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*name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover”* (Mark 16:17-18). Exorcisms were in the same category as tongue speaking, venom immunity, and healing – generally signs, wonders, or spiritual gifts. Yet, such things would “fail,” “cease”, and “vanish away” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:8). They would have an end because their purpose, for God to “bear witness” to the spoken word of salvation (Hebrews 2:1-4), has been fulfilled. Because the New Testament has been set down in writing and is accessible to all, there is no further need for God to “attest” Christ with ongoing “miracles, wonder, and signs” (Acts 2:22). It only stands to reason that if a miraculous ability such as exorcising demons has been done away with, then so, too, has demonic possession. Otherwise, Satan has a power on earth that is currently unopposed.

**The purpose of exorcisms was to plunder the devil’s palace.** Jesus explained what He was doing when He exorcised the evil spirits: “*If I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils*” (Luke 11:20-22). Jesus went to plunder Satan’s house, but first had to bind him. It is Jesus’ purpose “*that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (Hebrews 2:14-15). It took someone stronger than the strong man to plunder his goods and the only one strong enough to plunder Satan of the power of death is Jesus, concerning whom Peter preached, “*it was not possible that He should be held by [death]*” (Acts 2:24)! Before the Lord went to hades (Acts 2:31), He had to “*first bind the strong man*” (Matthew 12:29), so that’s what He was doing when overpowering the unclean spirits.

**Demons confessed Christ!** “*Even the demons believe and tremble*” (James 2:19). Whatever troubles men today, which others might attribute to devils possessing them, be it mental illness or other conditions, are the supposed evil spirits answering, “*Jesus I know*” (Acts 19:15)? If not, then they’re not the same as were dealt with in the time of Christ and the apostles.

## **DISCOURAGED, DISAPPOINTED, DISENCHANTED, DISCONNECTED, DISILLUSIONED, DISHEARTENED, DISENGAGED**

Jonathan Perz

**W**hen one’s expectations for local churches full of imperfect people drive their faith, they often end up facing one if not all of these Ds. I talk to so many who have walked away because they are hurt by the church. Yet their greater challenge is that they place too much emphasis on and have unrealistic expectations for a local church. Their faith is largely rooted in the local church and not in the Lord. So, when the local church fails, as it will, their faith falters.

Local churches will struggle, face challenges, and fall short (Revelation 2-3). In a perfect world, local churches would never disappoint. But we live in a sinful world, and churches at their best are made up of struggling sinners who are forgiven. Still, Satan tempts and Christians succumb. Church members thus don’t always say the right things or act the right ways. Therefore it is critical to ensure our faith is always rooted in He who will never fail us and He who will never disappoint us.

For those out there struggling to rekindle their faith and recover from their hurt, I point you to Jesus. Remember why you love and follow Him. Then you will have a basis upon which to love and labor with His imperfect, struggling people, the church. It also serves well to recall that the church we will gather with in heaven will not be made up of struggling imperfect souls, but those who were victorious. There will be no sin there. So, with that as our hope, let us rekindle our love for the Lord and His people, putting our trust primarily in Him as we strive to encourage one another to reach home.

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“The church is not perfect, but woe to the man who finds pleasure in pointing out her imperfections. Christ loved His church and let us do the same.”

– C. H. Spurgeon

**"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

**GALATIANS 6:1**

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS  
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN  
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

**PROVERBS 25:11**

"People swear they're fighting demons when the whole time they're fighting the consequences of their choices."

**"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

**ACTS 20:27**

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**"I WILL CAUSE THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT  
TO PASS OUT OF THE LAND"**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Demonic possession occurred in a bygone era, having nothing at all to do with the present.

The end of demonic possession was foretold in the Old Covenant. More than five centuries before the advent of Christ, Zechariah prophesied, *"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. 'It shall be in that day,' says Jehovah of hosts, 'that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land'"* (Zechariah 13:1-2). "Unclean spirit" is a synonym for "demon" (Luke 8:29). God would remove the unclean spirits in the time that He would open the fountain for sin! This is not some darkly veiled metaphor; a fountain meant for cleansing from sin refers to salvation in Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:25; Titus 3:5). Therefore, in the time when Jesus brings salvation, demonic possession would come to an end.

The ability to cast out demons was a spiritual gift, and has, thus, ended. After commissioning the apostles to preach the gospel worldwide, Jesus remarked, *"These signs will follow those who believe: In My* – Continued on page 2 –

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