 Deu 33:9. Levi, killing Golden Calf worshippers, and halting the worship of that idol. (GS) -> Ex 32:29, Num 1:48-53, Deu 33:8, 10-11. By God's over-ruling the tribe of Levi was blessed and scattered to be a blessing.

Num 22:4-6. Balak calls Balaam to Curse/Arar Israel. (GS) -> Num 23:18-23 God never changes His mind. No CURSING will work against God's people. God BLESSED them instead, Josh 24:9-10, Neh 13:2.

2 Sam 16:5-8, 13. Shimei shouted out CURSES - Qalal on David. (MRR) -> 2 Sam 16:10-12; 1 Ki 2:8-9 David handed the matter over to God. If God agrees with Shimei, he bows to the verdict. If not, he trusts God to turn the curses into blessings. If David had been goaded into responding with cursing or violence, THAT could well have been sin, and earned God's just punishment. Later, Solomon would punish the sin of Shimei. [That Shimei, cursing David in his rejection, grovelling for mercy at his return, and being judged when the kingdom of peace was set up, is a picture of Israel in its rejection of Christ, facing Judgment in due course when He returns and sets up His Kingdom.]

Men's curses can never injure a child of God, EXCEPT by provoking us into shameful, unChrist-like retaliation.

Mt 26:74; Mk 14:71. Peter said curses in denying His Lord. [Mt 26:74 uses "Anathema."] (MRR) -> Mt 26:75; Mk 14:72 Peter needed to repent. He did repent and was forgiven.

Jn 7:49. The Rulers said the common people were CURSED. (Because they gladly listened to Jesus. Of course this opened their lives to Blessing.)

Mt 5:44; Lk 6:28; Rom 12:14. Men will Curse us Christians. (MRR) -> Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27-29, Rom 12:14. We're to Love those who curse us, pray for them, do good to them, and bless them.

(MRR) -> Rom 3:14; Jas 3:9-10. Christians are called to Bless people. It's a disgrace for us to CURSE. Cp Job 31:29-30, Jas 3:2-8; 11-12. We're to realise the power of the tongue, and control it.

them down!" Qabab- is used 10x in Num 22-24, as an equivalent of Naqab.

Num 22:11, 17; 23:8, 11, 13, 25, 27; 24:10. Balaam was hired to CURSE Israel in this sense, but had to confess that he couldn't. (GS) -> God frustrates all attempts to "Put a curse on" His people.

Scripture shows that God never curses anyone in this arbitrary manner, nor permits anyone to cause any of His people to be cursed in this way. In the end "God will render to every man according to his works," Rom 2:6. "Whatever a man sows, he will reap," Gal 6:7-10. BUT SPECIFICALLY the Balaam incident is recorded to demonstrate to us that God's people are not at the mercy of such CURSES - Naqab, and we're not to fear them. What we MUST fear is OUR CHOOSING TO SIN. Balaam succeeded in bringing a "Curse" on Israel, only when they yielded to the temptations of idolatry and sexual immorality, Num 25; Rev 2:14. See Appendix 6.

Job 5:3 Eliphaz claims (KJV) to have CURSED/Naqab someone's house. But God completely disowns him, Job 42:7-8.

Prov 11:26; 24:23-24 People will attempt to CURSE / Naqab those who force the price of grain up, or who call the wicked righteous (having been bribed to acquit them.) Christ is LORD of, and AWARE of, and OVER-RULES everything in the Universe, Col 1:16-17, and He will righteously ensure that everyone will reap what they sow. But only OUR OWN rebellion/wrongdoing can harm us. CURSES / Naqab cannot hurt you unless you deserve them. They are like birds that fly by and never settle, Prov 26:2. See Appendix 8.

DIVINATION - SORCERY - MAGIC - etc

About a dozen OT words are used to refer to such activities, mostly in lists, so we'll treat them all together. Some may involve spiritism, but unless that's stated they'll be treated here, not under "Demons." It's all a Satanic counterfeit, in any case.

The world is full of believers in magic, and exploiters of those who believe in it. I've read that the 1984 French Tax returns reported 50000 "Fortune Tellers," with an average declared income of \$100000

prophets were steps towards Him.)

Num 23:23, 24:1. Balaam confesses that sorcery will not work against God's people.

1 Sam 6:2-12. Philistines Divine to decide what to do with the Ark. God over-ruled to return the Ark to Israel. Perhaps Satanic powers, like the Philistines, had had enough.

2 Ki 17:17; 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6. Judah's use of sorcery is a reason for God's Exiling them. (These Scriptures are associated with "Children made to pass through the fire" to gain the goodwill of Baal and his Asherah. Thousands of jars containing burnt children's bones have been dug up at the Carthage Tophet, some dating almost to the time of Christ. Asherah was called Tanit here, and the sacrificing of children was called Molech.

Isa 3:2-3, 20. Jerusalem men involved in fortune telling, (KJV ORATOR is Lachash= Enchanter, Lucky charm, etc) and women who wear lucky charms, (KJV EARRINGS) are warned of impending judgment.

Isa 19:1-4. Egyptians consult idols, mediums and sorcerers, in vain.

Isa 47:9-15. Babylon is mocked because her magic and fortune telling and divination is useless. (GS) -> Isa 44:24-28. In contrast to that, God promises to deliver Israel from Babylon, and will certainly do so.

Jer 27:9-10; 29:8-9. Judah is told not to listen to prophets who use sorcery. Their answers pleased people, but God disowns them. (MRR) -> Jer 29:5-7, 12-13. The exiles are to settle in, prosper, pray for Babylon. They're to respond to God's intervention when it comes. (GS) -> Jer 29:10-11, 14. In 70 years God will bring them back.

Ezek 21:21-23, 29. Describes Nebuchadnezzar Divining by casting arrows to see how they fall, asking idols, examining the entrails of a sacrifice. Jerusalem will be indicated for attack. At Jerusalem, they also are Divining. (MRR) -> Ezek 21:23. It's not a matter of false/ unlucky Divination. (GS) -> Ezek 21:24-27. God is punishing them for their rebellion.

Dan 1:20, 2:2, 10, 27; 4:7; 5:7, 11, 15. The court professional Wise men, Fortune tellers, etc are listed. In a sense Daniel is associated with

star to seek, find, and worship Jesus. **7/

Acts 8:9-11. Simon a popular, successful Sorcerer/Magos. (MRR) -> Acts 8:22 He's to repent and ask God for forgiveness. He'd already made a profession of Faith, and been baptised in water. It left his heart unchanged. He shows no sign of a change now, but is trusting the "Magic" of Philip praying for him.

Acts 13:6, 8. Elymas a Sorcerer/Magos- as were the "Wise men." But Elymas was a sinful one doing Satan's work.

Acts 19:19-20 Ephesian believers burnt their BOOKS of magic/Periergos. The word means literally, "Things that are around work." They had been prying into magic, whether real or imagined, trying to tap powers/spirits that might do things for them so that they didn't have to work. (It's used 1 Tim 5:13 of a "Busybody-" who pries into other persons' affairs.) Burning those books made a clean break with their past. It was a good testimony at the time, and a good example for others to follow ever since. **8

Footnote **7 As noted with Joseph, all Divination may not have been a sin for those without knowledge of God's Word. At least, God meets honest seekers at wherever they're starting from.

