

The Redemption of the Man, Daniel Wrentz: Or The Unstoppable, Indomitable God

Written by the former Daniel Wrentz

On Saturday, April 22nd, 2023 at approximately 3:30 a.m., I was delivered from a demonic spirit. To truly tell this incredible story, I'll have to go back quite a ways and set the stage.

Tortured

I was severely emotionally abused by my father for nearly thirty years. To sum it up, he was an angry, manipulative, dominating, bully that used you for his pleasure, and, most nefariously of all, he convinced you that none of it happened or, even worse, that it was your fault, *or even worse that, that it was good*. From everything I have read and studied after breaking away from him, I believe he has some form of narcissistic personality disorder. But, in truth, because the nature of the abuse was emotional, no diagnosis or retelling of events can ever truly describe what happened. Only in pictures and allegory can the true nature of my father's monstrosity be revealed.

The closest thing I can compare it to is that of a young child being kidnapped and sold into sex slavery. Their earliest memory is only of the filthy mattress they were chained to in the six-by-six windowless room that they are still currently in. They have no concept of "outside". There is no sun. There are no trees. The universe isn't boundless with stars and galaxies, and there isn't an entire planet with billions of individuals and countries and cities and mothers and fathers. The *only* things that exist are themselves, the six-by-six room with 576 bumps on the wall, where food mysteriously appears out of thin air, a lock and chain, and being raped day in and day out.

For them, the daily raping is expected. Torture, anguish, confusion, misery, and anger are all normal; it's how their universe works, you see? Hope isn't a thing as much as flying carpets aren't. Being completely violated in every way is on equal footing with the Law of Gravity: it just *is*. But *even that's* not it—they have no basis to even compare their horrid existence to. It's not that they're saying, "I guess this is how things are now, I give up." No, they are simply understanding life and reality in the same way that you came to understand what the color blue is: *by what was presented*. To call them "traumatized" doesn't even scratch the surface.

Such is how it was emotionally with my father. What a miserable existence that was.... I remember determining at twelve years of age that death was better than life, and then plotting my suicide, going as far as readying my weapon to end the unyielding, unrelenting pain with hot tears of confusion and anger and sadness and self-hatred streaming down my cheeks, all alone. I confessed that moment to my father years later only to receive condemnation.... I could tell

you a hundred stories more, all as equally baffling and bizarre. I won't get into them here, as they would be a book of their own, but instead give you a quote of his that is etched into my mind and helps sum up just how perverted my father was: "Manipulation, when used for good, is called 'leadership.' And that's what I see Jesus doing in scripture." That's correct, dear reader, "Jesus Christ the Manipulator" was my father's god.

In a way though, suicide was the answer, and I'll explain. There's an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* where Captain Picard (Patrick Stewart) is captured and horrifically tortured until he believes (and sees) that four is five. In my father's universe of torture that I was born into, he gave me the same treatment; not to believe that one number was actually another, but rather that a revolver-pistol was loaded when it wasn't. And with this symbolic revolver, the only way to find out if it was truly loaded or not was to aim it at yourself and pull the trigger.

My father's methodology was like playing a game of poker where every hand he went "all in", and to "call his bluff" you had to wager your life and sanity—it was madness. The slightest question of his world or resistance to his influence was met with *extreme* response: "Dad, why can't I see the bullets?" *Wham!* He slams the magnum on the table. "You're telling me this gun ain't loaded! Fine. Go ahead, son. Stick it in your mouth and blow your brains out! Don't say I didn't warn ya!" His treatment was malevolent. Continual emotional rape is the only way to describe it.

That metaphor of the pistol is so fitting to what I had to do to break free. I took the gun, I saw the bullets that were *not* there, put the barrel in my mouth, and with everything in me and around me screaming that I was about to violently end my life and my father looking on smugly, I held my breath and squeezed the trigger. *Click.* With the sound of the hammer striking an empty chamber, I was born into this world as a twenty-eight-year-old man.

This is difficult to understand if you've never experienced being brainwashed, but it's exactly as I've described. When I think back to breaking away from my father, it feels as if I've gone through the motions of suicide. And you must understand, it took me years of restoration and therapy before seeing *any* of this. For the longest time, I hadn't even the notion I was abused.

A Shred of Light

In the summer of 2018, I set some boundaries with my father and began breaking away from his toxicity by beginning my healing journey through restoration therapy, mainly by learning about the true and loving nature of God, as my earthly father had horribly perverted my idea of what a "father" even was. Sometime that fall, I had my first breakthrough with the help of my dear friend, Terry Stanley. The first hurdle was understanding that I had even *been* abused—reread the above portion of the child sex slave if you have trouble understanding what I mean by that.

It was quite the experience. My friend (and therapist) was clearly laying out exactly how all the things I had been telling him were evidence of extreme emotional abuse, yet I couldn't see it. But even more sinister, I couldn't *feel* it. Such was the nature of the extended abuse I suffered: it

“didn’t exist.” I remember the night of my first breakthrough: I was up all night going over, again and again, all my friend had been explaining. I kept getting to a point where I felt I was about to see it but each time it would fizzle out, like I was running into an invisible wall. Exhausted, I laid down to sleep at six in the morning, however, my mind continued searching. And then it happened. There, lying next to my sleeping wife and two-year-old son, I imagined myself doing to my son everything my father had done to me, and I saw it all, clear as the breaking dawn. I was the child sex slave.

“I was abused!” I yelled out, retching and throwing myself to the floor. The full brunt of my father’s savage brutality had been revealed in all its horror and, oh, how I wept. All the pain that normally would have been expressed at each individual injustice came bursting forth. I sobbed and I wailed. After a time, I began laughing uncontrollably and then dry-heaving. After that, I sobbed and wept again. I was like this, non-stop, for over thirty minutes. My wife had been startled awake by my long overdue cathartic moment but quickly realized what was happening and comforted me. Even my young son recognized his daddy’s tremendous pain and hugged me. Afterwards, for several days, I felt disoriented—as I should, my entire life was being dismantled.

Since the first, I’ve had more of these intense moments than I can remember, all of which have been centered around seeing more of the abuse and gaining revelation of God’s true nature. So many lies were implanted within me, and when my heart shifts to the truth it often comes with an incredible relief of pain. Every time it happens I’m amazed at the amount of pain that comes out, *because I didn’t even know it was there*. Again, pain, suffering, and torture were normalized.

It’s been an amazing experience of healing and restoration, and it always comes in ways and touches things I could *never* have predicted. This particular period lasted a few years but, as I’m sure most know, I still had (and have) a long road ahead to the Lord’s full restoration.

Effects of Abuse

As I’m also sure most are aware, childhood abuse has lasting effects long into adulthood. One of which is that however your earthly father treated you often causes you to view God in the same way. Needless to say, for me God was a God that allowed his children to suffer unimaginable horror with no comfort or relief for extremely long periods of time. My apologies if you find that offensive; please remember that I was merely taking the only things I’d been given and trying to reconcile them as a broken man.

Another unique way that my father’s abuse affected me was in my perception of reality. You see, my father was ever-consistently relentless with his backwards universe: a man of true conviction. I, like with what happened to Captain Picard, was trained and raised to believe that “four was five”, despite everything telling me otherwise, and I *gave* myself to it—after all, a child should trust their father.... It’s difficult to describe but that level of brainwashing has profound effects on your psyche; you might liken it to “gaslighting” if you’re familiar with the term. This type of consistent treatment (especially from birth onwards) robs you of your mind and, in a very

real way, makes you crazy. So many times I was convinced I had some sort of mental illness, but, in truth, I was simply reacting normally to the gross mistreatment of my soul and personhood. To affirm your response, yes, it's disgusting. And I lived it for decades.

