

# **Things that Go Bump in the Night**

## **Recognizing and Confronting General Demonic Activity**

A presentation by James A. Aderman  
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An old Scottish Prayer petitioned the Lord, "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us!"

Just a few months ago a widow in her late seventies described for me middle of the night sounds in, more precisely, on her house. "It sounds like someone is rolling a bowling ball down the roof," she said. But when she checked the outside of her one story ranch home there was no evidence of anything rolling off the roof. This noise happened repeatedly, though haphazardly over several months. She also talked about a time when there was the noise of shelves collapsing in her basement. Both she and her husband heard it. When her husband went downstairs to assess the damage, nothing was out of place.

A slight of frame eighth grader hesitantly told me the story of strange events taking place in her bedroom. A meticulous teenager, she had a specific place for everything in her room. If her things moved by a half inch, she'd know it. But at times she would find her things rearranged, moved out of place. She was an only-child so it wasn't that siblings had been playing in her room. Her parents denied they touched her things. She told how one day she watched in horror as her lipstick spun wildly on the top of her chest of drawers all on its own power.

"I hear a click-tock noise at night when I'm in bed," a primary school boy explained to me. "When the noise goes faster and faster, the ghost gets me. He tickles me." His mother, who had brought him to see me, sat at his side in my office.

The lad went on to explain that there were actually four "ghosts" that haunted him. One was an old lady who stood in the hallway outside his bedroom and said, "Hello." When she came near his bed, she "picks at me," he said. Two other male ghosts also talked with him. Finally, there was a ghost who claimed, "I am your Daddy." (The boy was adopted.) "Sometimes he's mean to me," the little boy said.

His mother told me how she tried to brighten the boy's room at night by affixing glow-in-the-dark stickers to the ceiling. The problem was that they wouldn't glow in the dark. When she took the stickers into another room, they glowed.

The eyes of a high school age boy darted about my office. His head jerked chicken-like. We were talking about his love-affair with Ouija boards, his dabbling in occult spells, and his pursuit of power through the Eastern religion side of the martial arts. He told me about his mother's and grandmother's clairvoyant abilities and his great grandmother's witchcraft. He related his horrific dreams and his conviction that demons can give a person special power if one can please them. In fact, he claimed his demons helped him pass tests in school. He also described how a friend of his and he, though physically separated, shared the same vision (a vision of hell). Later, when they compared their experiences, they confirmed they actually had

the same vision.

“What are you looking at?” I asked him. “What do you see in the corners of my office?”  
“My demons,” he said. “They are up there watching.”

This paper focuses on recognizing and confronting these types of demonic interferences in our lives and in the lives of other Christians.

### **Are Demons Responsible?**

Many contemporary Christians deny the existence of demons.<sup>1</sup> In our age of science and psychology there is little room for spirit beings like angels and demons. Modern enlightenment demands explanations that must be understood in physical world terms. Spirit beings defy such measurement and therefore must be assigned a place among the superstitions of less informed and more gullible cultures.

On the other extreme, among the more Bible-based Christians, a preoccupation with the demonic can exist. Satan and his fiends are believed by them the instigators of the plan and plot of every evil. Human agency is held at a minimum, demonic activity is assigned maximum responsibility. For example, perhaps you’ve also had Christians explain that the sin they were struggling to overcome was not conquerable because of Satan’s harassment.

Both extremes are dangerous. A denial of the demonic leaves one unprepared for Satan’s attacks. An over-emphasis of the demonic leads one to live in unnecessary fear and to excuse sinful personal behavior on the basis of demonic influence.

But perhaps an even more dangerous place to be is where a large share of American Christians find themselves. (Should I be so bold to suggest this includes WELS Christians?) The danger? Being a believer who acknowledges that Satan and his kingdom of demons are real, but who fails to acknowledge that devils continue to be active in our world today. Those Christians can comfort themselves that they know the truth about spiritual beings, but, because they allow themselves to be blinded to the impact of the demonic (or angelic), they live as though those beings don’t exist.

With that in mind, a short review of the Spirit’s word on demons and angels is in order.

The Bible clearly tells us demons are real, are dedicated to frustrating God’s gracious will, and work as hard today (if not harder) to frustrate that will than at any other time in the world’s history.

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<sup>1</sup> Barth: (Denying the existence of the devil and evil angels:) They are the myth, the myth of all mythologies (CD, III,3,521). (He calls this doctrine) one of the bad dreams of the older dogmatics (CD, III,3,531). Bultmann: I maintain that to revive or perpetuate the demonology of the NT in the modern world is to incur the charge of obscurantism and superstition. The church should do all in her power to root it out. (Kerygma and Myth, 120). Source: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary dogmatics notes.

The Washington Post provides op ed articles from a number of people on this issue at [http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/2009/03/does\\_satan\\_exist/all.html](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/2009/03/does_satan_exist/all.html)

a. Demons are real beings.

From Genesis through Revelation Satan and his hordes of fallen angels are described as real beings.<sup>2</sup> They are spiritual creatures, but living creatures nonetheless. When his ministry begins, Jesus is confronted by Satan, a real being with the ability to think and act.<sup>3</sup> The Savior speaks to inhabiting demons as individuals<sup>4</sup> and those demons are quoted as individuals with an awareness of their being, a being differentiated from other demons<sup>5</sup>. Demons are as different from one another as humans differ from each other. For example, Jesus speaks of one demon inviting seven demons “more wicked than itself” to share an unprotected human host.<sup>6</sup>

b. Demons are dedicated to frustrating God’s gracious will

As rebellious angels, devils continuously wage war against their creator. Since they cannot directly inflict harm on God, they fix their attention on humans, who are at the center of God’s affection in the universe.<sup>7</sup> So Peter calls the devil our enemy who is on the prowl, looking to devour us.<sup>8</sup> John identifies him with the smirking serpent who led our first parents to sin and warns that his intent is to lead “the whole world astray.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Job 1:6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. Zachariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

<sup>4</sup> Mark 7:29 Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” Luke 4:33,35 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice.... 35 “Be quiet!” Jesus said sternly. “Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. Luke 8:30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 8:31 The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.” Luke 4:33,34 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, 34 “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God!” Luke 8:30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 12:45, Luke 11:26

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Peter 5:8

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 12:9. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Paul tells us that demons are the gods who lurk behind every false religion.<sup>10</sup>

c. Demonic rebellion will worsen as the End nears.