Footnote **8 Today "New Age" enthusiasts, because they have turned their backs on Bible Truth, and Salvation in Christ, try to revive or imagine the superstitions of the "Old Ages," eager to believe in Horoscopes, the powers of Colours, Crystals, etc etc.

Gal 3:1 "Bewitched you," isn't to be taken literally. Their action in turning back to Law was foolish and sinful, but something they had CHOSEN to do Paul urges them to choose to repent and turn back to God and obey the Gospel. The idea of casting or removing "spells" comes from "Fairy Tales," never from God's Word.

Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8; 22:15. Sorcery/Sorcerers- Pharmakia- (Our word Pharmacy)- drugs, rituals etc used to produce trances, or supposed spiritual experiences. (The connection between drug use, and the REALITY of Supernatural/demonic experiences is uncertain. But if the PURPOSE in drug-taking is to contact the Supernatural, there's no

God's Word generally condemns and ridicules the whole thing. It's an insult to God for His people to dabble in it or fear it, as we're indwelt by the Lord of Glory, Col 2:6-10, 18-19. There's no Christian ritual or gift provided as a defence against sorcery nor any needed. Obedient fellowship with the Lord, and trust in His Sovereign overruling, is our defence and guide.

Even for the goddess any involvement is distracting folly at best, a spiritist snare at worst. So-called "CHRISTIAN FORTUNE TELLERS" score average for the trade - not more than 25% correct guesses!

An Attempt at APPLYING THESE PRINCIPLES to modern questions.

Q 1. Are souvenirs, carvings, pictures etc with non-Christian religious symbols or associations CURSED because of that association? As meat sold in the market, wasn't cursed because it had been offered to idols, neither is any other object automatically cursed because of its associations. See Appendix 6. From Scripture it would seem that I could buy any souvenir to the glory of God IF:-

1. It doesn't offend my conscience spiritually, morally or as being a waste of the money the Lord has made me steward of.
2. It won't be seen by anyone to whom it's sacred, who'd be offended to see me using it for non-religious purposes, 1 Cor 10:32
3. It won't be seen by a Christian converted from that religion who needs to make a clean break with all to do with it.
4. It won't capture the interest of young members of my family, or others and be an unwholesome influence.
5. The manufacture of it doesn't support/encourage a false religion.

Q 2. If I bring it into my home, will it bring a curse into my home? Just as meat bought in the market, that had been offered to idols being

nothing to us, but to someone, somewhere, would have religious/spiritual significance. IF our having them offends someone - their weak conscience must be considered.

Q 3. Does Ex 23:13; Deu 12:30; Josh 23:7; forbid US to name "gods" or read/talk about the ways which they were worshipped? God's Word does in fact name heathen "gods" and describe something of their worship, BUT IN SUCH A WAY THAT SUCH WORSHIP IS SEEN TO BE FOOLISH AND WICKED - not attractive. (Similarly it describes the realities of sexual sin without being pornographic. The record of David's adultery shows adultery as a tragedy.) It's spiritually unhealthy to be preoccupied with false religion, or any evil. Violent opposition to good or evil is often followed by conversion to it.

Q 4. Will looking at or entering a heathen temple, shrine, or sacred place of any religion, or looking at religious art, bring a curse on me? Not automatically. In Christ, we're FREE, and freed from Satan and his power, indwelt as we are by the One who is stronger than him. But we must ask ourselves WHY am I doing it? Is it an essential part of my education - as a student of art, or architecture, or as a missionary needing to understand the religion and culture of the land so as to evangelise and shepherd effectively - Though that would be done more safely from books, and from listening to converts.

The warnings given in Q1 apply strongly here. If our wanting to go is sowing to the flesh, we know what we'll reap! Unless our desire to be there is to glorify God we know that we're grieving God the HOLY Spirit who gets no pleasure out of our presence there. If anyone else who sees us there, or will hear about it, thinks I shouldn't be there, it may well stumble him/be a sin for me.

Q 5. Is listening to/ playing religious chants, music, or reading literature written by those of other religions, including atheist, humanists, or communists a sin? Will it bring a curse on me? Again the answer is there's nothing automatically wrong about it unless the message conveyed in itself discourages Godliness. BUT Some of us have naturally sensitive/ weak consciences with regard to these things. They are SIN for us. They're dangerous temptations. We must flee them. AND if they're not a temptation to us, we must watch that we don't stumble by our example those to whom they are.

VULGATE = COMMON LANGUAGE LATIN version of the Bible, as well as BIBLE manuscripts he took with him the writings of Plato, Aristotle etc.

As someone remarked acidly "He spent his mornings reading these heathen philosophers, his afternoons writing to others telling them it was a sin to read them!" His mind may have been refreshed/sharpened, and his writing style improved by such non-Godly literature. It may have been not temptation to evil, to him at his stage of life, and yet a snare and sin to other, and younger readers. (If so, it was a sin for any busybody to tell tales on him!) But ALL OF US need to face the facts of the brevity of time, the need for relaxation to refresh us for work, and the need to do ALL to the glory of God.

Q 6. What if I join in a game or activity that includes words, symbols, etc associated with other religions - is that wrong? Not automatically- we're free. BUT IF it has religious significance for others/distresses someone's sensitive conscience, it's SIN. (There's no reward in THIS life, or the next, for developing a super-sensitive spiritual conscience that looks for opportunities for being offended, and shows a Pharisaical genius for finding fault with others. Sensitive consciences associated with a gracious attitude to others are fine, as Romans 14 shows.) Just as it is PHYSICAL health to be sensibly indifferent to physical health, and unhealthily neurotic to be pre-occupied with it. Just so, WITH SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

Q 7 & 8. Can my parents/ancestors having associations with other religions, or irreligions, including Masonic lodges etc. bring a curse on me? Could anything said or done by my parents, or others, before my conception, between my conception and birth, or since, make any SPIRITUAL difference to me as a child of God now? God's Word says NO! Of course parental neglect or abuse injures the Flesh/Natural self of children. But in Ezek 18 God declares that in relation to Him/Spiritual things what the parents believe and do will not harm their children in the things of God. When we put our trust in Christ as Saviour, whether we realised it or not we handed ourselves over to Him totally, past present and future with what was in us, and around us. AND HE RECEIVED US TOTALLY JUST AS WE WERE, taking all our sins - Sins done by us or to us - upon Himself, for "He Himself bore them in His own body on the tree," 1 Pet 2:24. We became TOTALLY CLEAN in God's sight- a TOTALLY NEW

And from that moment everything within us and around was freed to work together for GOOD/ God's eternal purpose that we should become Christ-like. From that moment God's unstinting, all-powerful - if sometimes uncomfortable/ chastening - eternal love surrounded us. Nothing, including ourselves, can break us free from that total care or reach through it without OUR choice, and HIS permission, Rom 8:28-39.

This commits us to the constant challenge to learn the will of God, to choose it, to attempt to do it with all the love, earnest desire, power and persistence God the Holy Spirit can generate in us AND persuade us to seek, Phil 2:12-13. There is a constant need to turn from self to Christ, from our will to His will, from the things of the visible world to the things of the invisible, eternal world, 2 Cor 4:7-18; Col 3:1-17. A constant need to rejoice in the Lord and His fellowship.

