"I'm here, Satan," he said. "I can't see you, and maybe you can move faster than I can, but I'm still here, and by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit I intend to be a thorn in your side until one of us has had enough."
Frank E. Peretti in *This Present Darkness*

Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance
Prayer Study 553E
Lesson Five
WHO ARE WE FIGHTING? Part A

Part 1A: Serpentine Spirits

As we look closer at some specific demonic spirits, it is important to note that a demon is limited to being in one place at a time. When the Word speaks of the Spirit of Fear, for example, we know that it is not referring to just one demonic spirit named the Spirit of Fear in one place, but is referring to a company of these spirits spread over the entire world. It would be like the United States being attacked by North Korea. We use the term North Korea in the singular, but the army of North Korea in reality is made up of millions (1.19 million active duty and 7.7 million reservists) of people. Some may be attacking New York, while others simultaneously may be attacking Los Angeles or other American cities. The army of North Korea is made up of many people. Likewise, although we refer to these spirits in the singular, they actually are a company of spirits, who do their mischief all over the world, often simultaneous.

In this lesson in our Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance course, we will look at some of the "big boys", in the

demon hierarchy, who are causing the world such misery and conflict. First, we will begin with the serpentine spirits. Information in this section was taken from John Parish's *The Goshen Factor,* a very worthwhile read for this present day.

The author of the book of Mark was John Mark, the son of Mary. (This Mary is distinguished from the other Mary's in the Gospels, i.e. the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus; Mary, the wife of Cleophus; and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, who possibly could have been the Virgin Mary.) It is thought that Peter was the one who led Mark to Christ, and Peter even refers to Mark as his son, i.e. spiritual son (1st Peter 5:13). Mary's home was large and served as a meeting place for believers in Jerusalem. Mark's Gospel is thought to have been the first Gospel written (some times between AD 55 and 65) and was also thought to be based on eyewitness accounts of both Peter and Mark.

In Mark 16:9-20, we read some profoundly important words found, as far as I can tell, in only the book of Mark. The specific verse we want to look at here is Mark 16:18: *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* Some churches have mistakenly, I believe, built their theology on the first part of this verse: *They shall take up serpents.* They incorporate rattlesnakes in their services, believing that those who have faith will take up the rattlesnakes during the church service and not be harmed. Unfortunately, many church members have died because of this illogical practice. The Greek

word translated “take up” in English means “to remove, to take away, to destroy, to put away, and to do away with.” The translation of this word as *take up* is very poor, and many have died because of it. What the Holy Spirit is trying to say to us is we are to destroy and do away with spiritual serpents, or what we call serpentine spirits.

Interestingly enough, although there are dozens of different species of snakes (possibly as many as between 2700 and 3400), the Word of God only speaks of three: the asp, the viper or adder, and the python.

The asp is thought to be the modern day cobra. The cobra blinds its victim by spitting a stinging solution into their eyes. It slithers then to sink its fangs in the disabled victim. Its venom is very deadly and attacks the nervous system, causing muscular paralysis. The asp symbolizes those demons that blind and paralyze. Many believers are walking in spiritual blindness because they do not know the Word of God and have no understanding of spiritual warfare or of the signs of the times, even though we are in a constant struggle to the death between forces of darkness and forces of light in Christ and even though we are rushing to the events that will bring the end. These people are losing all feeling for the things of God. Deliverance and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the only demon repellent available.

The viper or adder strikes without notice. It crawls in places where no one would suspect a serpent was hiding and where people are accustom to gathering. It can hide in the sand. Often the viper attacks a horse’s heel, throwing the believer from his call, purpose and divine destiny. According to Parish, “We are on the road to revival, but the

adder is determined to strike and cause us to fall backward. The believer's authority to take up serpents gives us the ability to clear the path of hidden dangers like the military's minesweepers remove hidden explosives. We can't fall backward at this late date. The enemy must not be permitted to gain an advantage over us. There is no time to slow down."

The final snake spoken of in scripture is the python. This is the spirit behind witchcraft and divination. The Biblical directive in Leviticus 19:26 to forbid enchantments, literally means "do not hold conversations with serpents." If you are a genuine believer and are being attacked by this spirit, you most likely have witches and occultic fortune-tellers praying against you. The python wraps itself around its victims and crushes the victim and then swallows the carcass. Python spirits are frequently behind controlling habits, such as addictions, and squeeze all the energy and emotions and life out of the soul. We must learn to recognize and do battle against all three of these serpentine spirits so that we can walk in the dominion and authority which the Lord has given us.

Part 2A: More on Python

Acts 16:16-19: *Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 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." And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus*

Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

The English translation of *spirit of divination* is literally translated in the Greek as the *spirit of python.* Python comes from the name of the region where Delphi is located. Delphi was the home the famous oracle or witch who practiced divination or soothsaying or, what we more commonly today call fortune telling. It is a form of witchcraft. Divination is the art of obtaining secret knowledge, especially as pertains to the future, in a demonic counterfeit to the gift of prophecy. The scripture is very adamantly clear that believers are not to engage in any form of divination, manipulation or mind control, or witchcraft whether through consulting of mediums, psychic readings, hypnotism, horoscopes, tarot cards, crystals, satanic music, TM meditation, drugs, spells, séances, 8 balls, Ouija boards, palm readings, charismatic witchcraft, etc. Just to give one of many scriptures dealing with these subjects:

Deuteronomy 18:10: *There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or s sorcerer.*

In Greek mythology, Python was a snake that lived in the caves of Mount Parnassus. This snake was slain by Apollo who placed the oracle at Delphi. The oracle was given the

guardianship of the python that Apollo had killed. Christian sources believe that the oracle or priestess at Delphi was intoxicated by fumes, escaping from the underground cavern from which she spoke. They say that she really spoke gibberish, which had to be interpreted by a priest, and any questions asked had to have a "yes" or "no" answer. People came from all over the world to get direction and revelation from this oracle, who was obviously possessed by demons.