Paul urges us to recognize that the unseen hand instigating temptation, doubt, and spiritual rebellion is a demonic hand: “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”<sup>11</sup>

We should expect that, as we draw closer to the end of the universe, the terror tactics and deadly deceptions of demons will become more pronounced. Jesus warns about the severe temptations to unbelief during the end times, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect, if that were possible.”<sup>12</sup> John’s Revelation describes how the Anti-Christ along with his allies in anti-Christian government and among anti-Christian prophets will perform great signs and wonders prior to Jesus’ thief-in-the-night return. He reveals how their power source is “spirits of demons performing miraculous signs.”<sup>13</sup>

Sanctified living is impossible because of the evil, God-hating influence of the Devil. But to that influence we must add the world as well as our own sin nature.

a. Satan and his demons are constantly at work to blind the minds of humans so “they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> The sinful peer pressure the world exerts attempts to press everyone into its rebellious mould, shaping us with its cravings, lusts, and boastings.<sup>15</sup> And our own inborn hostility toward God, rebellion against his Spirit, and attraction to enslaving ourselves to sin makes every human easily prey.<sup>16 17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:20 The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 24:22

<sup>13</sup> Revelation 16:13,14

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4

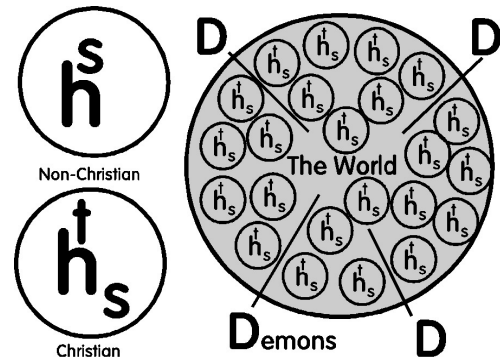
<sup>15</sup> 1 John 2:16

<sup>16</sup> Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.  
Galatians 5:17 The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.  
Romans 7:25 I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

<sup>17</sup> Additional passages that describe the work of the devil, the world, and our flesh include:  
John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. (Also John 14:30; 16:11.)

b. Although the Scriptures differentiate between the influence of the devil, the world, and our flesh, the way that unholy trinity works within us is so intertwined we can't clearly determine where one's influence ends and the others' begins.<sup>18</sup> For instance, in 1 John the Spirit warns us about our personal sinfulness (e.g., 1:6), but also notes how the world contributes to that sin (2:15f) and how demons demonstrate their influence in our lives through the sins we commit (3:8).

The warning for us is to stay on our guard against the misleading of demons and the world, but never to allow their influence to become an excuse for our sinning. Geraldine, a.k.a. Flip Wilson of his 1970s variety show (apologies to those of you not old enough to remember this show), attempted to sidestep her responsibility by claiming, "The devil made me do it!" The Scriptures do not recognize that defense.



Nonetheless, it is apparent in the Old and New Testaments that demons have imposed themselves directly into the lives of humans. Satan afflicted Job, robbing him of property, family, and health.<sup>19</sup> An evil spirit on occasion seized control of King Saul.<sup>20</sup> A demon incited

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James 1:13-15 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

1 John 2:16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

<sup>18</sup> James 3:14,15 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

1 Peter 5:8,9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 John 3:7-10 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

1 John 4:1-3 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

Revelation 12:10 (Satan), the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before God day and night

<sup>19</sup> Job 1

<sup>20</sup> 1 Samuel 18:10

David to take an census of Israel.<sup>21</sup> God allowed a demon to bring conflict between King Abimelech and the city of Shechem.<sup>22</sup> Jesus, as well as his disciples, encountered demons who had inhabited humans.<sup>23</sup> Jesus says it was Satan who caused a woman to be crippled, "Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"<sup>24</sup> Matthew 9:32 tells us a demon was responsible for a man's inability to talk. The Syrophoenician woman called out to Jesus because "my daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."<sup>25</sup>

The devil was allowed limited physical power over Jesus during this ministry initiating temptations. The devil took him to a mountain and to the highest point of the temple.<sup>26</sup> This spirit also exerted physical influence against the apostles. Paul does not explain how his plans to visit the Thessalonians were thwarted, but he insists Satan did thwart them, "We wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--but Satan stopped us."<sup>27</sup> It is also Paul who describes his "thorn in the flesh" as a "messenger of Satan," sent to torment him.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, the Scriptures record instances where the hateful rebellion of demons is apparent and where their revolt was directly confronted and put down.

No where does God's Word say that with the passing of time the influence of Satan and his demons will fade. Demons are as alive, well, and active in the world today as they have ever been. Rapidly declining morals around the globe, the genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that now continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the dramatic rise in non-Christian religion placard the power of hell in our world. The Scriptures never give us saints any indication that demons will ever forsake inhabiting human beings as a way to harass them and to lead them and others away from

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<sup>21</sup> "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel"(1 Chronicles 21:1).

<sup>22</sup> Judges 9:22-24 After Abimelech had governed Israel three years, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech. God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech.

<sup>23</sup> General examples:  
Matthew 4:24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.  
Mark 6:13 They [Jesus' disciples] drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 13:16

<sup>25</sup> Matthew 15:22

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 4:5,8

<sup>27</sup> 1 Thessalonians 2:18

<sup>28</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:7

salvation in Jesus. If anything, the Bible warns us that as Judgment Day draws closer, we will see more direct evidence of demonic interference in our world.<sup>29</sup> It is also of interest that in connection with the resurrected Savior's marching orders to his New Testament church is a promise to his disciples regarding their power over demons, "These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons...."<sup>30</sup>

## General Demonic Harassment

This presentation does not deal with severe demonic harassment, sometimes called demonic possession. We should anticipate that such harassment will exist until Judgment. See Siegbert Becker's assessment of possession happening today below<sup>31</sup>. However, there are degrees of

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<sup>29</sup> Matthew 24:21-25 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect -- if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.

1 Timothy 4:1-5 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

Revelation 20:7-10 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth -- Gog and Magog -- to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

<sup>30</sup> Mark 16:17

<sup>31</sup> The sainted Dr. Siegbert Becker, former professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, writes in his book *Wizards that Peep* (NPH, 1978),

*Thirty-five years ago, it seems to me, anyone who would seriously have suggested that there are today actual cases of devil possession would in most instances have been looked at askance as incurably superstitious. This was even characteristic of most Christians. Liberal Protestantism widely denied even the existence of a personal devil.... The more conservative admitted that there were cases of devil possession in the New Testament times but seriously questioned whether such things could still happen today.*

*No Bible-believing Christian can deny the possibility and the reality of demonic possession. The Bible tells us in clear and unmistakable terms there were people possessed by devil who were cured by the Lord Jesus and by the apostles. To doubt the possibility of demonization is to doubt the authority of Scripture....When the biblical statements are taken at face value the only possible conclusion to which we can come is that at least in New Testament times people were possessed by devils and that Jesus and his disciples actually cast them out. On this conclusion there is no room for compromise.*

*Whether there is such a thing as devil possession today is at least subject to question. The question*

demonization, not just possession (*obsessio corporalis* or *obsessio spiritualis*), which may afflict individuals. Demonic harassment spans from possession to the everyday annoyances that devils insert into our lives.