There is constantly the need to repent, confess, be forgiven, cleansed, restored to fellowship, 1 Jn 1:5-9. There will be hurts and pressures within and from outside us, from our present, past, and from what we see as the future. Hurts of body, heart, mind, soul and Spirit. God has identified Himself with them all/ suffers with all His own who suffer, Isa 63:9. He's the God of all COMFORT/ STRENGTHENING/ NEEDED HELP, coming alongside us in ALL we can ever suffer, and He will use it to His glory, and the blessing of others IF ONLY WE WILL ASK HIM TO, 2 Cor 1:3-4. Whatever hurt, or care, or temptation, comes to our mind, it's our responsibility to remember Who He is, and what He's done, and that He holds us in His nail-pierced hands. And deliberately commit the matter, and ourselves, into His hands to work what He knows to be best.

To do that often brings peace and heart-healing at once. Sometimes a slow growth of that peace. But even if in His will a desperate, crippling pain continues unabated as Paul experienced, the Lord will be with us in it all. We'll be conscious that His grace experienced by us exceeds the greatness of our need. In the end we'll have the satisfaction of seeing that grace and glory of God, triumphantly displayed, as we live and serve our Saviour, in obvious and conscious weakness 2 Cor 12:7-10.

SECTION III - SPIRITUAL WARFARE

submit to the written Word of God, and to the Lord Himself as the directing Head. ALL Christians/ church members need to clothe themselves with such humility. As we do so we can rely on God giving us the GRACE we need and so frustrate the Devil, and Glorify God by our unity, Rom 15:4-6.

5:6 God will Glorify us, in the proper time - ETERNALLY. There's no need to push and shove for present attention and praise.

5:7 CASTING ALL YOUR CARE/Anxiety- The Lord stands with us. He'll do the worrying, planning, providing, and does so, perfectly.

5:8 BE SOBER/Self-controlled- We're to be sensible, realistic, and calm in Christ. Not emotionally excited, inclined to irrational over-reaction. BE VIGILANT/alert- Wide awake, ready to respond appropriately to any action by the enemy, not overconfident, indifferent, smug, lazy, or discouraged into inactivity. YOUR ADVERSARY.. ROARING LION- See "Summing Up."

5:9. RESIST HIM- Not attack Him. Not plan your strategy - that's in the Commanding Officer's hands. Stand firm where you've been placed. Don't be moved from the ground given for you to base your life on STEADFAST/Firm IN THE FAITH- That is take your position firmly on "THE FAITH given once for ALL," Jude 3 All time/ all people/ all purposes, 2 Tim 3:16-17. The SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION that reveals Christ to us, and on which we're built, and build, Eph 2:20-22 Lk 6:46-49 1 Cor 3:8-15.

SAME AFFLICTIONS/Sufferings- In all ages and in all lands, the battle goes on. We share it with all of God's Soldiers/ God's Children.

5:10. THE GOD OF GRACE WHO CALLED YOU TO ETERNAL GLORY- His purpose will be accomplished in the present battle, and it's a purpose of GRACE. SUFFERED A LITTLE WHILE- It may seem unbearably LONG to us, but one day we'll see it as a brief opportunity for loyalty to Christ.

WILL PERFECT/Restore/ STRENGTHEN/ ESTABLISH YOU- It's WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US- our being perfected into Christ-likeness- that matters, not the TERRITORY we're defending. The OUTCOME isn't uncertain, Rom 8:37. The real battle has been fought and won at Calvary. But before the Lord returns to take up His throne, His own are

state always - not ignore what God has provided and how He has told us to use it, and then try to do a pathetic "Dress Up" when the attack starts. STAND- Not ATTACK. Not allow self to be lured off the safe ground. But persist in the Christian Lifestyle of Ephesians chapters 2-5.

6:12 The battle is NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD- It's through our fellow men, fellow Believers/our relationships with them at home, work, church, etc that Satan will attack us, but THEY'RE NOT OUR ENEMIES, and we must not treat them as such.

PRINCIPALITIES, POWERS, RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD- Unseen, but planning, manipulating, in HEAVENLY/Spiritual areas, empowering all challenges against the doing of the will of God. SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS - The unseen principles on which the Enemies operate, although what presents itself to us may seem beautiful, good and God-honouring - Cp Paul's experience, Acts 22:3-4.

6:13 TAKE.. STAND- Individually take what God's given. Stand firm on His Bible promises and provisions. Not allow ourselves to be persuaded or panicked into relying on our own wisdom and strength, or that of other people. Not persuaded away from loyalty to our Lord, and His Word.

6:14 HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH- We're to have studied God's Word in fellowship with Himself, by His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13-15, grasped it, and applied it to all our circumstances so that it keeps all we wear in place, ready for unhindered action. We're also to be girded with God's love, Col 3:12-17. BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - Our essential-to-life organs- heart and lungs, protected by Christ's Righteousness claimed and applied, 2 Cor 5:17-21; 1 Pet 2:9-25

6:15 FEET SHOD/FITTED WITH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE - Not standing on the uncertainties and slipperiness of Human wisdom and experience.

6:16 THE SHIELD OF FAITH- Our acceptance of, our trust in, and our obedience to THE FAITH God has set out in His Word, 2 Tim 3:15-17; Jude 3 ABLE TO QUENCH FIERY DARTS- Our nature IS flammable. What we listen to and say needs to be submitted to God's Word, Jas 3:5-6.

6:17 TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION- The Salvation PEACE that God's provided and we've received in Christ, is able to "Guard" our

PETITION. PRAYING AT ALL TIMES IN THE SPIRIT - Our spirit, our innermost being linked with God the Holy Spirit in our praying. He alone knows WHAT we should ask, and having moved us to pray in our feebleness, adds to our prayers the weight of His unspoken earnestness and power, Rom 8:26 WATCHING UNTO/ be alert. PERSEVERANCE, ALL SAINTS - An unending battle.

6:19-20 PRAY ON MY BEHALF THAT UTTERANCE.. AS AN AMBASSADOR - Paul would do all he could at the PHYSICAL LEVEL, to accomplish God's will. But the real victories, the spiritual ones, depended on fellowship with God and His purposes in prayer, 2 Cor 1:8-11.

SUMMARY

WARFARE AGAINST SATAN AS A MURDERER/ROARING LION

It's helpful for us to know the part played by a Roaring Lion when it's seeking prey. A herd of Antelope, etc, are feeding safely on the shorter grass. An open attack by the lions would be exhausting, and probably unsuccessful as Antelopes can run faster and farther. The Lionesses carefully position themselves among long grass and shrubs on one side of the herd. The Lion sneaks into position on the opposite side, and when close enough springs up and ROARS loudly. He's an obvious threat. The herd flee in the opposite direction. The Lionesses spring from hiding as the herd passes. The hunt is successful. The Lion strolls over to get his share.