Years of training to question and doubt my own judgment left me believing that nothing was real or could be proven, or that reality is simply chaotic and random. I need to delve a little deeper into "nothing can be proven" and how these philosophies on life left me trapped. You see, there was no rhyme or reason in my father's universe. There, one plus one is not two and you don't reap what you sow; all paradigms are defined at his whim. And so, I determined that *nothing* could be *absolutely* proven to be *absolutely* true. Let me illustrate.

Take the movie *The Matrix* for example. In the film, the matrix is indistinguishable from true reality. That is, without taking that red pill, there is *no* way to tell if you are in the computer simulation. Basically, I had that idea but in real life. I felt that I couldn't know *for sure* that things were real. For example, if I picked up an ice cube I could see it with my eyes and feel the cold with my fingers. However, these would just be signals my brain was receiving from *supposedly* my eyes and fingers.... As far as I knew, I could just be a brain in a jar, hooked up to electrodes and "experiencing reality."

Please note that I didn't *actually* believe such a thing, I was only recognizing that it was impossible to disprove otherwise: a fun thought experiment for some, but for me, life or death. I thought that if something like the matrix couldn't be disproven, then it can't be *completely* ruled out as a possibility, thus making even the most basic things of our reality actually *subjective*. And if something as innocuous as the color blue has to be "taken on faith" then *nothing* could actually ever be *known* 100%. That is, "there is no knowledge." (This is one approach to nihilism: the belief in nothing.)

The way this relates to the above is that if *nothing* can be known "for sure" then I couldn't 100% rule out the possibility that God *intended* for me to suffer in torment and He *purposefully* didn't provide comfort and that He *wanted* to leave me to sizzle in the fire. If you think I was trying to judge God, I wasn't. I was desperately trying to give myself to *whatever* His ways were. If what I was thinking was true, I didn't want to expect anything different, lest I set myself up for disappointment in thinking He loved me in a way that He actually didn't. Clearly, my father had taught me a most perverted form of love.

The worst of it was that I was effectively "painted into a corner". My understanding of reality removed even the *possibility* of "truth" and left only what I had experienced: torture. To escape it I needed something outside of it all. I needed faith, but faith in what? I couldn't answer that as much as a blind person can't answer what that same color blue is—for them, there is no "blue". Please remember, I wasn't *seeking* any of this out or *trying* to defy God. I didn't want any of it, but it was all I had. It was all I could see—like the child in the six-by-six room. And also, please note that I'm only able to express this in words after the fact, as now I have the light and depth to understand it all. Then, all of this was an ethereal nebulous of misery and confusion,

expressed as a deep and dark depression knitted with untrifling rage and an undercurrent of self-harm.

Obviously, none of this makes sense in the light of the truth; I was operating from an extremely broken mind and heart. I was doing with God what I did with my father: extreme lordship. Which, in a sense, is right; we need to view God as our Lord, but my understanding of it was perverse. I gave lordship to my father and he used it to abuse me and take what he wanted from me—I had served “The Mad God” and, now, I can see that I was readying myself to do it again. I was positioning myself to be “raped by God”, and then thank him for it.

I can't completely describe the amount of torment and torture I've taken in.

Stronghold

I experienced incredible restoration and healing in the several years following my initial breakthrough (around 2018-2021). It was a well-needed extended time of peace that I'm grateful for. I grew leaps and bounds spiritually, I understood and believed the Gospel for the first time (complete righteousness solely by faith), my marriage radically changed for the better, I no longer heard my father's voice in my head, I wrote a dozen songs and laughed and cried and lost a bunch of weight. It was truly a wonderful time of respite. And again, so very well-needed. However, everything I described in the previous section still loomed in my mind.

I'm not exactly sure when it started but after a time, I began to feel I was becoming spiritually darkened, back like I had felt before any healing. I had also experienced some more intense pain and perhaps it started there. What had happened was I quit my job (early 2021) and tried several business ventures, all of which blew up in my face in *absurd* fashion. As in, no one had ever heard of such a disastrous story. I lost *years* of savings and suffered *greatly* emotionally in the seemingly never-ending cascade of worst-case-scenario events. It was years of pain again, unstoppable and without hope.

The reason I had tried the ventures was that I had been learning and growing so much, and gaining freedom in so many ways that I felt led to step out in faith and to try and build a tentmaking that would be more suitable to who I felt the Lord made me to be. Not to become wealthy, but to operate in this life unencumbered as I feel the Lord intends for us all—as I had been trained up to only expect toil and striving (pain and torture). But, when I did I was met with a sledgehammer.

I suppose those extended traumatic events are what brought up my still-then-unresolved questions about God's character. There I was, trying to believe that God *didn't* want me to suffer as I had for so long, stepping out in that belief, walking by faith, only to be met with suffering *again*. It felt like I had gotten out of line, as if someone was saying, “You knew better, Daniel, and that's whatcha get.” It seemed like those deeply held beliefs of God being impartial to my torment were there to stay. It was like my father's views were right all along and four actually

was five and everything I had learned and grown in was a facade because life *is* suffering and you better figure it out or you're going suffer *even more*.

I tried to lean on what I had been through in those good years but I was ill-equipped; there were still vital, unrestored parts of me deep down. So over the next year or two, I grew darker and darker. Old questions rose up. I was dominated by my logic and philosophy. Former habits returned. I felt like maybe God was just toying with me, only showing me what life *could* be like to then take it away. I didn't reject God or Christ's sacrifice, I just returned to the only thing I really knew: to expect torment. I reconciled all my pain with my theology by believing that the way in which God loves us is that He sent His Son to die and save us *exclusively* spiritually. When we get to die it would be great, but as far as our natural lives and day-to-day experience goes, expect nothing short of sex slavery. Obviously, with all of that, a desire to end my life returned.

It got to the point where my wife, because of our frequent talks, felt I had "restarted". That is, I'd gone back to how I was before any of my restoration and healing. It was an accurate assessment as I was once again even struggling in recognizing my abuse for what it was despite all my incredible changes and revelation.

To elaborate, during my initial therapy, I filled up a notebook with every memory I had of what my father had done. At the time, I felt I had needed an objective outsider to comment on every single event because, due to the nature of the abuse, I couldn't tell *pain from love*. I had kept that notebook as a way to not forget what had happened to me, and a few times during the peaceful years I went through it, only to not make it to the end before being overwhelmed by the despair it contained. However, when I decided to look through it again, this time I felt nothing. At most, I thought, "It wasn't *that* bad." If I tried to see further I had that old familiar feeling of hitting an invisible wall.

My wife cried at my returned suffering.

Perhaps a month or so after looking through the notebook again (early 2023), I was having something of a breakthrough. I could see vaguely that the Lord was dependable in these areas of my struggle and I could turn to Him for comfort, but nothing would really stick. "He works all things out," said my wife. "How?" I asked. "Hope in the Lord's love," a brother would say. "I don't understand," I'd respond. "The Lord loves you," my wife declared. "Yes, but that's not without torment, right?" I earnestly questioned. For no small reason, I couldn't grasp the concept of the Lord's love and comfort. I didn't know what to hope in or what to expect from God other than my eternal salvation.

It all culminated one Monday night at a brother's (Church) meeting. I had brought up my struggles in understanding the Lord's comfort several times at previous meetings, and that night we had revisited the topic with me. My dear friend, Terry Stanley, the same who had helped me

early on, lovingly addressed the falsehoods I had in my heart. Another intense cathartic moment was in the works.

“I think we have to accept that pain beyond recognition can happen in our natural lives. Salvation is spiritual, meaning our only hope in life...is death.”

“Well,” he said in turn, “it’s certainly wise to understand our lives can have pain and suffering, but the nature of the Lord is to comfort us.”

