

The Kingdom Is Opposed

The Kingdom of God faces opposition from “principalities and powers” (Ephesians 6:10) that seek to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10) and which oppose the gospel through persecution, deception, temptation and spiritual oppression through witchcraft, curses and demonic activity.

Persecution

Matthew 10:16-42 ESV "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. (17) Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, (18) and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. (19) When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. (20) For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

(21) Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, (22) and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (23) When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

(24) "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. (25) It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (26) "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. (27) What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. (28) And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

(29) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. (30) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

(32) So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, (33) but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (34) "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (35) For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

(37) Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (39) Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

(40) "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. (41) The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. (42) And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Scenario Question: How relevant are these verses today? (say to Christians in Syria) How might they be relevant to Christians in the End Times?

A Tactical Armory

The following table summarizes the ways Satan attacks and the way we should respond to these attacks. I have called it a tactical armory since it tells us which weapon to select for the battle. You may notice that many of the Scriptures for Satan's tactics also contain the remedy for it close by or in the same verse! God is wise.

| Scripture References | Satan's Trick | Our Victory |
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| John 10:10 | Steal, Kill, Destroy | Take hold of the abundant life in Christ |
| 1 Timothy 3:6,7 | Pride leading to condemnation | Wise appointing of those in spiritual authority |
| Rev 12:10,11 | Accusation | The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, testifying to what the blood of the Lamb has done for you. |
| Luke 4:1-13 | Temptation through misapplied Scriptures that seem to validate fleshly desires for physical appetite, special-ness to God and power. | Knowing the Scriptures so well that you can spot the lie and counter it with a more appropriate Scripture. |
| 1 Timothy 4:1-7 | Deceptive false teachings | Reject fanciful tales, teach the Scriptures, sound doctrine, thankfulness, prayer |
| James 2:17-26 Matthew 7:15-28 | False assurance of salvation | A godly life of good works based on Jesus teaching is evidence of having true faith. |
| Deut 7:25, 18:10-13, 32:7, Lev 19:31 Isaiah 47:13, Acts 19:19 1 Corinthians 10:14 | Ensnarement in the occult , divination astrology, and the worship of false gods. | Destroy all objects associated with it. Complete disassociation from it. |
| 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Ephesians 6:10-21 Romans 8:4-6,.12:1,2 Philippians 4:8 Colossians 3:1-4. | Strongholds made of thoughts that oppose God -especially prideful thoughts and unbelief. These thoughts can control the life and emotions of a person, church or country. | Biblical apologetics, renewing the mind. Setting the mind on the things of the Spirit Use of our spiritual armour combined with faith, the word of God, prayer in the Spirit and humble submission. |
| Matthew 23:17,19,24,26 Luke 4:18 John 9:39 Romans 10:7-10,25 2Corinthians 3:14-17, 4:3,4 Ephesians 4:17-24, 1 John 2:10,11 | Blinding the minds of unbelievers. Especially those who stubbornly refuse Christ. | Turning to Christ. Having a willingness to accept the light and seek it further. Renewal of the mind. Loving your brother in Christ Good teaching and intercession can "open the eyes of the blind". |
| 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 | Religious ceremonies that appear "cultural" but are in fact demonic. | Awareness of the spiritual realities that under gird such things. Not participating in them. |
| Matthew 12:27-29, 16:19, 18:18-20, Luke 11:19-22 | Unrestrained Satanic activity. Spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realms. Spiritual "strong men" occupying a person, place or nation. | Binding and loosing in Jesus name which may often have a corporate dimension to it. |
| Matthew 9:32-34 Luke 13:11-16 Matthew 8;16,17 Mark 9:14-29 | Disease caused by demons (not all disease is meant) | Healing. Prayer and fasting. Faith. Use of command prayers in the name of Jesus. |
| Luke 10:17-19 Acts 16:16-18 Mark 5:1-20, 9:14-29 Luke 11:20-26 Acts 5;16, 8:7 | Demon-possession | Use of the name of Jesus with authority. Command the demons to leave. Sometimes it may help to identify the demons. Then the delivered person must live a Holy Spirit filled life. Faith, prayer & fasting may be necessary. |

Spiritual Oppression

Christians cannot be fully possessed by the Devil (because they have the Holy Spirit) but they can be oppressed, hindered and harassed. Such spiritual oppression often stems from things such as involvement in the occult, false teaching, and sexual immorality, or from keeping idols or magic books in the house (Deut. 7:24-26).