It's clear from Scripture that everyone is affected by demonic activity to some degree. For example, unbelievers have a level of demonization according to

- a. 2 Corinthians 4:4, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God"
- b. Ephesians 2:1,2 that says before conversion, "[we] followed...the ruler of the kingdom of the air...who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

Believers also have "everyday" problems with demonic harassment.

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:11 says, "I have forgiven...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."
- b. 1 Thessalonians 2:18 describes how Paul wanted to visit in Thessalonica, "but Satan stopped us."
- c. Peter warns Christians in 1 Peter 5:8, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."
- d. The Book of Revelation predicts (2:10), "The devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days."

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*probably cannot be answered with absolute finality without a revelation from God, since we are here dealing with things which are beyond the measuring capacity of scientific instruments. However, I must say that, for myself, I am convinced of the occurrence of the phenomenon in the modern world.... It is probably not as common as the present spate of literature and the surge of interest in the subject might seem to imply.... Restrained estimates (on the number of demonized individuals) would surely seem to indicate, however, that the evidence must finally overwhelmingly point to the fact that sometimes human beings actually do become demonized.*

*While we must be on our guard against a naive and gullible attitude, it seems to me that the evidence presented to demonstrate that there is such a thing as devil possession today is so overwhelming that it is more difficult not to believe than to believe. Only someone who is predisposed to deny the existence of the supernatural would have a good logical premise on which to base his rejection of the evidence. On the other hand it also seems well established that much of what appears to some people to be demonization is neurotic imagination, which may be encouraged by leaving the impression that possession is a common occurrence (pages 78-84).*

After counseling around 200 cases of demonic harassment, I am convinced Dr. Becker's assessment of the existence of demonic possession to be accurate. Satanic forces take over the will of individuals yet today. And it is happening in our culture. I also agree that, contrary to the claims of some Christians, in most cases, demonization should not take the blame for one's failure to live the Christian life. Such moral lapses must be dealt with by personal repentance rather than casting out supposed "demons of lust," "demons of lying," etc. I further agree that "neurotic imagination" is at the heart of some claims of demonization.



## Degrees of Demonic Encroachment

Demons working from the OUTSIDE		Demons working from the INSIDE	
Temptations, hassles (normal disruptions)	Hassles that affect the ability of a believer to function normally.	Demons have a "hold" or "grounds" in a believer's life.	Demons have (full) control in a person's life.
OPPRESSION	INTRUSION	OCCUPATION	RESIDENCY
Christians may be involved at any of these levels.			Non-Christians only

Martin Luther was keenly aware of the work of demons in his life and his world. For example,

- a. "Satan is there even when a man is asleep, though angels are also present. The devil can so frighten me that sweat pours from me in my sleep.... Troubled dreams are of the devil, because everything that serves death and terror and murder and lies is the devil's handiwork. Satan has often distracted me from prayer and has put such thoughts into my head that I ran away from it. The most severe bouts I have had with him I had when I was in bed at my Katy's side."<sup>32</sup>
- b. "I think that all dangerous diseases are blows of the devil. For this, however, he employs the instruments of nature.... Satan corrupts the qualities and humors of the body, etc. God also employs means for the preservation of health, such as sleep, food, and drink, for he does nothing except through instruments. So the devil also injures through appropriate means. When a fence leans over a little, he knocks it all the way down to the ground."<sup>33</sup>
- c. "The angels are very close to us and protect us and other creatures of God at his command.... The devils, too, are very near to us. Every moment they are plotting against our life and welfare, but the angels prevent them from harming us. Hence it is that they don't always harm us although they always want to harm us. There are many demons in the woods, water, swamps, and deserted places who may not injure people. Others are in dense clouds and cause storms, lightning, thunder, and hail and poison the air. Philosophers and physicians attribute these things to nature and I don't know what other causes."<sup>34</sup>
- d. "I was often pestered [by the devil] when I was imprisoned in my Patmos, high up in the fortress in the kingdom of the birds. I resisted him in faith and confronted him with this verse: 'God, who created man, is mine, and all things are under his feet.' If you have any power over him, try it!"<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Luther's works, vol. 54 : Table Talk; No. 508: One Should Not Pay Too Much Attention to Dreams – Spring, 1533

<sup>33</sup> Luther's works, vol. 54 : Table Talk; No. 360: Medicine May Be Used to Cure Disease – Fall, 1532

<sup>34</sup> Luther's works, vol. 54 : Table Talk; No. 2829: Protective Angels and Destructive Demons – Between November 24 and December 8, 1532.

<sup>35</sup> Luther's works, vol. 54 : Table Talk; No. 3814: How to Deal with Specters and Poltergeists — April 5, 1538

We, from our *esteemed* vantage point of the second decade of the Third Millennium, may be tempted to judge Luther obsessive about demons and their influence on life. But before we shrug off his convictions about demons as the prattlings of a child of his superstitious times, we need to evaluate how much we are children of our rationalistic, non-spiritual times. As the spiritual children of Luther, we ask, What does the Spirit tell us in his Word?

### **Things that Go Bump in the Night**

Are ghostly apparitions acts of Satan and his minions? Can spells be cast and conveyed? Are unexplained voices, noises, and lights evidence of demons attempting to harass, threaten, frighten? Is it possible for demons to impact the physical world in these ways?

Job chapter one describes how Satan directed tornadoes and terrorists to afflict that ancient saint, robbing him of farm and family. The Spirit also attributes Job's loss of health to the Devil's intervention. The emotional (spiritual) distress King Saul experienced was caused by a demon. A demon assigned to oversee Persia prevented the angel sent to Daniel from reaching him with God's message.<sup>36</sup> An evil spirit caused political dissension between Abimelech and the city of Shechem. Angels have assumed physical forms (human and animal) and spoken with humans.<sup>37</sup> They have also inhabited people's dreams.<sup>38</sup> The Scriptures give us no reason to believe that demons are unable to assume physical forms or impact our dreams. In the Gospels we find that some demonized people suffered health problems, displayed superhuman strength, inhabited animals (pigs), and were used by the demons who afflicted them as mouthpieces.

#### *Ghosts*

A member of mine complained to me about her dead mother-in-law's haunting of the room in which she died. There apparently was no love lost between the two of them; my member described her as a bitter, demanding woman. She talked about unexplained noises that came from that bed room and a cooler temperature there than in the rest of the house.

It's a fairly common phenomenon for people grieving the death of a loved one to "see" that loved, perhaps in the chair they regularly sat in or in a hallway or bedroom they regularly used. After my father's death my mother experienced such a grief-vision; she had a similar vision of my sister after she died. These experiences are the result of one's subconscious trying to make sense of the loss. They are not examples of those dead people returning to visit. If others had been in the same area where such visions were experienced they would not have seen what the griever saw because, no matter how real it felt to the one experiencing it, the vision was only taking place in his mind and not in reality.