Our bodies may suffer, Lk 12:4-12, but God's people are SPIRITUALLY safe as long as they stick to the green pastures of the soul-restoring Word of God. Sometimes Satan roars threats of imprisonment, beatings, martyrdom, to try to panic believers into abandoning obedience to Scripture, Gospel preaching, and gathering together for fellowship/worship, Heb 10:23-25. At most of us he only growls and whines, threatening that we'll be unpopular with everybody, and miss the fun of life, riches, promotion, marriage, etc unless we leave the security of God-based living. "Peer Pressure/ SNEER Pressure" is particularly hard to bear when we're young and single.

ability to attract followers - Even Godly Peter was once his mouthpiece, Mt 16:22-23 Instead of "Building on the Bible foundation," Eph 2:20-21 = obeying and teaching the Truth of God revealed to Apostles and Prophets such as Paul, these teachers claim superior knowledge that sets them above God's Word. They may claim to work miracles, demand generous financial support, (As I write this in 1992 one such leader is asking \$1.4 million for the property he has built up from his converts/ followers!) and bully their followers. They introduce religious ideas, supposedly better suited to our culture, wants, and the modern world. In fact they preach cheap "Plastic" substitute Gospels encouraging us to disown in practice the Lordship of Christ and His Word, 2 Pet 2:1-3; Jude 3-4.

They make a big impression on carnal Christians and worldlings by:-

- their public relations skill.
- their willingness to adapt their preaching to catch the ears, and meet the surface "felt needs" of their hearers.
- their dogmatic statements and impressive authority that will give hearers something to anchor to in uncertain times.

They're visibly successful, FOR A TIME. Church history is littered with the wreckage of the movements founded by such seemingly important "Christian Innovators." The Devil is always at work through such Leaders to Distract people from Christ and His Gospel, Divide His followers, and Defile the Church with pious fraud, and patent corruption.

We who are more orthodox/ timid/ old-fashioned criticise them, but may also be deceived by Satan's lies into seeking the popularity and praise within our own circle that makes us feel good about ourselves.

Whether we wish to be "Faithful-unto-death Orthodox," or "Up-to-date relevant" Believers, Satan will ensure we're made aware of "better" ways of doing what we see needs to be done He'll blend jealousy into our sincere concern for the Lord's Honour and Truth. If he can get us angry or afraid at the success of error, he can be sure of convincing us that THIS matter is so important that it calls for "no holds barred" warfare. He'll see to it that "Speaking the truth in Love," Eph 4:15-16 - Truth the arrow, and love the bow that powers it - seems feeble to us,

we can keep ourselves from rendering railing for railing, 1 Pet 3:8-12, and can in meekness gently reason with those who we fear are trapped in some error or distortion of Satan, 2 Tim 2:22-26 Unless our MOTIVE/ ATTITUDE/ ONE of voice, in all we do and say is an outshining of the love of God in our hearts we're wasting our time, 1 Cor 13:1-7, and wasting the time of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, Gal 2:20

There's nothing in Scripture of Believers having the ability, or responsibility to "Bind Satan, Demons, etc" either by Ritual, or the exercise of "Faith." Such ideas come from Gnosticism, Witchcraft, etc. Such behaviour shows ignorance and arrogance. We're to obey our Lord quietly, leaving it to Him to rebuke Satan, as Michael the Archangel did, Jude 8-10. Our Lord has entered the Strong Man's house, and delivered Satan's captives, Mat 12:29, Col 2:13-15; Heb 2:14-15. He has "Bound" Satan in limiting his power against the Redeemed to the tempting of their Flesh/ Sinful nature with the baited snares of "The World," Jas 1:14-15, so that if they sow to the "Flesh" they'll reap corruption, Gal 6:7-10. OUR battle is to MORTIFY the Flesh, and WALK IN THE SPIRIT, Rom 6-8, etc.

APPENDIX 1 - The beliefs and experience behind these studies.

I don't imagine that I now understand, and have set out, the WHOLE truth on this subject. Only a presumptuous fool could think that. Only God's Word IS wholly true/ the whole truth. All of us need grace each day to lay aside our preferences and prejudices, and sit afresh at His feet to listen, learn, trust, and obey. What I've written comes from a persistent attempt to do that. If it leads others to do that, Hallelujah!

Knowing the details of His Truth/Will is impossible in this life. God is GOD. His actions don't have to conform neatly to the pattern I see in His Word,

Sovereign Grace is His trademark. After 55 years of Bible Study Job 26:14, is our testimony, Ps 19:12-14 our prayer. So I'm happy to be told where I've failed to see what is written in God's Word for us, so that my understanding may increase PROVIDED THAT such instruction arises from the actual words of Scripture, and the message that they convey when they are allowed to speak for themselves.

Having dealt with the BIBLICAL side of our situation we have to admit that there is a wide range of views and practices in the professing Church. Personally I have had no experience of working for the Lord in lands where apparently Demonic religious activities are considered normal. Godly people have assured me that "miraculous" activities there such as Firewalking are made possible by Demons. I don't know. I do know that the Sceptics Society in this city hold annually a demonstration of similar Firewalking designed to show that no miracle is involved.

Some Christians have assured me that our Mental Hospitals are full of demon-possessed people. I accept the witness of a Christian holding a senior position in such hospitals that he had seen no cases of demon-possession. His conviction that all cases he had met involved problems with the CHEMICAL state of the patient's bodies was based on the fact that when CHEMICALS (Palliative drugs) were given to them their problems subsided, and became manageable.

Instead of attempting to lay down the law as to whose beliefs are right or wrong, I hope to help everyone to gain a Biblical perspective on them by asking a further series of questions - and ATTEMPTING answers:

Q 1. Is the Bible, illuminated by God the Holy Spirit, the only source of SPIRITUAL truth? YES. Our experience of life, and the experiences of others stored in textbooks, manuals, etc may well contain OTHER sorts of truth, but we have only ONE source of SPIRITUAL Truth.

Q 2. Does our knowledge and experience of life help us to understand Spiritual truth? YES. As God created the world around us the physical, social, and cultural world of human experience is a fertile source of ILLUSTRATIONS that help us to UNDERSTAND/ APPLY the spiritual truths/ principles given in the Bible. The Lord, and His servants who wrote the Scriptures, made constant use of them in this way. As more

insights into man's spiritual needs and how to meet them. No. It's totally dangerous to start with what our subjective experience teaches us, and extrapolate from it. We just don't happen to be the centre of the universe. The fact that millions think the same adds no weight either. A million rotten eggs are no more likely to produce life than one rotten egg. Even if we could observe the world accurately, the mental and emotional tools with which we handle experience to try to produce spiritual truth are blunt, warped, and broken by sin.

Q 4. Is our EXPERIENCE valid? Yes. Q 5. Is our INTERPRETATION of our experience valid? No. We can interpret what we experience only in terms of what we already know - in fact what we THINK we know. Phenomena that would have convinced an Italian peasant 300 years ago he'd seen a vision of Angels, seen today would be more likely to be considered a flying saucer. When it comes to understanding Scripture, we may all read the same words, yet each get a different message, BECAUSE THE EYES WE SEE THROUGH HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED DIFFERENTLY BY WHAT WE'VE ALREADY "LEARNED." Worse still is the current "scientific," philosophy which questions the existence of TRUTH, and prides itself on taking out, examining, and adjusting the "Eyes," God has given us to see truth with.

Q 6. Are our minds reliable? No. As Jer 17:9 say "The heart is deceitful above all things." As Emil Bruner pointed out many years ago the human mind is less and less reliable, the closer to the centre of our being the matter studied is. It's easy for Mathematicians to agree, harder for Economists, impossible for Philosophers or Theologians - BECAUSE IT WAS AT THE CENTRE OF OUR BEING WE REBELLED. The "Fall" was spiritual. Only by the Spirit of God can we know anything spiritually 1 Cor 2:6-16.