“I think we should also prepare to suffer without comfort.” The conversation was touching wounded parts of my heart and I was heating up. Slowly, he responded:

“You’ve told me all your past. I feel I’m going to say some things that will touch those hurts you have and it may anger you.”

“You can speak,” I said stoically.

Pausing first, he gently spoke, “The Lord does not call us to suffer emotional torture.”

“That’s not true...” There was *no* way for that to be the truth. Not after thirty years of excruciating torment, devoid of relief.

“Are you trying to say that you believe the opposite?”

“I...,” he had touched directly on the wound and I was livid. Glaring at him, I roared, “If that’s true, *then what the fuck happened to me?!!!*”

Jumping up, I lifted my chair over my head and brought it racing back down to the floor, violently shattering its wooden leg and cursing again while doing so. Regaining a small amount of composure I paced the room, fuming. My mind was everywhere all at once.

“I gotta ask a question!” I choked out in pain and anger.

“Okay.”

“Am I crazy?!”

“No, brother. You were abused.”

In an instant, I was that same blubbering mess I was all those years ago when I first saw my abuse. I retched on the floor with my brothers around me. Great tears of anguish poured forth. I had such a desperate need for relief that I, *again*, didn’t even know was there.

My friend helped and comforted me once more, and I was able to cry out to God to restore me in this area that I was so *obviously* lacking in. While I knew complete restoration would take time, I was immediately back to where I had fallen from over the past two years. I felt alive again, lighthearted, hopeful, and experiencing the Lord.

Even more, I went back and looked at the notebook again. This time, it was *exactly* like I had felt in the “good years.” I barely made it halfway before being overwhelmed by the unrelenting pain it contained—I saw it all clearly once more, the difference was truly profound. Not but a few months prior, I had looked through the notebook and felt nothing. The difference was so distinguished I thought that I had made a mistake and hadn’t read through the entire notebook the time prior, *but I had*. That sensation was unlike anything I’d ever experienced. It was as if I had had a hallucination previously. Truly bizarre.

My wife saw my change also and was overjoyed that the one she loved was back and experiencing freedom again. I also shared with her something my helpful friend had said that night at the brother’s meeting. Before I had my cathartic moment, I had shared with the brothers the comparison of my childhood to that of a sex slave and also made the revolver analogy. From knowing this and all the details of my past and after seeing my pain and rage pour out once again, my friend saw how evil the abuse of my father was and suggested to me that it was satanic and that my father may be possessed by a devil.

This notion had never crossed my mind and looking at it that way made much sense, especially with the prevalence and consistency of my father’s behavior and the vehement defense and denial of his own actions: abject blindness. My wife could see this also and we both thought it could be the case. Regardless, it certainly helped me separate God from my father all the more.

I truly was back to my old self...for a few days. But within a week I was worse off than before. It was extremely strange. I kept oscillating back and forth between having hope in the Lord and my undesired, deep-seated, pain-wrought beliefs. And when I was on one side I couldn’t remember what it was like on the other or what I had *just* been believing not the hour before. Back and forth, back and forth, uncontrollable madness. And, unfortunately, the old familiar side was winning, and before long I was back on the couch asking my wife those same questions about God, not knowing how I could trust or believe anything.

It was despairing. I told her I was having mental images of a ship at sea with giant tentacles reaching up out of the water, pulling it back under into its murky depths. I was having the same feelings of being forever stuck in my philosophies, unable to see anything else. Suicide was back at the top of the mind. No hope once more.

Again, my wife cried at her husband’s anguish.

Not long after this, I dreamt the *worst* nightmare I have ever had, by a *wide* margin.

The Nightmare

I don't feel every detail of this is important, but I want to describe the dream as best I can so I'll include all the beats. I think a few keynotes and the overall feeling is the point.

I was in a competition. It was a kind of game but it was serious, as in, sinister and deadly (compare it to something like *The Hunger Games*). We were going through caves and dungeons searching for something, and all the contestants were ex-military types, dressed like black ops mercenaries.

We finished the day's "challenge" and we all went back to our quarters, a hotel-like structure with individual rooms and a common area. Before going to my room, I spoke to one of the other contestants who seemed to know what was going on. She told me we were looking for letters, as in "A, B, C". She then said that "the letters come to us at night," and asked me what letter room I had.

"B," I answered.

"Ah," she uttered in recognition. "*The Bone King*. Try and bond with him..."

It felt as ominous as it sounds.

She left and I made my way down the hall to find room B. Arriving, I opened the door with my key and nervously stepped inside.... The shower was running.

Slowly, I walked to the bathroom, and there, in the shower, was a man. A tall man who was head and shoulders above the top of the shower. He looked older, like someone in their late sixties, but very physically capable. He turned to look at me and he had a mark across his face, like a large, purplish birthmark-like discoloration on his nose and left cheek. He looked at me with indifference and authority and then spoke.

"I'm splitting you up into army and repurposed missionaries," he declared in an assertive tone without blinking.

"Yeah...I noticed." (I don't know what he meant or why I responded this way.)

I left the bathroom and went to the bed area. I waited while The Bone King finished his shower.

I heard the shower turn off and the bathroom door open. He came out naked and stood there watching me, again without blinking. He then reached over and turned off the lights. It was pitch black, and I was terrified.

Silence.

Suddenly, his hands were around my face. He grabbed my head and pressed his mouth against mine. Violently shaking his head back and forth, he started making a terrible noise, loud and covered with spittle. The noise was like when you relax your mouth and cheeks and shake your head left and right (a “bub bub bub” sound.)

I woke up biting and growling at the blankets that had made their way to my face. For days after, I was disturbed.

I've had nightmares before but this was different. It was like it was happening *to* me versus something I created in my mind. Less like having a dream and more like waking up somewhere else. Like it was real.

Deliverance

A few more days passed after the nightmare and I was doing none the better. I shared the dream with my wife and she just tried to comfort me and continue lifting me up. At this time, I had more or less geared up for the next slog in life. Though, to be clear, I wasn't completely out of faith. I knew God had restored me in other ways and knew it was possible He could do it again. After all, the belief in nothing doesn't exclude the idea that anything *could* happen, I just couldn't take it as a guarantee. Couldn't hope in it. Not to mention that I didn't know what “it” even was to ask for.

The following Friday, I had a gig in Galveston (I'm in a band) and it worked out to where I drove the equipment trailer by myself, there and back. The drive was quite pleasant as it had been some time since I just sat quietly without work or distraction. You see, I had been working tirelessly ever since my failed ventures, still trying to build or find a more agreeable tentmaking.

On the drive, I turned my beliefs over and over again. I was trapped, I could see it. I couldn't ask God for help because I didn't know what to expect from Him. For me, to ask for something is to hope for it, and I couldn't do that believing that He was just as likely to help me as He was to let me suffer. Truly, there was no way out. However, between the fantasies of wishing some drunk would pull out in front of me, I was able to get it out to God that if something *was* wrong with me, I needed Him to kick the door in and rescue me.

We finished the gig late and I started back home at one-thirty in the morning. At 3 a.m. I was almost home and my wife called me. She was pregnant and frequently had insomnia around that time, but really, she just knew I was suffering and she loved me. We chatted and when I had to hang up to drop off the trailer, she said she'd wait up for me. I had no idea what else waited for me at home.

I stepped through the door and immediately felt my wife's tender love and compassion. I felt it soften me. We talked about the gig, I had some food, and then we sat down on the couch like

we had done so many times before where I poured my heart out to one of the few people on this planet that truly know me. I was asking her honest questions about how she has hope in the Lord and what that was like. I knew I wanted to believe, I was just trapped. Trapped by everything that had ever happened. I was the natural outcome of going through that type of hell. But with her answers, I was hitting that invisible wall again. I just couldn't comprehend.