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<sup>36</sup> **Daniel 10:13** But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

<sup>37</sup> Examples: Daniel 10; Elijah's fiery chariot, 2 Kings 2:12, compare Psalm 104:4.

<sup>38</sup> Example: Joseph's visitation by an angel, Matthew 1:20f.

But repeated visions of people who have died, especially when it includes conversation with them, goes beyond the subconscious battling for closure over the death of someone close. These are experiences that the Scriptures will not allow us to attribute to a disembodied human spirit.

God's Word does not allow belief that human souls find themselves in any other place than heaven or hell after death. A frequent Old Testament term for a believer's state after death is that that believer was resting with his fathers.<sup>39</sup> Jesus assures the repentant thief that after his death he would find himself in paradise.<sup>40</sup> The unbelieving rich man in Jesus' parable finds himself in the torments of hell and Lazarus is pictured enjoying heaven.<sup>41</sup> The Book of Hebrews states, "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."<sup>42</sup> Paul writes about how at death we move out of this temporary tent and exchange our existence for the eternal halls of heaven.<sup>43</sup>

Through Moses and Isaiah God makes it clear that attempting to speak with the dead is morally unacceptable. "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them."<sup>44</sup> "Let no one be found among you... who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead."<sup>45</sup> "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?"<sup>46</sup>

These prohibitions against contacting the dead did not stop Jews from believing there were ghosts, however. Confer the boat-bound disciples take on Jesus' walking toward them, "When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear."<sup>47</sup>

The conclusion must be that ghost-like creatures do exist, but they cannot be the

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<sup>39</sup> Examples, Genesis 47:30, Deuteronomy 31:16, 2 Samuel 7:12, 1 Kings 2:10.

<sup>40</sup> Luke 23:43

<sup>41</sup> Luke 16:19f

<sup>42</sup> Hebrews 9:27

<sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:1, 4 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.... For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

<sup>44</sup> Leviticus 19:31

<sup>45</sup> Deuteronomy 18:10

<sup>46</sup> Isaiah 8:19

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 14:26. Also note the resurrected Jesus also finds it necessary to assure his disciples he is not a ghost, "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Luke 24:39).

disembodied souls of humans.<sup>48</sup> The only other option is that these apparitions are demons who have taken on this form. (As we have noted above angelic beings have the ability to assume a variety of forms.<sup>49</sup>) It should not surprise that in those instances where communication with these beings is reported that they are able to share information that it would seem only the person they are pretending to be would have access to. Demons – not to mention God’s angels – are constantly on-duty in our lives. They have full access to what we do. And they are able to communicate that to each other. No wonder God forbids communicating with such beings.

### *Poltergeists*

A family in the Lake Geneva area asked me to visit their home. They described seeing objects fly across their living room. One of the teenage children talked about hearing a low, growling voice.

A number of years ago when I was counseling several individuals who were greatly harassed by demons, there were some unusual things that happened in my own home. My daughters complained about things disappearing from their rooms, only to reappear some time later in the place they originally had left them. One evening when I was about to leave home to teach a class on demons, I passed one of my daughters dark and empty bedroom. The television in the room went on by itself – the first and only time it ever did that.

The word poltergeist is drawn from the German word *polter* which means to “cause noise by knocking things about” and *geist*, a spirit, a ghost. The transcripts of Siegbert Becker’s lecture notes on the occult speak about poltergeist activity as fact. He cautions, “We surely ought to be on our guard against naive credulity, yet the conclusions of trained observers would seem to indicate that some of these accounts are based on actual occurrences that defy a natural explanation.”

Tempering his comments with his own caveat, Becker still maintains that there is sufficient evidence to acknowledge poltergeist activity.

According to reports that occasionally appear in the newspapers and that have often been investigated, strange and unexplained events take place as a result of haunting by a poltergeist. Unusual noises are heard for which there is no explanation. They are described

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<sup>48</sup> Regarding the story of Saul and the witch of Endor and the appearance of Samuel. Dr. Siegbert Becker writes: Personally I am convinced that she was in contact with something supernatural. The fact that she cried out in fear may indicate that she got more than she expected. But the question of whether this was Samuel or not is more difficult to decide. Luther says that it was a spirit that imitated Samuel in appearance and dress.<sup>1</sup> Such a view is not impossible even though the text says that Samuel spoke (1 Samuel 28:15). The argument that God would not permit one of His departed prophets be disturbed in death is certainly not based on any clear statement of Scripture, even though it is widely held. It is, however, hardly necessary for us to answer or even to debate such questions. That it was a sinful act on Saul's part, to attempt to gain hidden knowledge in this way and that it brought him nothing but grief is, however, made crystal clear in the text. Source: The Occult (a series of lectures), Siegbert W. Becker (<http://www.wlsessays.net/node/132>)

<sup>49</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us demons can even masquerade as God’s angels, “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

as moanings, groanings, scratching, pounding, rapping, and even actual speech. Dishes rattle or even fly around the room. Books whose source is obscure fall or are thrown. Sometimes they fall slowly in apparent violation of the law of gravity, or they fly in a curved pattern that cannot be accounted for by any of the laws of motion. When the rocks are picked up, they are found to be either unnaturally hot or cold. Heavy furniture is moved without anyone being near it. Objects mysteriously appear or disappear. The temperature of a room may be mysteriously raised or lowered. Fires, for which there is no apparent cause, may be kindled, and sometimes floods of water appear from nowhere. Sometimes apparitions are seen which are identified as previous tenants in the house or castle, very often people who have been murdered or committed suicide. Strong odors often manifest themselves.

Even people who accept the supernatural find it difficult to believe that such things really happen and that they are caused by spirits, or, if they do suspect that they might be true, they may find it difficult in this materialistic age to admit to such secret doubts about the closed character of this universe of ours.<sup>50</sup>

### **Dealing with Things Bumping in the Night**

I doubt that my experience is unique. You have probably also had members who have described to you their encounters with things bumping in the night. Initial skepticism that these experiences are demonic rather than immediate embrace of that explanation is probably the best course. Last month there was a rapping sound coming from the floor under our television room as my wife and I relaxed there. Rather than assuming a demonic threat, I went down into the basement to check it out. It requires several minutes of investigation, but the rapping turned out to be a loose electrical conduit vibrating against the floor joist. So when you get these reports do the tactful information gathering: Are you sure no one was playing a trick on you? Was anyone else there to experience this? Has it happened before? Are there any special times it occurs?

These are also important questions to assess why these events happen if there is demonic harassment at play. Demonic interference in our lives can occur for a variety of reasons.