Q 7. Does the indwelling Spirit, 1 Jn 2:20 free us from the need to listen to, and be corrected by, our fellow believers? No. Our spiritual health and growth, individually and collectively depends on the contribution in word and deed of every member of the body of Christ, 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:11-16, etc.

Q 8. Could God the Holy Spirit be the source of ideas, or practices which are not taught in Scripture? No, 2 Tim 3:14-17; 2 Pet 1:3-11; 2:19-2:3; Jude 3 (Note that these verses were written as the Scriptures were almost completed, and the Apostles were handing over their ORAL

religions. The rest was inevitable. When Francis Xavier in India, met Eastern religion he was amazed and distressed to find shaven, robed, celibate monks, using rosaries, and punishing their flesh, wayside shrines with images as aids to devotion, ritual prayers repeated endlessly, etc, BUT HEATHEN ONES! He didn't become a Bible-believer and repudiate his "Church." Instead he decided the Devil must have produced this false replica of the True Church, to confuse the people.

Here are recent examples of so-called "Christian" teaching that's based not on the Bible but on Psycho-analysis, and Animist/Witchdoctor Religion:

- "X" has a Spiritual Gift, for discovering and healing the traumas you suffered from the time of your conception onwards.
- If you are feeling depressed/ sick, physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually, the likely cause is some object in your house which brings a curse with it. "X" has a spiritual gift for discovering such objects, so they can be removed, or of lifting curses.
- "It's a well known fact that the spirits of people who have been deprived of life unfairly are the most malicious, and cause the most human suffering. When we consider the millions of infants aborted in recent years, the great upsurge of suffering and misery in our world is explained. There's an urgent need for the Anglican Church to devise a Christening service for these spirits, so they can be released into the mercy of Christ, and humanity spared the suffering that they're causing." (A Charismatic Anglican Psychiatrist author.)
- "Christian marriages are breaking up because occult groups are putting curses on them etc." God's Word says we reap what we sow - except what Sovereign Grace may grant. Christian marriages break up for the same reasons as godless marriages - selfishness, pride, the existence of attractive alternatives. Christians who fail to seek to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit Patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, in their marriage will soon find Love, Joy, and Peace, fading. We need to repent and be restored.)

Q 9. Doesn't the fact that "X" church is constantly casting out demons, removing curses, etc. PROVE the Biblical reality of what they believe they are doing? Sorry, No. Rather what happens there

fainting, hysterical, convulsive, or schizophrenic attacks. Especially in those with sufficient "Faith" to have given up the medication needed for them to function in a relatively normal manner. (A major feature of mental illness is the sufferer's conviction that the treatment and medication is the CAUSE, not the control of his condition.)

Any and all of what are claimed to be symptoms of Demon possession, seem to feature in Mental illnesses. It's Biblical wisdom for us to look for natural explanations of behaviour FIRST, just as we look first for the natural meaning of the words of Scripture. Our Lord's ministry did draw crowds/produce excitement but He did all He could to avoid/limit any publicity, exciting, emotional, entertaining elements, Mk 1:43-45; 5:37; 9:25 etc. Modern "Healing" campaigns seem to centre on them. Normally God speaks in a "still, small voice," 1 Ki 19:12, and simplicity and naturalness marked the Lord's healings. The proof that God HAS worked is seen in a quietening, a desire to follow Him, and willingness to go home to live and speak as a witness for Him, Mk 5:15-20

Q 10 But isn't the threat of the Occult so serious today that we must make a major effort to defeat it? No. Unless we believe we can put out flames by pouring petrol on them. There's truth in the old Hollywood motto "There's no such thing as BAD publicity." Preaching against Evil draws attention to it, and magnifies it in people's hearts and minds. Our task never changes - to PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED/ BURIED/ RAISED/ GLORIFIED/ RETURNING, and to live in the light of His presence. That will seem shockingly simplistic and ridiculously irrelevant to anyone who takes his own religious learning seriously. But then, it always has done, 1 Cor 1:18-25. It's precisely BECAUSE pressure to think about "Satan, Demons, Curses etc" produces an emotional state of unhealthy self-awareness, and imports a science of superstitions to support its claims, that congregations may easily become enslaved by, and pre-occupied with them.

Experiments have proved that a placebo will relieve post-operational pain in many patients simply because they think it is a powerful pain killer, and expect it to work. Similarly, devout members of congregations told - in God's Name by someone they accept as His representative - that something will happen, or has happened, are likely to be convinced that it will, or has happened.

against evil is "BLESS those that CURSE you," Mt 5:44, not "Get a Christian Witch-doctor to lift the curse off you," or "Cast the Demons out of you." God's answer to Spiritual Depression is for us to hand ourselves and our problems over to Him, and to spend our time thinking and doing the things we know to be good "REJOICE.. REQUEST.. THINK.. DO, Phil 4:4-9."

Q 11. Are people tempted with what is OBVIOUSLY Evil? A bare hook catches no fish. The bait has to SEE M good to be desirable. To be like God WAS good. The GOOD man was created for. What the serpent offered Eve was the short-cut impatience grasps, and pride revels in. "I got it for myself NOW, without waiting for God to give it to me." In Lk 4:1-12, bread was GOOD, and what the Lord Jesus needed. The Kingdoms of this world WERE His - what blessing His rule would be - only Satan's term of rebel stewardship wasn't yet up, and the Cross must deal with Sin first. And what could be wrong with claiming a promise of Scripture?

Q 12. What's the Devil's plan for the Church/us Believers in Christ? Three D's sum it up. Distract, Divide, Defile. As long as we don't do what the Lord wants us to do NOW, Satan doesn't care what wonderful displays of devotion and activity we plan. Plan a step forward in your local church fellowship - say a Gospel outreach - and just see how many good reasons for postponement crop up. We're not united enough, have a big expense coming up, can't agree on a speaker, someone's ill/absent, We're DISTRACTED.

We have limited time, energy, money. If we use ANY of it on feelings of jealousy, and resentment, and self-pity, on thoughts of how we can help our right doctrines, ideas or practices prevail against other people's wrong ones, that's so much less for the real battle. We're DIVIDED, and turning our energies against each other.

And in the Lord's battles, such a spirit grieves, Eph 4:29-32 and quenches 1 Th 5:19, the Holy Spirit in our individual and corporate life so that no matter how great the efforts and triumphs, the real victories are impossible. When we think of the DEFILING effect on our spirits, how out of tune with Christ it all makes us. The shame on His Name. The

towards, God. As our natural mind tries to order and make sense of its perceived experiences, it instinctively does so with a view to pleasing us, and confirming our preferences and prejudices. Our greatest problem is pride - The fact that our understanding of our spiritual experiences is closely bound up with the fact that it is ME AS I SEE ME - a subject in which I must surely be accepted as an expert. It's MY CHURCH 'S teaching - and surely we've every reason to be proud of its past achievements and present state. And anyone who disagrees with ME / what MY CHURCH BELIEVES AND DOES, is an enemy attacking MY CHRIST and HIS CHURCH, and therefore Satanically motivated, or, what is equally annoying and disturbing, A RIVAL to be beaten.