I don't remember exactly how we got there in the conversation, but in a moment, I saw that if there had ever been an attempt to steal someone's soul, it happened to me. And despite that world record attempt, God, out of love for His child, sent rescue through my wife and friend. I could see it so clearly but I couldn't grab it, but, *God*, how I wanted it.... In another moment I saw how I had to surrender my philosophies of everything being random and nothing being provable. I saw how they weren't philosophies at all but rather a wounded child's attempt to make sense of his world. "Oh," I pleaded, "Son of *David*, have *mercy* on me..." I was that blind man who'd been suffering for decades. "I give it up. I give it all up," I cried from the very bottom of my cavernous soul, "Lord *Jesus* help me."

What started next was what I thought was another cathartic event, but this one was different. In the past, these moments were eruptive. This one lingered at the start, as if I was locked in some way. I felt happy and sad at the same time. Wrecked and full of hope. Believing *everything* and *nothing* concurrently. The "in-between". Limbo. Slowly, I began to weep as I had in the past. Deep groans of torment and great sobs of *whatever it is that lies beyond despair*. When I ran out of sorrow I laughed and dry-heaved, doubled over, grasping my wife who was still with me.

I felt her comfort me with a hug. I need to say that again, I *felt* her comfort me. I reached up and hugged her back, to receive her and God's comfort. When I did this, the cathartic moment changed into something I have *never* experienced before. I started convulsing and making strange sounds and *panting like a dog*. Grunts and groans and sounds of vomit. My body locked up. I started making the same sound "The Bone King" had made, shaking my head back and forth. I can't say for sure I was completely in control, but I remember thinking if I had an unclean spirit in me that I wanted it *out* and I was ***desperately*** grasping for Jesus.

Between the strange sounds, I was able to tell my wife to pray. She prayed the Lord's Spirit over me and to fill me. After a time, the experience subsided and I sat back, depleted.

The next thing I remember is speaking the *Truth*: That Jesus loved me and He'd never leave me. That my imaginations weren't real and God was. That I had been in desperate need and God sent help and rescued me. That I'd been obliterated and He healed me. And all because He loves me. *He's the one that loves the lost sheep*. That's His nature. He'd never leave me to be tortured. And I can hope in that. I said it over and over and over.

Oh, thank you Jesus. You gave me hope. A reason to live. You saved me. Praise Your name. You are God and I believe. I give you everything, every part of me. Fill me Lord Jesus. I'm yours forever.

Looking Back

Being it was about five in the morning, I slept till the afternoon. When I woke up I could hardly do anything. I didn't want to eat because *Jesus had satiated me*. I didn't want to work on something because *Jesus satisfied me*. I didn't want to drink because I didn't want to take away from *what Jesus was filling me with*. The only thing I was motivated to do was rest, love my children, talk with my wife, and write this story.

My wife and I spoke about what had happened and we both agreed that I had had an exorcism. With this revelation, she was able to put some puzzle pieces together and revealed some things that left us both utterly *stunned*.

When I had first told her about my friend suggesting my father was influenced by demons a few weeks prior, she'd begun to pray that if there were any spirits tormenting me that they would be removed. Not only that, she later prayed (following Jesus's example) that if there indeed was a spirit *that its name would be revealed so that it may be cast out*. Not long after this I met and was tormented by something called "The Bone King" in a dream.

My wife and I have never been one to try and over-spiritualize matters (or demonize them especially). But I believe that's *exactly* what happened. I believe the cause of my lifelong torment was an evil spirit, an evil spirit called "The Bone King". And whether as a byproduct of his tremendous abuse or from him directly, I believe this spirit was given to me (likely at an early age) by my earthly father, who also has an evil spirit. And from what I know of the Wrentz family history, it's likely this pattern has been repeated for generations...

Sometime later, my friend also told me that months prior he had been prompted to learn more about demonic activity and that it was from his studies that he was able to connect the dots and then suggest what he did about my father that night of me breaking the chair. Besides all the unsettling evidence and the extreme change post-deliverance, it's not a far-fetched idea. I compare my childhood to that of a sex trafficking victim, and so many times those poor people wind up with demons from all the evil that is done to them. I'm amazed I never saw it before.

That night, my wife and I stayed up for *hours*, just lying in bed praying and singing and talking about Jesus. It was the most wonderful experience I've ever had in *all* my years. I've now stayed up all night writing out my redemption.

Looking back, so much makes sense now that there was an evil spirit buried in my mind, implanted from decades of pain and abuse, tormenting me, lying to me, and working against what God was doing: *the invisible wall*, the hallucination-like event that stopped me from understanding my notebook, the extreme anger at the notion of God's comfort, and all the rage, confusion, and self-destruction. The image of the ship being dragged underwater was *exactly* what was happening inside me. I was breaking loose of the grips of the monster and it was

pulling me back in. I had had moments of life and clarity all throughout but always soon thereafter was trapped again.

At the very end of this entity's power over me, I, with zero history of drug or alcohol abuse, started having five to six drinks a night for relief. I was also constantly having thoughts of the most horrific, unspeakable things happening to my children. It was a waking nightmare. I can see clearly now that my tormentor was losing control and was making a final push to destroy me. I honestly believe if it wasn't for Christ Jesus that I would have ended my life. Oh, Jesus, thank you.

Other things have been revealed as well. I saw how all my business disasters were centered around certain people I'd met: a sociopathic multi-millionaire, a pedophile, a real estate agent who my wife later met and declared "he's like your father", and a single-mother tenant that was actually *a bank robber on the run*. I believe that when I stepped out in faith and trusted the Lord in that area of suffering and provision, whatever was inside me called out for reinforcements and they then gathered together to beat me down: an orchestrated attack that would cause all I had believed emotionally to manifest in the physical, sealing my fate. Checkmate. But even with that, the Lord used to turn up the heat of the refining fire that would purge the last remaining parts of my heart. I can't stop thinking about it all. How perfectly orchestrated the Lord's salvation was.

Looking back even further, older things make sense now also. During my "good years", I had a dream of returning to my childhood home. As I drove closer, the landscape began to look more and more like a gigantic natural disaster had occurred. Piles of uprooted trees and giant mounds of mud from a massive rushing flood abounded: an illustration of the absolute hellscape and warzone that my upbringing actually was. I also had a dream where I witnessed my father's body and face lock up. His head was thrown back and jaw unhinged, followed by the most otherworldly and horrific sound of pure evil that poured out of his mouth for longer and louder than any person could humanly make. I see now that these were spiritual truths being given to me while I slept.

Even as a child, I remember lying in bed before sleep and having the most *bizarre* thoughts, seemingly out of nowhere. I would imagine that one day I'd find out I was schizophrenic and discover my reality was an illusion, or that one day I'd uncover repressed memories of my father molesting me. Surely, these thoughts were actually glimpses of light making their way through tiny cracks in my father's encapsulating universe of misery, as they are nearly *exactly* what has now come to pass. Praise God Almighty. He was with me the entire time...

Redemption

In just the few days since my deliverance I've had *countless* changes, large, small, and all for the better. It feels as if my spirit has been quickened, like that's where I'm living from and out of. Like I'm flowing freely in the Lord. For the first time in my life, I feel like everything is genuinely okay; the world is broken but *Jesus has overcome it*. Like I have hope—in fact, *I do*. Where I once had lifelong beliefs that reality was only excruciating torment, I now have complete faith in

the Lord's comfort and provision. I mean, why wouldn't I? He healed my soul and my mind, He died to save my spirit, and He went on a thirty-year campaign behind enemy lines to rescue this tiny, insignificant, little green plant that was crushed and forgotten. "Comfort and provision" are just the complementary peanuts on the plane ride of His fiery, relentless love.

