

The Nature of Witchcraft (Part 4)



The Enemies We Face (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

All right. Then we'll look at divination, which in most modern translations is called fortune-telling. This is the knowledge element of witchcraft. The product is not now power, but it is knowledge which, as I pointed out, is the first desire that led man into sin. And there is a picture in Acts chapter 16, very clear. Acts 16, verses 16 and following. This is what happened when Paul and Silas first arrived to preach the Gospel in Philippi.

> "Now it happened as we went to prayer that a certain slave-girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us."

Now what the Greek actually says is, "having a spirit of python" or a "python spirit." In other words, a snake spirit. And remember, snakes have always been regarded in pagan society as somehow the source of unusual knowledge and wisdom. There is a well-known lady in Washington, D.C., who is a well-known fortune-teller, who in her own autobiography stated the power came to her when a snake came in bed with her.

Now what I want to point out to you is what this girl said was absolutely true. And she did not know it by natural means, she knew it by supernatural means. She was just a slave-girl.

> "But she brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. [Because she was a slave, the profit did not go to her, it went to her masters.] This girl followed Paul and us and cried out, saying: These men are the servants of the most high God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

Wasn't that amazing? It was absolutely true. I have sometimes commented that in contemporary missions that lady might have been made a charter member of the church of Philippi. She was the first person to recognize who Paul and Silas really were. But Paul knew that is not God's Spirit, that's a divining spirit, a fortune-telling spirit. In the end he turned around and commanded it to come out in the name of Jesus. And it came out and she was no longer able to tell fortunes. Her masters were so angry at the profits they had

lost that they brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates, and you know the rest of the story. The whole city was in an uproar because a single slave-girl was delivered of a spirit of divination. See, at that point not merely was Paul dealing with Satan's kingdom on the natural, physical plane, but Satan's kingdom in the heavenlies intervened because their strategy against the church was being frustrated. It is a remarkable thing almost everywhere Paul went there was a riot. And later, in 2 Corinthians, he said, "There was an angel of Satan that buffeted me." I believe that was exactly correct. It's not a metaphor. It was a satanic angel that organized a riot in every city where Paul went. So, why don't we have riots? Maybe we don't bother Satan enough. I really believe when the church is what it ought to be, there will be a lot more riots. There will also be a lot more revivals. I don't know how many revivals you can have without riots. So you have to decide. Is it worth the price?

Then there is sorcery. Sorcery, I think, and this is not always used this way, operates through objects: potions, charms, anything that is called lucky, like a lucky horseshoe—all that is occult. People that carry things that give them luck. It also operates through love potions, you know. Very, very common: "I want this man to fall in love with me. So I go to the witch doctor and get a potion, put it in his food and after that he's going to fall in love with me." And, of course, to a certain extent, it works.

We, Ruth and I, were in Zambia together with some other brothers and sisters. We offered to pray for all ladies who were barren and could not have children. For Africans that's a real disaster. About 400 ladies gathered in front of us. Before we prayed, someone asked the question (they were all professing Christians): "How many of you went to the witch doctor for a potion to deliver you from barrenness?" and all but two of them raised their hands. See, we are not dealing with something that's very rare and uncommon.

Sorcery also operates through music. You remember we saw that very probably Lucifer was in charge of the music of heaven. He knows a lot about music. He knows its power. And a lot of contemporary music, what's been called "acid rock" and others, is simply sorcery. You watch a young person that's been listening to that for an hour and their eyes are stare-y, they've lost contact with reality.

And then another main branch of sorcery is drugs. The Greek word for sorcery is directly formed from the Greek word for a drug and the whole drug culture with all its accompaniments of acid rock and so on, is just a clear example of sorcery at work in our culture. And almost all those people if they come to Jesus will need to be delivered from that power. In fact I have come to the place myself where I doubt whether it is much use working with people in that particular stratum of society if you don't understand how to deal with demons.