- a. Demons, of course, are constantly attempting to exploit our spiritual weaknesses. Like their master, they prowl about seeking openings – or creating openings – that will allow them to devour us.<sup>51</sup> These are the daily incursions of “normal” spiritual war in which we and demons are combatants.
- b. Sins that we have not dealt with properly provide an invitation to demons to harass us. In Ephesians 4:26-27 Paul quotes from Psalm 4:4 and then warns, “‘In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil (δίαβολος, slander, adversary) a foothold (Greek: τοπος, a place, region, room, s, opportunity).” Lenski notes, “By manifesting our exasperation too long and not laying it

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<sup>50</sup> The Occult (a series of lectures), Siegbert W. Becker (<http://www.wlsessays.net/node/132>)

<sup>51</sup> 1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

before God in prayer at least by sundown and thus sinning we should not give room to God to exercise his righteous activity but to the devil to use his activity in our sinning.”<sup>52</sup> The more we refuse to acknowledge sin in our lives – anger or any other – the greater the place (region) we give over to Satan.

- c. Involvement in the occult also is an invitation to demons to take more of a role in our lives. Although black magic and satanic covens may first come to mind in this regard, playing with a Ouija board or tarot cards, seeking one’s future through palm reading or crystals, or engaging in astrology are also doorways to demonic interference in one’s life.<sup>53</sup>
- d. Ancestral involvement in the occult may also provide demons with a seeming right to afflict the generations that follow. After demanding, "You shall have no other gods before me," the Lord specifically applies that commandment to the demon-designed religions his people left behind in Egypt and would encounter in the Holy Land. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:3-6).<sup>54</sup> We usually teach these words as the conclusion to the Commandments but notice how God’s warning of his punishment for the worship of false gods (i.e., demons masquerading as gods)<sup>55</sup> will extend to future generations.

Dr. Fred Dickason, a Christian theologian who has worked with over 500 heavily demonized individuals, maintains that 95% of those people came from families which had occultic commitments.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, Lenski, p. 578-579.

<sup>53</sup> Deuteronomy 18:10 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD.

Other examples of involvement with the occult would include praying to demons/ spirit guides/ghosts, etc; seances; fortune telling; psychics; offering sacrifices of fruit, flowers, animals; charms, channeling, crystals; horoscopes; involvement in false religions and New Age theology (Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Eastern religions); favoring music that glorifies Satan, immorality, suicide, and other sins; demon inspired teachings of liberal, cultic, and charismatic Christianity may also open one to demonic interference.

Whenever the Lord God of the Bible is not our source of confidence, strength, and hope, we have crossed the bridge into the occult.

<sup>54</sup> See also Jeremiah 32:18 You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers’ sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the LORD Almighty,

<sup>55</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:20 The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God.

<sup>56</sup> Demon Possession and the Christian, C. Fred Dickason, p. 221

- e. Spells and curses sent by others may also be the reason for such phenomenon in our lives. Several years ago I was invited to the home of a young family near West Bend, WI. Their five year old son had been complaining to them for some time about three “people” who would keep him awake at night. They were sure he was imagining this, especially because he would often amuse himself (he was an only child) by playing with pretend friends. Their assessment of the situation changed one night when the boy came to bed with his mother because he was frightened. Shortly after, she saw these people herself; they were hovering over her bed. It was then that they contacted me for advice. As it turned out, the mother’s brother had been conjuring demons to harass the family.

Siegbert Becker insisted that magic spells actually do work. He defines magic as “the divinely forbidden art of attempting to bring about results beyond human power by recourse to superhuman spirit agencies”<sup>57</sup> He cites the experience of a member of a congregation he once served. She told him “how she was cured of malaria by scattering a handful of barley in a circle around herself at the crossroads at midnight while reciting an incantation that began with the words, “I scatter this seed in the name of my Jesus.”<sup>58</sup>

In addition he writes, “Charms, are very effective.... It is hard to resist the conclusion that the devil’s power is actually brought to bear in many cases of magic.”<sup>59</sup> In *Wizards That Peep* Becker quotes repeatedly and confidently from Kurt Koch, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century German theologian who wrote several books about his investigation of occult phenomenon. “If half of the stories told in the books written by Kurt Koch are true, then there can hardly be any doubt that witchcraft is effective today through the enlistment of demonic powers.”<sup>60</sup>

Koch maintains that “the most powerful sorcerer I have ever met is the shaman Alualuk whom...I met in Alaska when visiting the Eskimo tribe to which he belongs. This shaman even possessed the occult power to raise heathen people from the dead. One such person who he raised to life again lived a further ten years. However, Alualuk was soundly converted to Christ and as a result of his conversion he lost his magical powers. When I asked him, ‘Whose power did you use to do all these things?’ he replied, ‘The power of the devil of course.’”<sup>61</sup>

- f. Demonic claim to a certain piece of property may also result in hauntings or poltergeist activity. We must admit that there is no clear teaching in Scripture that demons are assigned certain areas to patrol. However, we have an example of that kind of territorialism in the Prince of Persia who prevented the Lord’s angel from reaching Daniel

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<sup>57</sup> *Wizards That Peep*, p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>61</sup> *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, Kegel Publications 1970.

in a timely manner.<sup>62</sup> The leader of the legion of demons in the Gadarene describes his unwillingness to leave there, “He begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area” (Mark 5:10). Jesus names Satan the god of this world.<sup>63</sup> In addition, we should not overlook that adherents of many religions describe specific geographical locations as the home of certain spirit beings.

Not one of these reasons for demonic harassment provides demons with a legal right to afflict God’s people. Blood-bought children of God do not belong to Satan or any demon. Jesus’ perfect life and sin-suffering death guarantee that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>64</sup> In baptism the Triune God has placed his name on us by working faith in Jesus within us so we now belong to him. This God claims us as his, having marked us with “a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”<sup>65</sup> He has adopted, guaranteeing we “are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.”<sup>66</sup>

Freedom from this kind of demonic harassment, of course, requires that any sins in our lives that have given room to demons be confessed and Jesus’ cleansing claimed. The anticipated fruit of faith would include a commitment never to allow such sins into one’s life again. In many cases, a rite of private confession is most helpful. Without proper confession and absolution, demons will maintain their foothold in a person’s life. In addition, the Christian will rededicate himself to filling his life and heart with his Father’s Word. Without the guarding power of that sentry, the danger of a recurrence of harassment, even increased harassment, escalates. Recall Jesus’ description of the way unclean spirits operate, “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”<sup>67</sup>

I have attached a document called, *A Vow of Renunciation*, that could be used for this purpose. You’ll find a paragraph there that addresses any ancestral ties to the demon world.