You have to understand how massive it is for me to say *any* of that. It's monumental. This is coming from the guy that used to believe that God's "food and covering" only consisted of a bridge to sleep under and a garbage can to eat from—anything else was on *you*. If a million years from now they write *The History of the Universe*, somewhere in between the fall of the Roman Empire and the invention of time travel, there'll be a page that reads, "And in 2023 Daniel was given hope." Amazing...

My dreams have changed; where I once was tormented I now laugh. Just the other day I had a dream where I was in the woods surrounded by a community of RV trailers. The people there were "backwoods": you know, ignorant and aggressive. One of the men began to harass and bully me. Interrupting him, I said, "Uh, where's the restroom?" Ignoring me, he continued his tirade. I interrupted again, "Hey! I really gotta go!" He made no change in his behavior so I unzipped my trousers and started relieving myself right there in front of him, in the middle of the camp. Three other "good 'ol boys" came up from behind me to help their buddy and began hurling their flaming darts also. "Huh?" I said, spinning around, sending a yellow stream of you-know-what across their shoes. They were dumbfounded and speechless. It was hilarious.

I feel like a little kid who's about four years old. At night, I lie awake in wide-eyed wonder of the world, looking all around me with amazement. In that same vein, I'm kinda dumb, and it's *wonderful*. I have physically been unable to think like I have before. For example, a few days ago, I, a physics major with a 3.9 GPA and Magna Cum Laude honors, former microseismic geophysicist, *and* Calculus tutor, was *genuinely* having difficulty taking off and replacing a *screw-on* garden hose sprayer, *and I was in stitches*. I'm forgetting things, losing things, and even getting lost, and all because I'm now living completely from my heart, enraptured by each current moment of life and totally given to it, unconsciously forsaking tomorrow. I haven't once worried for my future, as I had continually beforehand, because why would I? Jesus loves me right *now*.

You need to understand where I'm coming from with that. I was, in no small part, a mental powerhouse. I could process a situation down to its finest parts and take in *gobs* of information, determining nearly every possible outcome and, then, all the outcomes *of those* outcomes, while also creating plans and contingencies for each exponentially exhaustive scenario. It was draining, but it's how I learned to survive my father, as you never knew how he would twist a conversation.

Later in life, I used this "strength" of mine to attempt to optimize my life for less pain. As in, if I could see all the possibilities of any given choice, I could then fine-tune every detail to combat my never-ending suffering. The effect of this was that I continually live approximately ten years in the future. Picture it as a wall of interlinking cogs where my hand that turned the first cog was

in the present, while my eyes were focused on the 100th cog down my complex and intricate line of machinery that I constantly adjusted—which, in the end, was self-defeating as I suffered unending anxiety with life's ever-changing tide: truly, a futile effort that again represents how trapped I was. Jesus healed me of this too by showing me that my imaginations weren't real (my perception of the future in this case) and that He's all I'll ever need, allowing me to enjoy life *now*. When I "gave it all up", I *really* gave it up.

Another change is that I don't want to be alone. Previously, I used to cherish my isolated, late-night times, where I got my "introverted fix." I even held my extreme introversion as a point of pride as it added to my "mysterious mystique" and made me more unapproachable. In truth, this was just another symptom of the horrible state of my heart. Now, I *want* to be around others; I'm free and have no more need for self-protection. I've even started going to sleep with my family as I just don't have the heart to go "lock myself in my cave" any longer. Lying there with my wife on one side and a four-year-old on the other and Jesus all around is better than any movie I've ever enjoyed. In addition, I want light. Previously, for nearly most my life, I exclusively slept with an eye mask, as I wanted complete darkness to sleep in. After my deliverance, when I went to put it on again out of habit, I simply couldn't do it. "Who wouldn't want to see the light?" I said aloud, dropping the padded cloth into the garbage pail. "I want to wake up to the sun and witness His mercies renewing every day."

I've also had *none* of my former torment and those life-defining philosophies are now nowhere in sight. In fact, it's been quite the opposite: soon after my deliverance I was crying and shouting with joy at how I *knew* the couch I was touching was *real*. "Are we in the matrix?" That's just a fun science-fiction idea now. That idea is impossible to disprove *only* inside the philosophical box it was born in. God's reality—and by that I mean *true* reality—is God's and His alone. And *His* spiritual truths make man's vain ideas look like a toddler's finger painting.

This next understanding still leaves me amazed, and I believe I'll sit in awe of it till the day I die. What I've seen is that the thing the enemy sought to kill me with is *exactly* what Jesus used to save me. As you now know, I was trapped in a box. To the east lay despair, and to the west lay misery. And I couldn't go up because of the invisible wall. So...I dug. "Yes, I will dig my way out," I had thought, but after years of going deeper, I reached bedrock—that is, those philosophies of the randomness and improbability of all things. I was trapped: the end of the line. I had found all sides of the box and saw I was locked inside—that was my six-by-six room, and I had come to know all its aspects intimately. However, this is precisely what was needed for Jesus to then come save me. That bedrock of despair showed me every possibility in my universe, every facet of my jail cell; I understood everything, and it was harrowing. At the bottom of the box—at the bottom of myself—was the belief that *nothing* could be proven. And it was only at this place of *absolute zero*, fully knowing what could and could not happen in my world, that Jesus would come and provide the inexplicable: a genuine impossible miracle that shattered my prison forever. Just like the slippery bar soap that uses the pressure of the person trying to clutch it for its sudden escape: the perfect miracle to counteract the perfect attack. *In-credible...*

Upon seeing these truths for the very first time, I cried and danced in joy while laughing, jumping up and down, completely free, saying to my wife, “It’s all I’ve ever wanted. It’s all I’ve ever wanted.”

The relief is unreal. Comparable to a kidnapped child of years gone, without closure, suddenly coming home. Now, the somber man, Daniel Wrentz, can’t stop smiling. I’m lighthearted and unburdened. My relationship with my kids has radically changed as I’m now opening up in ways that I didn’t have the capacity for previously. I’m meeting my wife in new ways and seeing new truths in the Spirit *almost hourly*. Sex has changed, my humor has changed, and no lies, even my *bathroom habits* have changed. Jesus’s love and redemption has permeated every fiber of my being and fathom of my soul.

I’m completely blown away by the way my story has worked out; it’s as if it could take the number one spot in a “Top 10 Wildest Twists in Cinema History” countdown list. My past and upbringing were *always* such a blurry, confusing mystery to me—*nothing* surrounding my childhood and father *ever* made sense. I would try and tell stories about it but would mostly just get confused looks in return. Nearly *no one* understood what had and was happening. I thank the Lord for my wife, Brittany, and friend, Terry, for loving me and listening for hours, months, and years, to me try and explain just what was going on inside. Both of you are very close to my heart.

Further Changes

Surely, you can see why I had to cut my hair and shave my face; I’m not the same person. I can’t just quietly stay the same lest someone look at me and not be aware that something *impossible* has happened. Where once my only desire was to be invisible, to implode and disappear, and live out my days in a cabin in the forest, now I *want* to be seen. I *am* what God did.

You see, towards the end of the demon’s control, I had more and more begun to identify with a homeless person: crushed, misunderstood, unadjusted, and deeply damaged. I’d stopped cutting my hair altogether (it was down past my shoulder blades) and I was no longer trimming my beard. When I got home after telling my friend of my deliverance, I felt compelled to cut it all off. Racing to the bathroom, I grabbed the clippers, and a few minutes later, hair was *everywhere*—a messy heap of tangled brown. Underneath it all, was someone else. There, looking at me in the mirror was a man: clean, boyish, and with a twinkle in his eye. “Nice to meet you,” I said, grinning at the familiar stranger.