Let us look at just one picture of sorcery in Revelation, chapter 9 and verse 21. Well, this describes a future scene, I believe, in human history when God's judgments are being manifested and falling on the wicked and it says in verse 20 and then 21:

> "But the rest of mankind who are not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons and idols of gold. [Notice idolatry is the first thing.] Gold, silver, brass, stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear, nor walk. [And notice which goes with idolatry.] They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries, or their sexual immorality."

And the word "sorceries," the alternative translation in some versions is "drugs." And together with sorcery goes sexual immorality and violence. And the tremendous upsurge of violence in our contemporary civilization is largely the work of sorcery. So when you want to pray about it, don't just pray about the branch, you have to deal with the root.

Now we come to the third area of this subject, which is witchcraft or sorcery within the church. And here is an area where some Christians have no idea what is really going on. I want to turn to Galatians chapter 3 and read a few verses — the first five verses.

> "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"

Did you ever absorb that fact? They were charismatic Christians, Pentecostal Christians. You'll see they knew the Lord, they were saved, they had received the Holy Spirit, they were witnessing miracles, but they were bewitched. And this is the standard Greek word for "to bewitch." Interestingly enough, it is still used in modern Greek. The word vaskanRa is the modern Greek word for the evil eye. I happen to know because a Greek Orthodox priest who had come to know the Lord Jesus came to me some years ago and he said to me, "Pray for me. I want to be delivered from this vaskanRa." It is exactly the same word that is used here.

> "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth that before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?"

How did Paul know that witchcraft was operating? What was the evidence? Very important! Witchcraft had obscured the

revelation they had received of Jesus Christ crucified. That's the supreme aim of witchcraft in the church is to hide the reality of Jesus Christ crucified.

Now look at the description of what happened in the following verses.

> "This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? [Notice they had received the Holy Spirit. Paul says: 'How did you receive it? By keeping the law of Moses or by hearing the Gospel with faith?'] Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? [I really am inclined to think that text could go up over the entrance of most churches.] Are you so foolish having begun in the Holy Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain. Therefore, He who supplies the Spirit [do you notice the Spirit was ministered to them?] and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"

So the root problem was the reality of Jesus crucified had been obscured by an evil, satanic power that had moved in. And the two problems that resulted were carnality and legalism. They had gone back to fleshly attempts to do the will of God and please God, to keeping all sorts of rules as a way of achieving righteousness with God. And they had missed the purpose of Christ's death.

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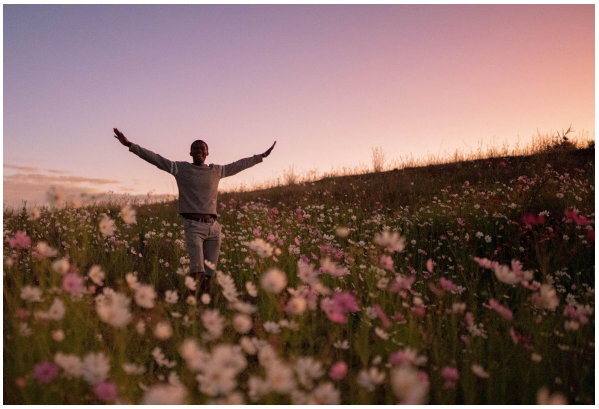
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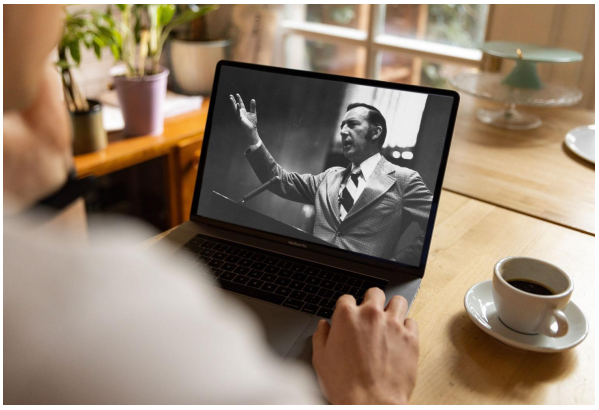
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