If harassment is the result of a person’s deep involvement in the occult, there will likely be significant counseling required before this person is able to shrug off the lies and threats of the

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<sup>62</sup> Daniel 10:13 The prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

<sup>63</sup> For example, John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11.

<sup>64</sup> Romans 8:1

<sup>65</sup> Ephesians 1:13

<sup>66</sup> Ephesians 2:19

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 12:43-45



demons in his life. A refocusing on who we are in Christ is essential for spiritual health to return. Several years ago I wrote a series of articles on that topic for *The Northwestern Lutheran*. They are entitled, *Our Place in the Son*. They are available at the *Forward in Christ* web site and can be reach through <http://www.wels.net>.<sup>68</sup>

Demonical prowling, spells and curses, as well as demonic claims to property are also best confronted on the basis of God's grace in Jesus. Affirming the complete forgiveness Jesus has won on the cross and has guaranteed in the empty tomb is the strength of the gospel armor the Spirit provides us in the arsenal of his Word.<sup>69</sup> Demons flee, spells and curses neutralize, and demonic property claims dissolve in the freedom-giving light of Scripture.

I have attached another form I use when cleansing a place of demons (*Scriptures for Cleansing a Place*). You'll notice that it is four pages of God's promises about who he is and, through his grace, who we are. It is not a magical rite. It is a statement of truth. In my experience, standing on this truth breaks the ability of evil spirits to infest a place and provides relief to the Christians who live there.

## **The War is Won**

Not only is the war between us and Satan winnable, it is won. "The reason the Son of God

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<sup>68</sup> Assisting Christians who have strayed into the occult will include working through basic issues of Christianity. These believers need to be reassured of their unshakable position before God through Jesus. When they understand this, the lies that hold them in bondage to demons are broken and they are freed.

I concentrate on helping individuals work through two steps as they stand against demonic encroachment in their lives. The first is that they take back the ground they gave over to Satan. That involves

1. Acknowledging and renouncing the opening they gave to demonic harassment (Vow of Renunciation).
2. Claiming God's forgiveness in Jesus.
3. Demonstrating fruits of repentance to express their thankfulness for God's grace. That includes severing all ties with the occult.

The next step is to grow in appreciation for who it is Christ has made them and, consequently, to take advantage of the Pygmalion effect (what we believe about ourselves changes who we are and how we act). That growth happens as they

1. Immerse themselves in God's Word (personal and corporate Bible study, worship, memorization of the Scriptures, family devotions, etc.).
2. Refresh themselves with God's gracious promises about himself and them.
3. Step out in faith on those promises, determining to live up to who they are in Christ. On the flip side of this step, they will refuse to give in to the feeling they are less than God has declared them to be.

<sup>69</sup> Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

appeared was to destroy the devil's work."<sup>70</sup> Jesus' resurrection day descent into hell is proof of that victory. "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, (Christ) made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."<sup>71</sup> All that remains is the "mopping up" action that follows every war, as victors continue to encounter pockets of resistance even after there's been unconditional surrender.

Even as we face fierce fighting, the promise of Almighty God remain ours. "If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent."<sup>72</sup>

The battles against Satan and his demons are successfully waged not on our power nor by incantations and religious charms but by the Spirit of the Lord of Armies through the empowering of his Word. David's address to Goliath applies to our battles with demons, "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."<sup>73</sup> We are saved from sin by the Lord's grace and power. We conquer in spiritual warfare by the same grace and power. Our victory is "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty."<sup>74</sup>

## **A Mighty Fortress**

A Warfare Hymn by Martin Luther

1. A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from every need That has us now ov'rtaken.  
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal.
2. With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the valiant one, Whom God himself elected.  
You ask, "Who is this?" Jesus Christ it is,  
The almighty Lord, And there's none other God; He holds the field forever.
3. Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpow'r us.  
This world's prince may still, Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none, He's judged, the deed is done! One little word can fell him.
4. The Word they still shall let remain, Nor any thanks have for it;

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<sup>70</sup> 1 John 3:8

<sup>71</sup> Colossians 2:15

<sup>72</sup> Psalm 91:9-13

<sup>73</sup> 1 Samuel 17:47

<sup>74</sup> Zechariah 4:6

He's by our side upon the plain With his good gifts and Spirit.  
And do what they will, Hate, steal, hurt or kill,  
Though all may be gone, Our victory is won; The kingdom's ours forever.

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## A Vow of Renunciation

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [name], in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of the blood he shed for me on Calvary, renounce the devil and all his wicked works.

I acknowledge, repent of, and renounce any ways I have allowed sin to reign in my life. Those sins may include the use of illicit drugs, of music that honors Satan, of pornography, and of abortion. I repent of all immorality, bitterness and anger, lust, and \_\_\_\_\_ [any other sins].

I confess and renounce all my occultic practices and sins as an abomination before the Most High Triune God. I renounce any and all connection I have had seeking hidden knowledge through the Ouija board, seances, tarot cards, crystal balls, psychics, horoscopes, magic(k), and \_\_\_\_\_ [other involvements].

I renounce any occult influences that exist in my life as a result of the involvement of my parents, grandparents or any other ancestors in any form of Satanism and/or sin. I claim your promise, merciful and mighty Lord God, that through faith in Jesus I am your dear child and I ask you to break any hold that Satan may have in my life because of the deeds and beliefs of my forefathers.

I pray that any evil power or ability that I possess or which has oppressed or possessed me to be completely destroyed and removed from me for I want no gift that isn't from you, Lord God of the Bible. Such gifts may include the ability to read minds, converse with spirits, control others, cast spells, levitate, have out-of-body experiences, foretell the future. I desire no gift which does not originate from the Triune God.

By the power of the Spirit who lives within me, I commit myself, my body, my mind, my personality, my emotions, my whole being to the Triune God: the Father who created and preserves me, the Son who became a human being in order to forgive all my sins, the Spirit who has created faith in my heart and keeps it there. I take my position through Jesus in that God's sight as his dearly loved child, as a victorious conqueror, as dead to sin and alive to God. In the power and authority of Jesus, I command that every spiritual chain that binds me be broken and I no longer be harassed by any demon.

I thank you, Father, for deliverance in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### **CONFESSION** (from the Luther's Small Catechism)

Confession has two parts. The one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the pastor\* as from God himself, not doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven. (\*The German term is best translated as "confessor," that is, the person who hears the confession.)

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, employer or employee? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you hurt anyone by word or deed? Have you been dishonest, careless, wasteful, or done other wrong?

The confessor will say to the repentant, "By the authority of Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

## A Daily Affirmation of Faith

### My Confession of Faith

Today, through the power of the Spirit who lives within me, I rejoice that “the blood of Jesus (God’s) Son purifies us from all sin.” Consequently, I deliberately submit myself fully to the Triune God as he has made himself known to me through the Holy Scriptures. Those Scriptures are the only inspired, infallible, authoritative standard for all life and faith. For that reason, in this day I will not judge God, his work, myself, or others on the basis of feelings or circumstances, but I will view them on the basis of the truth of his Word.