The change in me is so profound that if we were in Old Testament times we’d build an altar here as a reminder to all that “Here is the spot where the Lord delivered and redeemed the tortured, captive man, Daniel. Remember this: God saves.” Take this story as that altar. Read it again

and again, for it is God's Truth. Take it as a reminder and evidence of who the Lord is: the One who loves the lost sheep.

In Native American culture, a person's name would often reference something that happened in their lives. In addition, a person's name would often change at major pivots in their lives. A great artistic representation of this is Kevin Costner's character, Lt. Dunbar, in the film *Dances With Wolves*. The Sioux Indians witnessed Dunbar running and playing with a befriended wolf. They then collectively recognized and referred to him by the name "Dances with Wolves", for that is who he was, "the one that danced with the wolves." His life events *became* his name and identity.

Such is the same in the Bible. When men were drastically changed by God, often their names would be changed also—I too have been changed, so deeply so that I can no longer live under the same name, for that man has passed on. Daniel was a tortured man. And with his final labored breath, he gave all he had to Jesus. With that, the Lord had mercy on Daniel and let him die. Thank you, Jesus, for the peace and rest that Daniel now has.

This new man has never known torment. He's only known the love of his wife, children, and friends, and has only ever had a loving God as his father. This man was conceived in hope and faith. This man was born *knowing* that God would *never* let him suffer, that God will save him. This story *is* his name. This man's name is Joshua, which means "God is my rescue". For that is who I am, "the one who God saved." And for the rest of my days, I will live out this miracle that the Lord Jesus has done under this new name.

In addition, I can no longer carry the surname "Wrentz", for there is darkness in that family and light needs to be shown upon that darkness wherever it lies. I will sever their legacy of shame, abuse, and familial idolatry and take up the name of my maternal grandfather, George Martin: a meek, soft-spoken, simple, wholesome, and oh-so-kind man, whom I loved and who loved me as his only grandson, and who also had no sons of his own.

I recognize changing one's name is strange, especially for our specific culture. So, I wanted to touch on it from another few angles in effort to help you. First off is just what I mentioned above: such an event is uncommon in American culture. Should we be in another place or time it would be a welcomed and expected occurrence. Secondly, when you say my name, you aren't just saying, "What's up, Josh?" You're saying, "Hey, 'He Who God Saved', how are you?" You are recognizing and agreeing with what the Lord has done and is doing, as I am doing the same by living it out. Lastly, think about what you'd have to go through to consider such a thing—what would you have to endure to make changing your name a no-brainer? Rescue from thirty years of demonic torture might do it.

Additionally, if you find leaving a family distressing, please consider these words of the Bible and of Christ Himself and be comforted:

- “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother...” (Genesis 2:24)
- “And He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.' But He said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.' Another also said, 'I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say goodbye to those at my home.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'” (Luke 9:59-62)
- “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms on account of My name, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29)
- “Someone said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak to You.' But Jesus replied to the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?' And extending His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold: My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.’” (Matthew 12:47-50)
- “And do not call anyone on earth your father; for only One is your Father, He who is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9)
- “Now large crowds were going along with Him, and He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.’” (Luke 14:25-26)
- “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to turn a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a person’s enemies will be the members of his household.” (Matthew 10:34-36)

Obviously, all of this is a lot of process, so please go as slow as you need, there is grace aplenty for all. Until then, come and see the miracle of Joshua, the man that was formerly Daniel Wrentz, who God delivered. Touch his hands, hug his neck, feel and see the living altar to the Lord.

Conclusion

All in all, there’s really only one thing to say: *Jesus*. He came to set the captives free and heal the broken-hearted. He came for the weary and mourning, and the bruised and the poor. He came for all those in pain and in great need of comfort. Jesus...Jesus came for *me*.

Please share this story however you would like.

-Joshua George Martin

(Read on for the continued testimony)

Follow Up

Since finishing my story, I've had a number of other amazing things happen in the Lord. Also, after sharing it, I've been asked the same few questions several times. So, it seemed good to share the other miracles and experiences and answer those questions here.

Hearing The Lord

Two days after my deliverance, I went to the park to walk in the sun, praise the Lord, and seek His leading on what I was to do next. I still had the question of what type of tentmaking He had for me, but, at a recent Church meeting, a brother had shared how we “ought not put God in a box” when seeking His voice. That is, what we think we need isn't always what we *really* need, so we shouldn't be too narrowly focused when seeking His leading. We see this throughout the books of the Gospel where Jesus's answers are seemingly out of left field. This is because He was dealing with what was *behind* the questions and giving people what they really needed: a deeper heart change. Just like when the rich young ruler asked what he needed to do for eternal life, Jesus told Him to sell all he had and come follow. News flash: “Selling all you possess” isn't a requirement for salvation. Jesus was exposing his idolatry and focus on the temporal.

I took my brother's message and did just that. I sought to simply hear from Him, whatever it was He would say. And that's what happened. Where I had hoped he would lead me in a tentmaking, I felt Him tell me to “rest” and “not be alone.” I immediately walked to my truck, drove home, shared the word of the Lord with my wife, and took a nap, all in faith. I would soon learn exactly why these two directions were His leading, as a few days later I found myself tempted to not follow the Lord's recent commands.

You see, I had written out the bulk of my story the night after my deliverance. However, I kept seeing more and more as the days progressed and wanted to add in all these amazing revelations. Plus, my first draft was looking rough, to say the least, and I had called the Church to gather at my home the upcoming Sunday so I could share the wonderful testimony. I “*had*” to get the story finished.

One day, later that week, I told my wife that I wanted to stay up late and finish the story. So that night, where I had begun to go to sleep with all my family (resting and not being alone), I went to my office and started grinding away, just like I had been for the past several years. Around midnight, my wife, who later told me that she felt funny about the whole idea and at the time was unable to sleep, came and shared how she felt I was acting like “old Daniel.” Immediately, I took it as the Lord's correction and came to bed. However, that small deviation was all it took to start the boulder rolling down the hill.

As I laid next to her in the dark, I, in all seriousness, *became* Daniel again. By dipping my toes into that grinding, hustling, no-rest attitude, I hit the start button of my mental Rube Goldberg

machine of anxiety and believing that nothing good came without tremendous suffering and everything was all on me...and it scared me to my core. I cried out to Jesus again to save me and within minutes I was completely back to Joshua. I wept with joy and thanked Jesus once more with my wife.

What I believe happened is that I wandered off in my flesh, trying to “do good” when the Lord had only asked me to rest and not be alone. But even with this, He showed me some incredible things:

First off, He confirmed my deliverance. If you’ll remember back to my story, I had breakthroughs into the light but then would quickly be back in darkness. This was the *exact* opposite. I had been experiencing being sustained in the Spirit and when I had a “breakthrough” to the darkness, I was quickly back in the light. It was evident I no longer had that evil force inside working against me.

Secondly, He reassured my new beliefs. Part of my deliverance was seeing that I was a lost little lamb, *way* behind enemy lines, and that He still loved me and saved me. Now, here I was, after a thirty-three-year mission to rescue me, five minutes later wandering off *again*.... Yet, there *He* was, again, loving the lost sheep. He will never leave me.

Next, He showed me why He called me to rest and not be alone: I was having my mind renewed. You may have heard the phrase “being stuck in a rut” to describe the difficulty of establishing a new way of thinking, well, after a lifetime of demonic torture I had something more like a *canal* cut through my mind. The Lord knew there were a few key places in my brain, where “old data files” needed updating. In His wisdom, He told me to rest and not be alone as I had a propensity to work myself to the bone and believe in my own imaginations, both of which lead me to a place far from His truth. He wanted me to experience resting in Him, knowing that it’s *Him* that accomplishes anything and *from* Him that all good things come, and to surround myself with people that know Him and who would speak truth to me, replacing all the lies the demon and my father had fed me. His final touch to this is that He wanted me to enjoy my life, because I never had before.