None of us dare belittle the experiences of others, but we all need to test by Scripture our interpretation of what we experience. How we interpret our experience depends on the individual mindset/ world-view we've developed from our upbringing and education, in both the natural and spiritual worlds. Christian growth for each of us is always towards God's viewpoint. If what is written in this booklet doesn't conform to what you view as your experience, I beg of you, in the Lord's Name, GO BACK TO HIS BOOK, and start with what He says, and view your experiences in its light. Value the Christian Tradition that brought you to birth, and cradled and reared you, but let God's Word MOVE YOU TOWARDS the centre line of Truth. I'm cheered by the words of a Pastor whose tradition is quite different from mine - "I'm loyal to my Pentecostal tradition, but keep stressing the basics, holiness, servanthood, the person and work of Christ, discipleship, commitment. Reminding people of their responsibilities, publicising the non-spectacular. Preaching expositively, (Trophimus leftsick, as well as Dorcas raised) to cure crankiness."

If what is written here DOES conform to your experience, you have the same obligation. Join me in GOING BACK TO HIS BOOK. Rationalism seemed likely to drive the Supernatural out of both the world and the church of my youth. Today credulous pre-occupation with the Supernatural threatens to drive rationality out of both, and the world is plunging into a reckless, wicked godlessness.

The Lord in His wise mercy has spared me contact with real demon-possession, but these things have distressed me:

- A sermon warning parents not to let children swim on any beach until sure no Heathen Maoris had been buried there for fear they picked up a curse.

APPE NDIX 2 - God, Satan & Us.

While it's usual, and BIBLICAL, to view God and Satan as rulers of Rival Kingdoms of LIGHT and DARKNESS, this is Biblical only in a lesser sense, and tends to merge into Dualistic thinking - the heresy that God and Satan are powers independent of each other. It's more Biblical to think in terms of the ONE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD, and Satan as a Rebellious Provincial Governor, who has succeeded in some degree, for some time, to frustrate some of God's purposes. (God did not CREATE Satan. He created Lucifer who chose to rebel, and become Satan.) The stories of Job, and of Ahab and the Lying Spirit 1 Ki 22:19-23, show that God strictly limits what Satan can do, and makes use of him and his servants for His purposes. God will grant the delusion necessary for Satan's rebellion to come to its temporarily triumphant head, 2 Th 2:11.

Job 1:6 records Satan as one of those who PRESENTED/Yatsab himself before God. The Hebrew word is used of gathering before God at His command, Deu 31:14; Josh 24:1; 1 Sam 10:19; AND, for Moses commanded to stand before Pharaoh, Ex 8:20. This suggests that Satan, although a rebel, along with other Angelic powers was required to report on his stewardship. There's no power in the Universe except the power of our Lord, Col 1:16-17, who "Upholds all things by THE WORD OF HIS POWER/powerful word," Heb 1:3.

God's gifts and callings are irrevocable, Rom 11:29. God gave a high GIFT and CALLING to Satan - Possibly the highest in Creation. It was within his God-given power to rebel, and to tempt Adam and Eve to join him in rebellion. They did. Whatever original authority he had over this world, since they chose to obey him and disobey God, Satan is the effective RULER-PRINCE, and worshipped GOD of this world, Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 1 Jn 5:19.

On the Cross Christ totally defeated Satan, and all his allies, Col 2:15, and provided deliverance for all mankind, Heb 2:14-15. The LORD has not

Since man forfeited his stewardship to Satan by obeying him instead of God, Satan's lawful sphere of activity is the World and its possessions, Lk 4:5-7; Mt 6:24, and the Flesh and its desires and experiences, Jn 8:34; Jas 1:14-15. These remain within his sphere of effective authority, and he's still permitted to organise the world to persecute, and/or tempt us as he chooses. Our bodies/ minds/ emotions, as part of fallen Creation, are still subject to sickness and decay, Rom 8:18-25. But anything that Satan can do IS PART OF THE "ALL THINGS THAT WORK TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD" - the eternal good of making us Christ-like, and we remain secure in the Love of God, Rom 8:28-39.

We reap what we sow, Gal 6:7-8; Jas 1:4-15; 4:1-6; Rom 6:6-22 8:13-25; Phil 3:9-20. The power of Satan's agents is limited, Mt 10:28, and Paul delivers flagrant sinners to Satan for the destruction of their flesh with a view to spiritual gain, 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20.

That we live in fallen bodies, in a rebel world, brings suffering, Rom 8:23, but the WORST Satan and his allies can do, only robs us of the VISIBLE/TEMPORARY things that attract us, so that the INVISIBLE/ETERNAL becomes our delight, 2 Cor 4:16-18. Suffering sifts our motives, Jas 1:2-8, driving us from our Pride and self-sufficiency to the throne of GRACE so that our weakness is lost in His Strength, 2 Cor 12:7-10. We abandon our SELFISH RIGHTS to take refuge in the Cross, where we can live in fellowship with the Suffering Christ, Gal 2:20; Phil 3:7-16, building for a shared eternal glory, Rom 8:17-25.

Satan may be permitted to remove God's GIFTS from our natural lives, as he was in Job's case, but neither he, nor any other power in Heaven, earth, or hell, including ourselves, can ever REMOVE GOD FROM US, Heb 13:5, or us from His hand, Jn 10:28-29. Nor can they remove His Love, and sacrificially loving, blessing/ chastening care that moves us on to Christ-likeness, Rom 8:28-39. Satan's attacks drive us to safety, Prov 18:10. (William Rew, of Zaire, tells how a hunting dog of his that habitually broke free to hunt on its own, met a python which wrapped itself round the dog to crush it. Independent action suddenly lost its attraction for the dog. Being with its Master suddenly seemed desirable. It struggled back to him, and the python was shot. Like us as Believers, the experience taught it to stay close to him, Ps 119:67.)

We're to bless those who curse us, Mt 5:44; seek the Lord's will, and way of escape in all temptation, 1 Cor 10:12-14; and use the uncertainty caused by conflicting teaching as the chance to choose whatever most honours God, 1 Cor 11:19. As we do this no evil can touch us, for we are acting in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit Himself who indwells us. Against Him Satan can do nothing. Only as we step outside the Self-denying, Cross-carrying life, can Satan and Evil touch us.

APPENDIX 3 - The Commission of Matthew 10

What should our reaction be if we meet someone who claims to be operating under the commission of Mt 10:1, with authority from the Lord to heal all sickness, and cast out demons?

Check that his life conforms to the criteria given in the Mt 10 Commission - That he is travelling without spare clothes or money, depending on hospitality and speaking only to Jews. His message is that the Kingdom (and its King) is near, and is demonstrating that fact with a near perfect record of success in healing sickness and casting out demons. (Through failure in their own spiritual life- lack of prayer/fasting- the Disciples had ONE failure.)

If he passes that test we should, like Priscilla and Aquila, ask him home, and give him a more adequate understanding of God's ways in our present age, Acts 18:26 Show from Mt 28:16-20 Mk 16:15-18, that the preaching that the Kingdom/ King is near is over - the Jews have rejected the King and Kingdom, and the King/ the Kingdom isn't NEAR, but in Heaven until they repent as a nation, and He intervenes to reign and put the world to rights, Acts 3:21.