1. Based on God’s Word I recognize that the Triune **God is worthy of all honor**, praise, and worship as the creator, sustainer, and source of all things. I confess that God, as my creator, made me for himself. Therefore, awed by his regard for me, during this day I will live for him.
2. Based on God’s Word I recognize that **God loved me and chose me in Jesus Christ** before time began. Therefore, compelled by his love for me, during this day I will live for him.
3. Based on God’s Word I recognize that God has proven his love to me in sending his Son to die in my place. In Jesus every provision has already been made for my past, present, and future needs through his representative work. Therefore, based on God’s Word I recognize that I have a secure, eternal position since God has
  - **anointed** me with the Holy Spirit;
  - **made me alive** spiritually;
  - **raised** me with Christ;
  - **seated me with Jesus** in the heavenly realms;
  - **accepted** me;
  - **forgiven** me;
  - applied the **perfect righteousness** of his Son to me so that I am **justified**;
  - given me **eternal life**;
  - **baptized** me into the body of Christ, where I have a unique and important function;
  - **sealed** me into a guaranteed relationship with him;
  - **made me complete** in Christ;
  - **adopted** me into his family, assuming every responsibility for me;
  - given himself to me as **all I need** in every situation for each day, and
  - continued to seek
    - to lead me into a **closer walk** with Jesus Christ and
    - to **fill my life** with himself.
4. Based on God’s Word I recognize that only God can deal with sin and only God can produce holiness of life. Through Jesus **God has completely dealt with my sin** and saved me. More than that, “his power...is at work within me.”
  - Since only God can forgive a lack of holiness and replace it with a life of holiness, I have in him the strength to fully **acknowledge my sins** of action and inaction, my sins in mind, heart, and deed.
    - I am **distressed** that these sins are in my life.
    - I **assume full responsibility** for the sins I have committed.
    - I plead for God’s **forgiveness**.
  - At the same time, I rejoice that **God** has already **provided that forgiveness** through his Son.

## My Commitment of Faith

This Spirit-worked and gospel-motivated faith in God's grace through Christ urges a whole-being response to God. Therefore,

- I **surrender to his will** and trust him as my sanctification, the one who has declared me holy and enables me to live in a holy way.
  - I will live in the trust that **he will do whatever may be necessary** in my life, without and within, so I may be enabled to live today for his glory in purity, freedom, rest, and power.
  - I **acknowledge my complete dependence** on him **and submission** to him as I strive to **thank and praise God** for his grace in the following ways.
1. During this day I will **obey** God. Rejoicing in my forgiveness and new nature, I deliberately determine to walk in step with Christ throughout this day.
  2. During this day I will **believe** God that I am forgiven. I accept this on the basis of the testimony of his Word which is objective truth and final authority.
    - Because of the promises of God's Word, I believe he has forgiven and cleansed me from all sin through his Son. Claiming the saint-status Jesus has won for me, I **renounce** all feelings of **guilt and shame**. As the saint Jesus has made me, I will live free from false guilt and false shame.
    - Because of the promises of God's Word, I will **protect** my mind and heart **from** all **teachings that do not align with the Scriptures** and, for the sake of others, I will lovingly stand against such teachings because they diminish who God is and what he has graciously done for me and all others.
  3. During this day I will **acknowledge** that God has already equipped me to fulfill his will.
    - I will not make any excuse for my sin and failure.
    - I renounce all self-effort to live the Christian life and to serve God. The power to live a God-pleasing life comes from God alone through contact with his Spirit in the means of grace.
    - I renounce all non-biblical motives, goals, and activities which serve my sinful pride.
  4. During this day I will **recognize** the provision which God has made for me.
    - Not only will he provide me with "daily bread" for my body, he will provide all I need spiritually.
    - Therefore I gratefully accept my God's provision for this day and I renounce any thoughts that God must change circumstances or people so that I may be better cared for or become more spiritual.
      - I rejoice that Jesus Christ is my cleansing from the old nature. I ask the Holy Spirit to keep me aware that he has already applied to me the work of Christ accomplished for me in the crucifixion. In cooperation with and dependence upon him, I will "put off the old Adam."
      - I rejoice that Jesus Christ is my enablement moment by moment to live above sin. According to his promise, the Holy Spirit has applied to me the work of the resurrection so that I may walk in newness of life. In Spirit-worked cooperation with and dependence upon him, I will "put on the new man."
      - I rejoice that Jesus Christ is my deliverance from Satan. I acknowledge my position with

him in the heavenly realms, confident the Holy Spirit will apply to me the work of the ascension. In his name I submit myself to God and stand against all of Satan's influence and subtlety. In Spirit-worked cooperation with and dependence upon God, I will "resist the devil."

- I rejoice that the Holy Spirit is my anointing who empowers and blesses every aspect of my life and service today. In baptism he has clothed me with Christ and I now share in his resurrection. As the result of my baptism the Spirit has become the guaranteeing seal and God's down payment on his infinite grace. Therefore I desire to be more aware that I am "filled with the Holy Spirit" through the power of the gospel and I desire to live by the Spirit's direction.
- I rejoice in my Savior's personal touch and his assurance of forgiveness in Lord's Supper. Along with the bread and wine of Holy Communion Jesus gives me his body and blood—the proofs of my cleansing from sin. Therefore I treasure these guarantees of my adoption into God's family and, consequently, I pledge to live as God's child.

5. During this day I will **pray continually**. Through Jesus' righteousness and intercession, my Father God hears and acts on each of my prayers. Consequently, I will speak with God in the confidence of a child speaking to its loving father. Beyond asking for God's help for myself, in my prayers for this day
  - I will **praise** him for the awe-inspiring, merciful God he is;
  - I will **thank** him for the many evidences of his grace; and
  - I will **intercede** for others, including those who hate and persecute me and the Lord's Church.
6. During this day I will live out my appreciation for God's **undeserved love for** me as I love **all others** in the same way as God has loved me. I pledge to submit myself to others out of reverence for Christ as I seek to imitate my Father, because I am his dearly loved child, and as I seek to live a life of love, just as Christ loved me and gave himself up for me as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
7. During this day I will **praise God** for whatever happens. I trust that he is in control, that he is absolutely wise, that his love for me is beyond comprehension. I trust that he uses even the worst of circumstances for my benefit. I refuse to allow worry, the alteration of my plans and goals, or the experience of pain or heartache to diminish my praise.
8. During this day I will **set my mind on things above**, because my **life** is now **hidden with Christ** in God. I will live in eager anticipation for the day when Christ will appear at worlds' end, because then I and all believers will **appear with him in glory** to celebrate our resurrection to eternal life.
9. During this day I will seek to **share God's grace** in Jesus with the people the Spirit brings into my life. I acknowledge that this is a key reason my Father has given me another day of life. I refuse to be cowed by any fear of rejection, by any embarrassment, or by any harassment that would keep me from talking about my God. I trust his Spirit to empower, use, and direct my testimony.