Lastly, He reminded me of what I’d been through—it was no small thing. I was a hospital patient in the recovery wing after *major* surgery, a literal heart transplant. I hadn’t heeded The Doctor’s instruction and when I tried to stand up too soon, I popped a stitch. Sorry, Lord; thank you for loving me.

And, truly, it’s not the story itself that will change people’s lives; my words and writing ability aren’t what makes it so powerful. What makes it so is the Spirit that flows through it. This story is an undeniable example of the love and power of Christ Jesus, a living testament to the mighty change that He did in my life. And the story *about* my change isn’t worth *the* change itself.

Hearing the Spirit

About a week and a half after my deliverance, I attended another brother's meeting on a Monday night. With the chair I had smashed in a heap in the corner, I was able to preach the Gospel and share with a brother something the Lord had for him. Together we loved another brother who was struggling with forgiveness and worshiped and praised God as the Body of Christ. It was a wonderful, beautiful night.

Afterwards, I went home and shared all that the Lord had done that evening with my wife and we fell asleep together at about 11 o'clock or so. Around 1:30 in the morning (I checked my phone after), I woke up to a mysterious sound. It sounded as if water was being poured onto a tile floor: a splattering sound. But it was loud, *really* loud. As if it were being played through an amplified speaker. I thought maybe I was dreaming, but I was lucid. I knew where I was, I knew the approximate time, *and* I was looking around the room for this noise. Plus, I laid there after the event and *then* fell asleep again. I was definitely coherent.

Still, though, I thought *surely* I was coming out of a dream. However, the noise persisted. But, still, I just laid there, not believing it. It went on for so long that I finally decided that I was indeed *actually* hearing this noise. With that, I sat up in bed, thinking, "Okay, what *is* that?!" though without feelings of worry or concern. After this, the noise faded and I had an image come to my mind of a large wooden vat, like the ones used in a brewery or winery, being filled up to overflowing, and the sound I was hearing was of the liquid spilling over the sides to the floor. I then felt the Lord explain that this is what He was doing with me: where once I was dry, empty, blocked up, and desolate, He has now completely filled me—and even though my vat was full, *He's just kept on pourin' anyways*. Now, it's spilling out all over the place and getting on everything. A big, beautiful mess.

I just laid there amongst my sleeping family in awe, completely amazed, and feeling the Spirit from my head to my toes. It made me feel so incredibly hopeful for the future. I don't know exactly what's in store for me, but I do know this: it's full of Jesus and that's all I could ever want.

Never in my life had I ever experienced supernatural miracles like these and now I was two for two and in as many weeks. But, little to my knowledge, there were still more to come.

A Miraculous Confirmation

Two weeks to the date after my deliverance, my wife and I went to visit our friends, Linda and Travis Idom (a married couple from our local Church fellowship), as they had invited us to their home for lunch after I read my story to the Church. With their invite, they also mentioned they had something to share with us. Previously, I would have felt resistance or obligation to such an invite, but now I *couldn't wait* to load up the car with a bunch of little kids and drive an hour to spend time with a brother and sister in Christ.

After eating lunch, we all continued talking about and sharing different stories on how the Lord had loved us, spoken to us, helped us, and guided us in our lives. Linda was sharing how the Lord had miraculously spoken to her on several occasions (one of which kept her from accidentally running over her child and another that kept her from being bitten by a snake) and then told how God had let her peek into the spiritual realm and see the demon that was inside her cousin. Some number of years back, she was picking up her cousin to go somewhere with her. When the cousin sat down in the car, Linda said she looked over at her and her face changed. What she saw was a face, but it wasn't her cousin's face. It was the face of something else that was inside her. Something *evil*. When she suddenly came face to face with this satanic entity, Linda's body went cold and shivers fell down her spine.

Linda also shared that when looking at this thing, she could feel its intent. Its face was smug and brazen, as if it was there to cause mischief and proud of it—sickeningly gleeful in its wickedness. Linda then explained that this type experience had happened three separate times in her life. The first was many years ago, the second was with her cousin, and the third was about two years ago...with me. She told me all she had seen.

“It was the very last Church meeting you hosted before you moved. The meeting was over and everybody was in the living room, talking. You were standing next to Travis, listening to him tell a story, and I was across the room watching both of you. And I saw your face change, just like with my cousin. At first, I thought it looked like a lion's face, but then I thought, 'No, that's a reptile.' Then it settled into a figure, another face, but it wasn't your face. It was different. And then, it *looked* at me. It could see that *I* could see *it*, like one conscious thing looking at another. And just like with my cousin, I could feel why it was here, but this thing was different. It was here to *destroy everything* and take *no* prisoners.”

Upon hearing this, all I could think of was another quote of my father's. One where he prided himself in his capacity for rage and power and destruction. One I'd heard him say over and over: “There's hurricanes, tornadoes, and then there's *Doug Wrentz*. There's a side of me you ain't ever seen...” My wife brought up my dream where the landscape of my childhood had been utterly destroyed. It was eerie, to state the obvious.

After this, Linda and Travis both shared how on the way home from that meeting, Linda told Travis what she has seen, and that for weeks after they prayed and asked God what to do with it. They didn't feel it was right to “call me out” in front of the Church (which seems like the right choice as I wasn't quenching the Spirit in the meetings and the evil spirit wasn't manifesting in my behavior). Being I was a tender brother, they also weren't sure how to broach the subject with me personally. Basically, they could see what kind of man I was and that I was simply being tormented. In the end, they both felt that God had just shown them so they could continue praying for me and against what was in me. Looking back, Linda had seen this during what I've been calling “the good years” and I feel I wouldn't have been able to receive that message at the time, especially if it had been public. But, no doubt, God could have worked it all out perfectly regardless, just as He has done.

Linda also shared that about two weeks prior to our visit, she was woken up in the middle of the night and was prompted to pray for me. She described it like the Holy Spirit had put the thought "Pray for Daniel" square in the middle of her forehead. So she did, from about three to five in the morning. We were unable to confirm exactly which day this happened, but the timeframe falls right around the date *and time* I was being delivered. And with what God has done already, I don't doubt that it could have been the *exact* same time at all.

Lastly, after Linda told me her story, she also said, "I felt God wanted me to share all this with you as a testimony that you aren't crazy, and what happened *really did happen*. And that God loves you so much." The miracle within this already miraculous story is that just the night prior to the visit with our friends, I was having the question, "Did all of that just happen? Have I completely lost my mind?" And *bam*. God *immediately* answered the next day. I truly felt the Father's love, and it confirmed all my heart changes and beliefs once again. Previously, I was trapped in darkness, and whenever I made it out into the light I was battered back down. Now it's the complete inverse *and* opposite: instead of an evil spirit in me working against me, I now have the Holy Spirit in me working *for* me. This time, I was living in the light and when the teensiest, tiniest question of doubt tried to creep in, it looked up and saw a God Almighty glaring down at it. As its heart sank to the floor and its bowels evacuated, it saw Him spit in both His hands, pick up a sledgehammer the size of the Sun, saw Him lift it up over His holy head, heard Him say, "Nuh-uh, not with Joshua," and with the force of a million-billion galaxies it was obliterated out of *this and all* dimensions. I strongly suspect Satan has one less demon to work with now...

It's amazing, there's been so much proof coming out after the fact for my miracle that, now, believing it is just the *logical* thing to do. From the experience itself, to my wife remembering how she prayed for the spirit's name to be revealed, to my friend being prompted to learn about and recognize demonic abuse, to my other friend actually *seeing* the demon years ago, all these other miracles, my extreme change post-deliverance, and all my questions of my tortured past being answered...the list just keeps growing. There are even other things I haven't written about, like how a month before my deliverance I went on a ten-day water fast or how I used to be *unable* to speak during Church meetings and now I can't shut up. Every piece of my entire life makes sense now, from birth to date.