Instead our commission is to take the Gospel of the grace of God to people of every race, everywhere, baptising converts individually, and teaching them to obey all that the Lord has said in His Word. Unlike Mt 10, the Lord's servants today have no AUTHORITY POWER- Exousia to do anything. Instead all such power in Heaven and earth is held in the Lord's own hands, and He will be with His servants always, working the spiritual miracles of Salvation, and, IF/when He chose, (or possibly IF/when He chooses) granting physical miracles to confirm that the message they preached, now recorded in the NT, is authorised by God, Heb 2:3-4.

Still, there's something very odd about preachers travelling and living in comfort, spending money on advertising, canvassing for and collecting large sums of money, making financial gain from books describing their activities, preaching to Gentiles a mixture of the Kingdom promises to Jews, and the Gospel of the Grace of God, and with a similar rate of success (perhaps as high as 10%) in healing, and demon-casting-out as cultists, and spiritists have. I have read that it was their success in these activities that made the Mormons a power in the religious world.

In God's Word we see three religious movements in Israel that prepared the scene for the Lord's FIRST Coming - the Revival of Messianic Hope, the Pharisaic Revival, and the Temple/ Priestly Revival. God used all three of them to call out people who went into the Church, and heaven. Satan used the same movements to blind men's eyes with pre-occupation with the things and blessings of his world, and those so blinded stumbled on after false "Messiahs" until they fell in judgment and destruction about 70AD.

It seems likely that the modern "Charismatic Revival" may be playing a similar role - God using it to reap a harvest for Himself that will, with all Believers, be caught up to Glory at His shout, 1 Th 4:13-18. Satan using its "Kingdom Blessings Now/Mt 7:21-23" elements to pre-occupy people with physical blessings, and to blind them to Biblical spiritual realities. When the true Christians in the "Charismatic Movement" go home, Christendom will have a movement ready for Anti-Christ to take over, as a platform for his false miracles, 2 Th 2:7-12. Under this "False Messiah," mankind will stumble on into the Judgment of the Great Tribulation.

APPENDIX 4 ISRAEL'S COVENANT-BREAKING/being CURSED.

Human Oath-bound agreements might be unjust, foolish, hurtful, and impossible to keep or enforce - eg Saul's oath cursing anyone who ate anything until HIS enemies were destroyed, 1 Sam 14:24. Generally the only MORAL element in breaking such agreements was failure to keep one's promise, and associating God's name with this deceit/failure. God might punish the one compelling an unjust OATH more than the one who failed to keep it. But THE COVENANT OATH between God and Abraham/ Israel was TOTALLY WISE, RIGHTEOUS, EMPOWERED TO BE KEPT, AND INEVITABLY MUST BE

- Put themselves under God's CURSE - Cherem. He'd set them apart for Himself, and they'd welcomed that position, Ex 19:8. Ignoring Him and turning to Idol worship insulted Him, Deu 11. This is compared with a wife leaving her husband for a life of adultery and prostitution. An INEXCUSABLE ACTION, as God had set His love on Israel in grace, made her all she was, given her all she had, and in every way been a perfect Husband. Turning from His LOVE / LOVING CARE, was all the worse as there wasn't even any GAIN FOR HER in doing so, Jer 31:32 Ezek 16:1-63 231-27.
- Equally they were breaking their covenant oath to God, and bringing themselves under the CURSE - Alah, Arar, for having done so. Gal 3:10-13 confirms the consequences of breaking their covenant oath.
- Many of the actions that broke their Covenant with God were obvious sins - Idolatry, Murder, Sexual Immorality, Greedy Exploitation of the weak - these were actions earning God's CURSE - Arar. There was nothing arbitrary, or magical about it all. Such sins must bring a bitter harvest, AND A RIGHTEOUS GOD MUST SEE THAT THEY DID, Deu 27 etc. CURSE - Arar, Mearah is used 18x in Deu 27-28 6x in Malachi and once elsewhere. If they wanted in their heart to please God, He would be pleased with them, 2 Chr 30:17-20 Mt 22:34-40 The Law may seem complicated to us, but the essential requirement was never a matter of special spiritual insights, pharisaical hair-splitting, or priestly rituals, etc. It was a matter of heart/mind/will surrendered to God, and seeking His mercy. Even an ignorant man who wanted to walk with God in His ways was able to, Isa 35:8. If they lacked that desire, intercession by the Godliest could not help them, Ezek 14:20
- The word CURSE - Qalal is used throughout the OT, emphasising the NATURE of the curse they would, and did, experience. As noted earlier it means to despise, frustrate, etc. When Israel despised God, and His Covenant, they made themselves DESPICABLE. In FRUSTRATING His Purposes for them, they doomed themselves to FRUSTRATION. In failing to honour HIM, they made themselves a disgrace and a laughing-stock to the world, 1 Ki 9:6-9. This principle continues to be true today. Only when we rejoice in the Lord, and delight ourselves in Him, are we set free to receive our heart's desires, Ps 37:4.

As Christians/ God's children we're not under EXTERNAL law and can't suffer the curse of covenant-breaking. That CHRIST

DELIBERATELY CHOSEN against God, and conscience. Their experiencing the curse was designed to bring them back to God. Such a return to God DELIBERATELY CHOSEN would bring them into blessing and make them a blessing, just as God intended, Deu 30 1 Ki 8:33-50 Zech 8:13. People being aware that they had sinned against God and were experiencing His Chastening hand leading them to repentance and restoration to His fellowship is seen in, Ps 32 Ps 51; etc. But it's always the result of conviction of actual sin, and restoration required RATIONAL/MORAL ACTION. I know no Scriptural instance when being "under a curse" was detected by subjective introspection, or the way a person felt. Sadly, often, their spiritual hardness of heart made them feel confident, Isa 58:1-14; Mal 1:6-8. It wasn't a case of their FEE LING less than the best - feeling they were cursed.

In all cases:-

- A. GOD, or HIS SERVANTS proclaimed that people were under GOD'S curse because their behaviour was visibly and clearly that which He had stated as being cursed. Apart from the SPIRITUAL/ GODWARD aspect of their behaviour that brought the curse on them - idolatry, etc, the MORAL/ MANWARD ASPECT WAS ALSO OFTEN OBVIOUS, ADULTERY, LYING, STEALING, COVETING, etc are obviously sins against humanity, their own human natures, and that of others, as well as disobedience to God. Eg. see Deu 27:15-26
- B. The curse was a matter of concrete things - famine, military defeat, plague, exile, death. It was obvious to the onlooker, even the heathen onlooker, that what was happening to them was a curse from God that resulted from their disobedience - Read Deu 28:29, Jer 40:2-3; 1 Ki 9:6-9. Their emotional and psychological suffering had obvious causes.

We learn from this that when we're emotionally distressed or depressed, we must deal with the cause, not the effect:

1. Ask the Lord to convict us of any sin that needs to be put right, and accept that if the Holy Spirit doesn't convict us of any specific sin, the problem lies elsewhere. Continuing to look within can only depress us. And our looking to others for spiritual relief can enslave us.
2. We must check whether we've been eating, sleeping, working etc. wisely, and check up on our medical health. (That feeling a miserable

APPENDIX 6- Does CONTACT WITH EVIL BRING A CURSE?

(Exposition of 1 Cor 8:1-10:33 The carcasses of animals offered as sacrifices in temples stocked the Butcher's shops. Jews did not eat such meat. Paul answers the question as to whether Christians should eat such meat.)