Having made this confession, I now **receive God's promised rest** for this day. Therefore, I relax in the trust of faith, knowing that in the moment of temptation, trial, or need, the Lord himself will be there as my strength and sufficiency.

Adapted by James A. Aderman from *Daily Affirmations of Faith* by Dr. Victor Matthews.



## Spiritual Warfare Prayer for my Congregation

Almighty God, Father,

Based on my position in Christ, drawing on your power alone, and dressed in the armor you give through redemption in your Son, I take my **stand against the devil's schemes** in my congregation and against the effects of any **human sinfulness**. I pray for the fullness of every blessing you want to give Fairview.

I ask, in the name of Jesus, that you would **shield and empower** <staff names> and me, along with our families, with the presence of your Spirit. Support us in your everlasting arms and drive the enemy away from us, our homes, and our church. Keep reminding us of our inestimable status as your children and continue to motivate us to live each day as a response to your grace.

Assign and send your holy angels to protect and deliver us and all in our Fairview family from any danger. More than that, empower us all, especially our leaders, **aggressively to stand firm**, dressed in the armor you provide and wielding the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Enable us to live out our high calling in Christ, acting on your promise that we are in Christ, dead to sin and alive to God, seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. I commend these servants of yours to your watchful care.

I depend on you to keep your promise that no purpose of yours can be thwarted by the interference of Satan and his forces nor by human rebellion. I pray that you would immediately countermand the orders of all powers of darkness sent to harass the disciple-making work of my church. Send them away, never to return. I especially pray against any demonic or human influences at my church which would cause easily hurt feelings, a lack of forgiveness, a lack of sensitivity, a decaying love for your Word, and a diminishing commitment to Great Commission ministry. I ask you to eliminate their power and presence in my congregation.

You alone are almighty, Lord God of salvation. You alone are to be worshiped. Because of your Son, help us all at Fairview to fear you, trust you, and love you.

*Adapted by James Aderman from a prayer by Thomas White*

## A Prayer for Protection from Spells and Curses

Almighty God, loving Lord, I commit my family and myself into your almighty and all-loving hands. I trust that you stand as a hedge and barrier against any spells and curses invoked to hurt and harass me and my family. In the authority given through your Son I cancel all spells, curses, and the like assigned against us. Father, I pray that you would impress on individuals desiring to harm us in those ways that you firmly and unequivocally stand in their path. More than that, show them you wish to be their Father and to offer them forgiveness and eternal life in your Son. Shatter Satan's hold on those souls.

# Scriptures for Cleansing a Place

## Introduction

The following Scripture verses may be used to cleanse a place of demonic presence. Please remember, however, that these pages do not contain magic incantations which, if spoken in the right way, will drive demons out of a place. Rather, they are a guide for Christians to use when confronting demons and affirming the lofty position granted them by their conquering Savior. Like a prayer from a prayer book, these pages assist a believer in giving voice to the faith the Spirit has worked in his heart and the stand he is now taking against the powers of darkness as a child of God.

To begin command in the name of Jesus that any demons associated with the place you are cleansing must be present during this cleansing in all their parts. Insist that each demon must listen to what you have to say. Order that no demon may leave until it is commanded to leave at the conclusion of this cleansing and that it can only go to the abyss or wherever the Lord Jesus allows. Then read through the following paragraphs.

## Cleansing

Demons who do the bidding of your master, Satan, I know who you are. I will tell you who I am because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is my Savior. God's holy Word says:

**1 John 3:1** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

**Galatians 3:26** You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.... **4:6** Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."  
**4:7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

**1 Timothy 2:19** Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his...."

Therefore, I can stand against you, demons of Satan, and can drive you from this place, for I have the promise of the Lord of the Universe who is also my Father:

**Isaiah 41:10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.<sup>13</sup> For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

**Isaiah 43:1** But now, this is what the Lord says--he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

**Psalm 41:2** The Lord will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.

**Psalm 91:5** You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, <sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

**John 10:27** My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

I acknowledge that I am empowered to stand against you not on my own strength but on the infinite strength of almighty God, just as David stood against Goliath. I say with him, "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands" (**1 Samuel 17:47**). So demons, it is with the confidence of David I say to you, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (**1 Samuel 17:45**). And I command you in the name of Jesus, the almighty God whose battle this is, to leave this place and to go to the pit or wherever he will allow you to go. It is written:

**Philippians 2:9** God exalted (his Son Jesus) to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

**Matthew 1:21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

**Jeremiah 10:6** No one is like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.

Demons of Satan, you have no right to be here. Because they trust Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, it is the children of God who live here. Therefore you must take all of your works and abandon this place, not leaving any part of you behind. It is written:

**Psalm 91:9-15** If you make the Most High your dwelling--even the Lord, who is my refuge--10 then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; <sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. <sup>13</sup> You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

<sup>14</sup> "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. <sup>15</sup> He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in

trouble, I will deliver him and honor him."

I love the Lord who is the Most High. For that reason I stand with Josuha who confessed, "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (**Joshua** 24:15).

Demons, not only do you have no right to be here, you have no power to stay. You have been defeated by my Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus, God's Son, has stripped you of all your power. The Lord's Christ has wrestled with you and he has defeated you soundly. It is written:

**1 Peter** 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison <sup>20</sup> who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

The Bible also explains about Jesus' death, proclamation of triumph in hell, and resurrection:

**John** 10:17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

**John** 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**Colossians** 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

**Matthew** 28:5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Based on the guarantees of Jesus' death in my place, his parade of triumphant through the street of hell, and his glorious resurrection, I am taking my stand against you, demons. I recognize that you are the strong man Jesus has tied securely ("Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house" **Matthew** 12:29). Therefore I claim God's advice for dealing you, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Demons who follow Satan, you along with your master are the losers. You have lost the war and this battle. You can no longer be present here. For it is written:

**1 Corinthians** 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 18:35** You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.

**Psalm 60:12** With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

Because of Jesus Christ, I rest secure in my eternal relationship with the Lord of all. For it is written:

**Romans 8:35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Consequently, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command any demon assigned to this place for whatever reason to leave and never return. I forbid any demon to enter this place now or in the future or to send other demons to this place. I command the demons assigned to this place to go to the Abyss or wherever the Lord Jesus allows.

I praise the Most High God who sent his Son as my Savior and Lord as it is written:

**Jude 25** To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

*Developed by James Aderman*