Gosh, I wish I could give you all a taste of the relief I have. It's like I'm standing, arms outstretched, in front of a fully opened dam of cleansing peace or running butt-naked in a hurricane of pure joy. Like I've taken a nosedive into a volcano of non-stop, liquid-hot, impossible love. It's beyond incredible and surpasses description. Praise You, Jesus. You saved me. Thank You so, so much.

A Different Kind of Dream

The last thing I believe I'll share is a dream I had about a week and a half after being set free. I believe it has more to do with what's going on in my heart, but I also believe it's *deeply* spiritual, as you'll see. I've had several other meaningful dreams but this one has really stuck with me.

The setting was in medieval times and I was a soldier in a large castle. In this castle, there had been a quiet coup and, now, nearly all those in the castle were serving under a different authority. However, I was part of a remnant: a group of around fifty men that still served the original authority.

Where the betrayers had once been moving in secret, they had now grown strong enough to make their move, and, on this particular night, they were set to attack us, seeking to wipe out all resistance. Knowing this and that the enemy was all around us, we final-fifty gathered together in a large room for protection. We were highly outnumbered and ill-prepared for battle; shoddy helmets and lesser weapons were all we were able to gather with the time we had. We made barricades out of the tables, took defensive positions, and then, we waited. The room was dead quiet.

We were scared.

But then...something came over me. I start chanting, like an Indian around a campfire. And I started dancing. At first, I was alone, but then a few other men started to join. Humming and bobbing their heads, softly and slowly at first, but then louder and bolder, then chanting and moving along with me. Other men saw and started also. The spirit amongst us slowly began to grow. More men joined in. Then a drum started; *Bum, bum, bum, bum, bum, bum, bum, bum*. And before long, I was leading the *war dance*.

The room was on *fire*, and we were in a fever pitch. The entire mass was chanting and yelling. The drum pounding, urging us on. Moving in a great circle around the large room, we danced and screamed and lost our minds. And there I was, out front, dancing and whooping and hollering like a wild Indian, *like a madman*.

"eeYaaaa-Ho!!!" I yelled out from my belly, and all the men followed after, *"eeYaaaa-Ho!!!"*

When we finished, *we were ready*. With the men roaring behind me and my own heart consumed in molten fire and eyes ablaze, I thrust my sword toward the door and bellowed, "Send'em in!!!" With that, I awoke, my eyes glistening and my heart still red hot, pounding with passion. There was no need to see the battle, it was already won.

In light of my story, the fact that I had this kind of dream is remarkable. I was on God's side and we were now taking the fight to the enemy. To quote C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*: "Aslan is on the move." And if God is for us, who can be against us? So, to any that would dare oppose, get wise and recognize Who it is that you defy and run while you still can. And, forces of darkness? Step aside, lest you be *smote* by The Almighty.

Frequently Asked Questions

“Do you think you were saved before your deliverance?”

I believe what people are really asking with this is “Can a Christian have a demon?” The only thing I can really do is share my experience as I don’t have full knowledge of all the mechanics behind possession, oppression, strongholds, and the like.

When I think back to before my deliverance, I can say confidently that I believed Jesus was the Son of God, He was my Lord, He died for my sins and rose again, that I was humble to Him, that I had consciously given Him all I knew I had to give, and that I was made righteous only by my faith in Him. I hold all of that the same now as I did before. What changed was, specifically, believing in and understanding the nature of God’s day-to-day love and comfort (an experiential issue, not a salvific one). That said, I feel very certain I was saved. And with that also, it certainly seems like something “came out” of me that night on the couch with my wife.

It may be important to point out that I was very much in control of my actions. Unlike the man in the Bible that lived in the graveyard, my experience was that of being tormented only in my mind and being blinded to certain truths of God’s reality. Perhaps, it’s that evil spirits can be more “dormant” depending on what the affected individual is doing with their heart; as with each shred of light I received, I was faithful with it, and then received more (Luke 16:10). I do feel that the more a spirit manifests in a person’s behavior, the more that person is “agreeing” with it in *some* way, whether by having a hard heart or rejecting God or some other willful act. What I’m saying is the inverse of James 4:7, that is if we *don’t* resist the enemy he *won’t* flee. With some minor observation and experience, I sense that people with demons *and* rebellious hearts often “shy away” from talk concerning “surrendering all to Jesus”, which seems to make a “testing of the will” the litmus test for salvation. As we know, demons declared Jesus as the Son of God but did not (and do not) not surrender to Him.

I also think that walking out the alternative view to its end sheds some light on the answer. I liken my journey to a perpetual version of the parable of the hidden treasure in a field: again and again, I was shown more and more light, and every time I “sold all I had” to gain it. I was confused, blinded, lied to, desperate, and violently clinging to what little truth I had. For me, to say that if I had died before that Friday night that I’d have gone to Hell because I had an evil spirit in me, regardless of being a tortured captive from an early age and believing as best I could, just doesn’t seem to fit the character of the God that saved me from that same evil spirit.

Lastly, we may gain some insight by looking at when Jesus addressed Satan while speaking to His follower, Peter: “Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’” (Matthew 16:23)

All of this would seem to suggest that, yes, a Christian can have a demon. But, again, I am merely sharing my experience and perception. Regardless, I believe whatever the answer is, that God is always just.

“When did you open yourself up to receive darkness?”

I feel this question is coming from one of a few places: a belief the person is holding with how spiritual warfare works, a misunderstanding of the heart, or just the inability to comprehend what it's like to be brainwashed and consistently abused for so long. I believe the answer they're expecting is something like, “I rejected God at this certain point,” (which I didn't, which is why I was able to be delivered) or “I started drinking after such and such happened,” as if there are certain acts that “open us up” to spirits. Scripture tells us that “it's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth,” (Matthew 15:11) and that “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks,” (Matthew 12:34). It's not the act itself that opens you up to evil spirits, it's your heart behind it. For example, a drunk may be expressing his belief that “God doesn't provide relief” with his alcoholism, or someone playing with a Ouija board may be believing, in their heart, they can be a medium to the spirit world.

In that sense, I did “do” a thing to open myself up to receive darkness: I believed my father's lies and all that my dark world was telling me. I believed that nothing could be proven and you couldn't expect God's comfort, that love was pain. These beliefs postured my heart in such a way that allowed the enemy to enter in and gain a foothold, making me the perfect candidate to be tortured: a person that knew nothing else. In my story, this point is capitalized upon when I repented from those beliefs (once I saw them) and was then *immediately* delivered from that unclean spirit—it had no more ground to stand on and had to leave. Till the day I die, I'll continue repenting of the mistruths I have as the Lord reveals them to me.

As a side note: while I did “agree” with those lies, all of this was very much done *to* me, as I hope you can tell. We certainly don't have to suffer Satan's minions but, as you encounter those who have spirits, have mercy on the person inside; it isn't for no reason that they are the way they are. Many of them are in fact primed to be redeemed, being that (as I can testify to) it's easy to cry out for and surrender to Jesus when you're *desperate*. Recognize that *nobody* with a spirit is having a good time. All of them (willful or not) have been tricked or entrapped and are being tortured. And these are the very ones who Jesus came to save: the captives (Luke 4:18, 40-41).

Final Note

If you feel trapped or tortured in any way, recognize that this is not from God, and the answer you're searching for is only found in complete surrender to Jesus. There's nothing like His love and healing and joy. Recognize too, that it will cost you your life, but, *wow*...is He ever worth it.

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