8:1-3 What we KNOW/ our opinions, inflate our ego. LOVE, is valuable, because it builds us and others up.

8:4-6 They knew rationally, that an idol is nothing - a nothing - has no life, knowledge, power etc. It cannot affect God offered to it.

8:7 But for some the idol IS something - a Master they once served, an attractive, or threatening alternative to the true God and His service. Their conscience is weak/sensitive in the matter. For them to eat God offered to idols would be choosing to go back to the old life, defiling their conscience, unfitting them for fellowship with God.

8:8 What we eat/don't eat doesn't IN ITSELF matter to God, improve our fellowship with Him, or make us better or worse in His sight.

8:9-10 BUT to exercise our freedom in this way, might offend/ stumble a brother who has a weak/sensitive conscience, about this matter. If he copied us he'd be tripped up and would land in the dirt.

8:11-13 When this happens the weak/sensitive brother, will be destroyed = be spiritually damaged, and his witness spoiled etc. (The Greek word can mean all those things.) Your "SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE," far from doing any good, will have reduced the effectiveness of Christ's death on behalf of that man. This would be a sin against Christ as well as against the fellow believer. Paul will eat vegetables only, rather than hinder anyone's spiritual progress.

In Ch 9 Paul goes on to explore further the idea of personal freedom and "Rights." He writes of his position as an Apostle, and his willingness to give up any right, in order to give the maximum help and example to

- 10:9-10 To challenge God, by grumbling at what His holy, loving will provided, and seeing how far they could go in ignoring His wishes was TEMPTING GOD - Testing what He would do about it. This was expressly forbidden, AND dangerous.
- 10:11-13 If we say we can't help giving in to any temptation, we're slandering God. Certainly temptation is stressful, but so is facing an approaching ball from the "enemy" at cricket or softball/baseball. He IS all out to humiliate us/get us "out." That's half the game. The other half is the fact that "Temptation," is also our chance to SCORE for our team, our Captain. God as umpire guarantees that only balls that are in fact playable by us will ever come at us!
- 10:14-17 Having shown that we ourselves alone are responsible for any sin and failure to do God's will, Paul warns that it's obviously common sense to keep as far as possible away from idolatry. At the heart of Christian worship, at the Lord's table, we confess that we have fellowship with the Lord, His Atoning Blood shed for us, and His body given for us. TOO, we confess our unity with all other believers. THEREFORE it's obvious that our having fellowship with the Godless in feasting in an Idol Temple, isn't just OUR concern, affecting just OUR reputation but involves the reputation of Christ Crucified for us, and also affects our fellow believers.
- 10:18-22 To EAT in a Heathen temple anything that had been sacrificed there was to be receiving from/having fellowship with the altar on which it was offered, and the "god" that it was offered to. IDOLS are of course "nothings" (The prophets stressed that in Jer 10:1-16; Hab 2:18-19, etc), BUT demonic powers are associated with idol worship. How dare any believer CHOOSE to share in the spiritual, artistic, or social fellowship offered in such places! Christ doesn't belong there, and neither do we. We must limit the places we go to, and the people we go with, to those we can share happily with the Lord of glory, and thank him for giving us.
- 10:23-26 "Everything Permissible," living life to the full, to the limits set by the law of the land, the moral standards of our society, or our individual conscience is very attractive. Even Christians, bought with the precious blood of Christ are tempted to do everything He's not specifically forbidden. Paul challenges the low standards that focus on the

accepted. The individual is responsible to decide whether it's something he can do in fellowship with his Lord. If he does, he's not to ask if the meat was from an animal killed as a sacrifice.

But if anyone - in teasing fun, or serious warning (as us teetotallers may be told that the wedding breakfast punch or trifle has alcohol in it!) - told them that the meat HAD been offered to idols, as the conscience of the person giving the information made an issue of it, THEY weren't to eat it.

10:30 Food should be enjoyed with thankfulness to God, and THAT requires us to have a clear conscience before God and man. The one with a weak/sensitive conscience may be a fellow believer, but it's not unusual for those who make no profession of faith in Christ, to have true and high standards for Christian behaviour.

10:31-11:1 Summed up: (a) Godward - do all to His Glory. (b) Manward - Make sure nothing you do will offend the RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES of other people. Eg don't eat/talk about eating pork in the presence of Jews or Moslems. Don't needlessly offend the rationality or philosophy of sophisticated, highly educated people. Avoid turning anyone away from any interest in the Gospel.

Don't offend the conscience of fellow members of the body of Christ by doing anything that would lower their standards and hinder them from going all out to please their Lord. Instead all we do must positively encourage the lost to be saved, and the saved from wasting their time, effort, or money on anything less than the most God-honouring and eternally rewarding of life's options.

APPENDIX 7 - BALAAM.

Num 22:1-24:25 tell us some things, but, there's much more God in His Wisdom hasn't told us about Balaam - He has more important things for us to learn, pass on, and do: Deu 29:29, Acts 1:6-8. Balaam had a reputation for being able to use God's Power, but used DIVINATION, Num 24:1 which God forbids, Deu 18:10. He was revered as a prophet long after his death. 1967 excavations at Deir Alla, Jordan valley, found a classroom wall inscribed with his prophecies.

in God mustn't insult HIM by fearing/ seeking the help of any power in the Universe, Colossians chapters 1 and 2

Num 25 1-18 Balaam at last succeeded in gaining a reward for himself by using his knowledge of the Lord. He knew that malice and magic are powerless against God's people. But as God operates on a MORAL basis, Balaam made sin attractive to God's people, so their wilful choice to join in idol worship, Ex 2:5, etc brought them under God's curse. The attack was indirect, neither Balak, nor Balaam being visible. The approach was not by armed men, but disarming smiles from attractive women, with an invitation to "entertainment" - exotic religious rites associated with sexual indulgence. All quite the "Done thing" for welcome "tourists" in Moab and Midian.

A plague from God - one of the curses promised for such apostasy and immorality, Deu 28 58-59, killed 24000 Israelites. It was stopped at that point only by brutal punitive action against offenders. AND brutal punitive action against the tempters, including Balaam, Josh 13 22

In N T Churches, Satan used the Balaam approach to corrupt and bring them under God's judgment, Rev 2:14. We can expect his most subtle and effective efforts will be through leaders WITHIN THE CHURCH. Even the Apostle Peter, called of God, gifted, and enthusiastic; IMMEDIATELY AFTER having received and voiced the revelation from God that Jesus was "The Christ the Son of the living God," could voice Satan's temptation to the Lord. So, every one of US needs to test by the Scriptures every idea that comes to us, directly, or through the ministry of Men of God, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS BEEN PRECEDED BY CHRIST-EXALTING, AND SOUL-BLESSING REVELATIONS OF TRUTH TO US.

Around us, technological progress is making united world action possible, and social and moral chaos is creating a desperate need for a "Superman" to unite the world and bring it to order. We know that Satan's false "Saviour" will come in with Supernatural powers, 2 Th 2:1-12. We must be on guard against the infiltration of his ideas into the Church, keeping our eyes on the Lord, Heb 12:1-2, and our ears listening for the Shout of triumph, 1 Th 4:16.

Criticism, Corrections and Additions are welcomed.

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