Oppression can also come from outside through curses and witch-craft or from within ourselves because we harbor hatred, bitterness, malice and unforgiveness in our hearts (Matthew 18:21-35)

The symptoms of demonic oppression include:

1. Hopelessness, despair, loss of confidence, spiritual anguish and struggle, the constant feeling of accusation or of being 'unclean' in some way.
2. The sense of being cursed or of being the victim of some malicious spiritual force, a feeling that hatred, malice or envy is being directed at you in order to destroy you.
3. An out-of-control thought life, very vivid fantasies and day-dreams, being unable to think straight, numerous fears.
4. A sense of being 'blocked' or stifled in one's Christian life, a pronounced loss of enthusiasm for spiritual things.
5. Addictions, compulsions, lying, impulsiveness, habitual folly, excessive materialism, being hyper-critical, outbursts of anger, a long line of broken relationships.
6. The feeling of being attacked, strangled or seduced by spirits during one's sleep. Seeing dark shapes, hearing seducing, accusing or very demanding voices.
7. Unusual, even bizarre accidents and illnesses, constant financial problems, a continual lack of success in life despite one's best efforts.

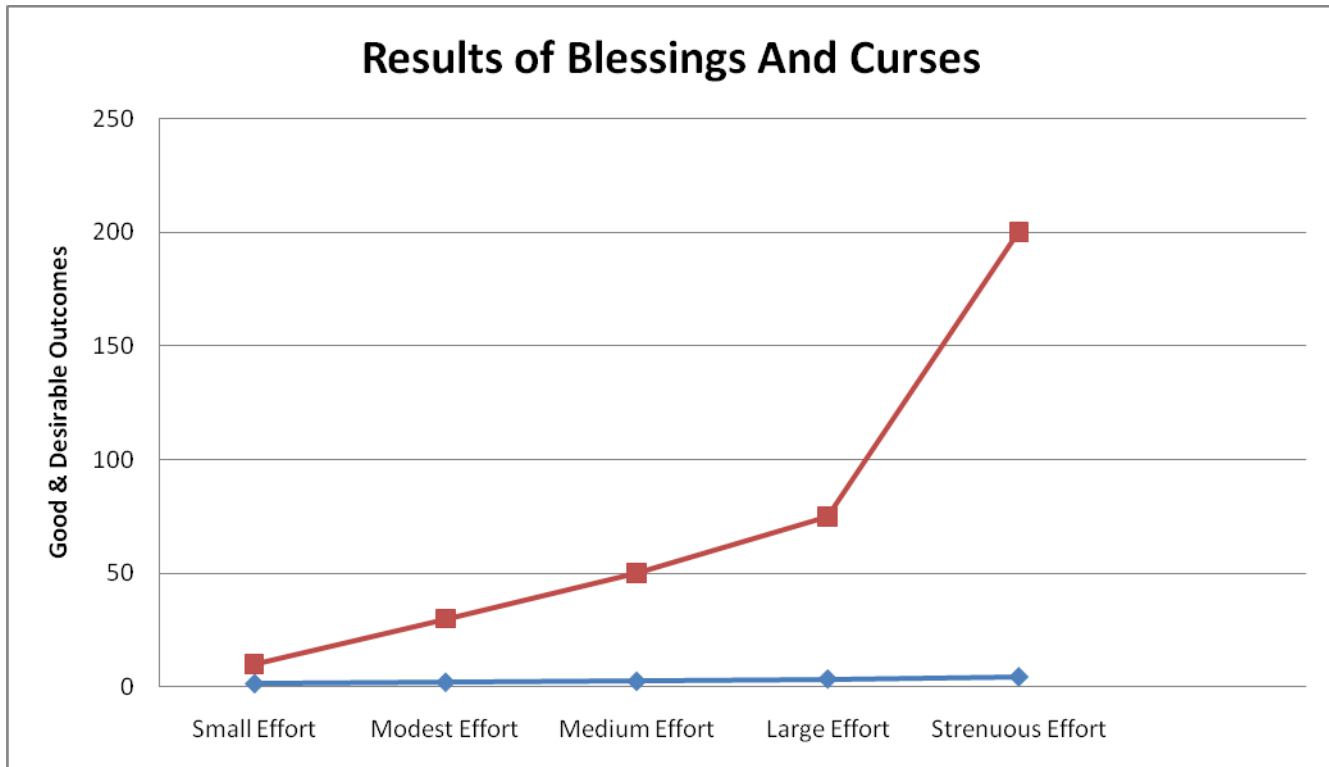
Ezekiel 8 and Your Body As A Spiritual Temple

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19) and is analogous to the Jewish Temple built by Solomon. However that temple eventually became defiled by idols. Yet God still dwelt in the Holy of Holies while abominations filled the outer room. This came to a peak just before the Babylonians destroyed the Temple, during the time of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 8:3-18 God shows Ezekiel all the secret abominations going on in God's Holy Temple. So we find that demonic activity and holy activity can take place in the same structure for a time (the glory of the Lord eventually leaves the Temple).