As we have already noted, pythons kill their prey by constriction and slow suffocation. One of the only ways to kill a python, who is in the process of choking a victim, is by cutting his head off.

I believe that there are two main ways this spirit of python gains a foothold in a ministry:

1. Through rebellion, especially of leadership (1st Samuel 15:23a: *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft…*)
2. Through witchcraft, especially from outside sources who demonically pray against a ministry.

What does this spirit do?

1. Tries to keep you from doing what God wants you to do by crushing your hopes, dreams, faith, vision, drive, motivation, and fight. This is often done by the demonic spirit filling your head with lies, accusations, condemnation, fear, unbelief, and shame.
2. Brings a spirit of apathy, despair and depression.
3. Can be one of the spirit behind addictions.

4. Is often a spirit behind unusual problems with choking, gagging, tightness of the chest.
5. Squeezes the life out of people, making them feel unusually tired and down, apathetic, joyless, and hopeless.
6. Is closely linked to the spirit of suicide, infirmity, and death.
7. Wants to control, much like the spirit of Jezebel.

To get rid of this spirit:

1. Break all generational curses involved in any ancestral involvement in any form of witchcraft.
2. Repent of any, even innocent, involvement in any kind of divination or witchcraft.
3. Ask the Lord if there is any witchcraft being directed at you, and break its power in spiritual warfare.

Part 3A: Leviathan

Although not usually thought of as a snake, Leviathan is also sometimes considered a serpentine spirit. Leviathan is a very strong spirit affecting great numbers of the Body of Christ. Its primary task is to cause miscommunication in order to separate relationships because it knows that there is great power in agreement in the Body of Christ. (Matthew 18:19: "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.") Pride, especially in one's competence, is an open door for this spirit to come in. It seeks control and often partners with Jezebel. Many believe it is most prominent around areas of water, such as seacoast towns and islands, since it seems to be related to the crocodile or alligator or dragon or a water serpent-like

creature. Three of the main scriptures dealing with Leviathan are quoted below:

Job 41:34: *He beholds every high thing; He is king over the children of pride.* (For a complete description of this creature, read all of Job 41.)

Psalm 74:12-14: *But you, oh God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth. it was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him to the creatures of the desert.*

Isaiah 27:1: *In that day* [the Kingdom Age] *the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan, that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.*

Some of the best material I have ever read on Leviathan is found in Dave Williams' *The Miracle Results of Fasting.* Williams points out that the sea in scripture normally refers to masses of people. He says "creatures of the desert" in Psalm 74 are genuine, *on-track-and-doing* God's business, believers. These believers, however, are in a wilderness time, confused, and seeking God for direction and where they should go and what they should do next. He further states that he believes Leviathan is a hideous demonic creature under the direct leadership of satan himself. He is assigned to bring down ministries, men and women of God, churches, families, and people who are seeking to do God's will in their lives. Thus, Leviathan hangs around water,

which is symbolic of God's Spirit and the living Water that Jesus came to give.

Leviathan has many heads. This is the source of confusion in many churches where people refuse to submit to the pastoral head of the church. Often Leviathan opens people up to pride. A believer with a leviathan spirit comes claiming to be more righteous and more spiritual than those who are around him. But in the end he is exposed as a deceptive fraud whose mission is to sow discord and disunity among the body. Williams reminds us that prayer and fasting are two of the most powerful weapons in defeating Leviathan.

What does this spirit do?

According to Paul Cox, in *Guidelines to Deliverance*:

1. It works against worship.
2. It affects thoughts and emotions.
3. It changes how people see things or how they hear things.
4. It twists communication to cause damage to relationships. (Often the hearer disregards the words that are said because he feels he knows the motives behind the words. Sometimes the hearer simply mishears what is spoken.)
5. It causes the hearer to keep from connecting a current comment with the big sequence of events. The mother says, "Sally is sick and can't bring Johnny home from soccer practice, so I will have to go get him myself." In her mind, the mother has just told her husband that dinner will be late, but he may not hear that at all.

6. It causes a person to be unaware of the need to tell others when he has changed his mind about something, leaving the possibility that this minor change might affect someone else's day in a major way.
7. It causes division between Christian leaders because of miscommunication.

To deal with Leviathan, you need to look at three areas:

1. Territorial areas, i.e. where do you see this spirit operating over and over
2. Generational patterns in families-Is your family divided, especially because of miscommunication
3. Personal attachment due to sin, especially the sin of pride

Prayer Against Leviathan by Paul Cox: *I break, shatter, cut-off, dissolve, and destroy Leviathan. I ask Lord that no parts of Leviathan be left behind or be allowed to reconnect to me in any way. I break, shatter, cut-off, dissolve and destroy any curses against worship, my throat, stomach, emotions and thoughts. I break, shatter, cut-off, dissolve and destroy any demons affecting my Godly spiritual giftings or spiritual death. I command all demons leave my presence now and go to the place that Jesus sends you.*