So we find that some Christians are leading spiritually defiled lives, worshipping both God and other idols such as New Age idols, statues, and Eastern religions or committing gross sexual sin or taking drugs. They grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and set themselves up for spiritual oppression.

Scenario Question: Do you know anyone whose life might be under spiritual oppression of some sort?



Blessings (red line above) – A positive word of great spiritual power, often as a result of faith and obedience, blessing on Abraham, David, the Rechabites etc. Exponential advancement you reap 30, 60 and a hundredfold from the effort that you expend! Blessings go to thousands of generations (Exodus 34:6,7). The Foundational Genesis 1 Blessings: Be fruitful, multiply and have dominion

Curses (blue line above) – a negative word of genuine spiritual power often as a result of judgment on sin, wickedness and injustice or of parental wrath (God on Cain, Noah on Canaan). You can work very hard and yet achieve very little in the way of tangible results e.g. the curse on the ground, etc. Your effort is wasted, futile fruitless and frustrating. Curses go to 3 or 4 generations (Exodus 34:6-7). The Foundational Genesis 3 Curses : hard fruitless labor, difficult childbirth, humiliation and insignificance.

Abrahamic Blessings: Fruitful land, Multiply as the stars & sand of the sea, have dominion over the gates of the enemies also see Noah’s blessings Genesis 9. We have the Abrahamic blessings (read whole of Galatians 3)

We have all the spiritual blessings in Heavenly Realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3)

Curses are broken on the Cross: Galatians 3:10-14, Colossians 2:13-15

For an entire article see: <http://www.globalchristians.org/articles/curses.htm>

Ephesus – City of Spiritual Warfare

Acts 19 tells us that Ephesus was full of occult activity such as Jewish exorcists, magicians, idol manufacturers and above them all a gigantic temple to Diana (also known as Artemis).

The apostles Paul and John both ministered there and Ephesians and 1 John tell us much about how to combat spiritual oppression. Here are some of the main points:

1. The powers of darkness are real (Ephesians 2:2, 6:12)
2. But Christ has conquered them (Ephesians 1:19-23, 4:8, Colossians. 2:15) and they must submit to His Name (Philippians 2:10,11)
3. Jesus Christ has ascended into Heaven (Ephesians 1:19-23, 4:8-10) and Christians have been seated with Him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6) so we also have spiritual authority (1 Corinthians 6:2,3).
4. If we admit our situation and honestly confess our sins we will be forgiven and the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7-9)
5. So we see that through Christ we have a right to spiritual cleansing. (Hebrews 9:14)
6. We must renounce the hidden deeds of darkness (Ephesians 5:11-14) including the occult, sexual immorality & covetousness (Ephesians 5:2-5) and all hatred (1 John 2:9-11) and decide to walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:5-7, Ephesians 5:8-10). This is often called removing the ground the enemy has in our lives.
7. After this we should then ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and put on each piece of the whole armor of God by prayer. (Ephesians 6:10-20)

A Prayer

I honestly confess my sins (list them) including any occult involvement of my parents and ancestors (list them) (Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 5:9, 2 Samuel 21:1)

I renounce the Devil and all his works. (this may include destroying occult objects such as magic books & idols) (Acts 19:17-20, Deuteronomy 7:24-26)

I forgive others (list their names) just as Jesus Christ has for-given me. (Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:12-15,)

I claim my spiritual cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ whom I confess to be my Savior and my Lord. (1 John 1:7-9, Hebrews 9:14)

I now give any ground that Satan may have had in my life over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and I ask for God to fill me with the Holy Spirit and with joy. (Ephesians 5:1-18)

I take up my spiritual authority as one seated in heavenly realms with Christ Jesus and in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I command Satan and all his demons to depart from me. (Ephesians 2:6, 1:20, Mark 3:15, 16:17,18; Luke 9:1)

I claim that all curses spoken and written against me are broken by the cross of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:10-14, Colossians 2:13-15) and that I have all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3) including the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:14,29) for God has out-blessed the curse (Psalm 109:28) and turned it into a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5)

And I now prayerfully put on each piece of the full armor of God (name each piece see Ephesians 6:10-20) and I will walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:5-7). In Jesus' Name. Amen.