

Former Occultists Expose the Dark Truth About Halloween

In separate interviews with Charisma Media, former witch turned [deliverance minister Jenny Weaver](#) and [former Satanist John Ramirez](#), who is now an evangelist for Christ, share their powerful testimonies of transformation and deliverance.

“As a young girl, I got into some really deep dark things,” Weaver recounts, explaining how an abusive family life led her to seek acceptance in all the wrong places. “The spirit of rejection gripped my life... I began to cut myself, wanting to kill myself, doing a lot of self-mutilation.”

Weaver describes how her search for belonging led her to witchcraft after watching “The Craft,” a film about witches. “I thought, ‘I want to do that,’ and I did. I began to dive into Wicca and witchcraft.” Her journey takes a dark turn as she becomes immersed in spells and rituals, thinking they would grant her power. “We wanted spirits to come into us... we didn’t think it was possession; we thought it was power,” she recalls.

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After years of addiction, homelessness and torment, Weaver experiences a divine rescue. “God literally delivered me in a moment,” she says, emphasizing the stark contrast between her past and her faith-filled present.

Today, Weaver warns parents about the dangers of spiritual compromise and why her family [has nothing to do with Halloween.](#)

“Halloween is steeped in demonic rituals,” she warns. “People

think it's innocent, but the origins are rooted in the worship of the dead and spirits. We can't compromise by changing it into a Christian holiday."

Weaver explains that the costumes and traditions are linked to ancient beliefs that invite evil spirits into the world. "My job is to train my children to know we don't serve the devil one day and God the next," she states firmly. "We have to have those hard conversations with our kids to educate them about the reality of spiritual warfare. As parents, we must protect our families by closing those doors and refusing to engage in practices that open them."

For Ramirez, life in the darkness of Satanism was all he knew for years, and his powerful testimony of freedom from the devil's grasp [equips fellow believers with knowledge](#) about the demonic holiday.



[Order John Ramirez's "Exposing the Devil's Playbook" on Amazon.com!](#)

"I tell you, it boggles my mind how you can have a one-night

stand with the devil and then say you love Jesus," he shares. Ramirez recounts his own harrowing experiences, including a "demonic wedding" on Halloween, complete with animal sacrifices and rituals led by witches and warlocks. "The founder of the Church of Satan once thanked Christian parents for allowing their children to celebrate the devil," he states, highlighting the spiritual gravity of this holiday.

Ramirez insists that dressing children in costumes and attending church on Halloween only masks the underlying issues. "You're still celebrating a demonic holiday," he warns. "The devil lives in your church that day. Why would you celebrate something that opens doors to darkness?" He emphasizes that this seemingly innocent practice can have dire spiritual consequences, as children who are exposed to such celebrations may later struggle with addiction and rebellion.

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Drawing from his 25 years of experience serving the devil, Ramirez declares passionately, "You are giving your children over to the enemy." He challenges parents to consider the implications of their actions, explaining that even a single compromise can lead to devastating spiritual repercussions. "Celebrate the harvest by bringing souls into the kingdom," he urges, advocating for a shift in focus away from Halloween.

Both Jenny Weaver and John Ramirez found deliverance in Jesus Christ, transforming their lives from darkness to light. Their testimonies serve as powerful reminders of the spiritual dangers associated with celebrations like Halloween, which can open doors to demonic influence. As believers, it is crucial to heed their warnings, aligning with Scripture in Ephesians 5:11, which states, "And do not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; instead, expose them." By choosing to avoid wickedness and engage in the light of

Christ, Christians can protect themselves and their families from spiritual harm.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

The Transformative Power of the Bible on Mental Health

Dr. George Barna, in a recent interview with CBN's Billy Hallowell, sheds light on the correlation between mental health challenges and an individual's worldview. Barna's latest research from the American Worldview Inventory 2024 shows that a biblical worldview may offer [relief to those struggling with mental health issues](#) like anxiety, depression and fear.

"Our best estimates show that about one out of every four adults has a diagnosable mental illness," Barna says. He points out that younger generations are grappling with mental health challenges at a higher rate, with 56% of Gen Z experiencing symptoms like anxiety and depression. In stark contrast, only 14% of Baby Boomers face similar issues, a generation with a significantly higher rate of biblical worldview adherence. According to Barna, this is no mere coincidence.

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“People with a biblical worldview are less likely to do things like wind up in prison, to have some kind of addiction ... to say that they’re feeling fulfilled with their life,” he explains. This connection shows that adopting faith-based values offers a broader sense of purpose, grounding people in challenging times.

For many facing mental health battles, he believes the answer to their problems isn’t always medication. “What may be happening is that it’s not a chemical imbalance or physical issue ... it may be their belief structure, their worldview,” he says, highlighting the importance of spiritual health in conjunction with mental health.



[Order Kenza Haddock’s “The Three Enemies of Your Mental Health” on Amazon.com!](#)

Barna notes that people of faith often find comfort through shared community and purpose in life, which can reduce feelings of despair. While he acknowledges that medicinal treatment is necessary for some, he emphasizes that “worldview isn’t just about believing things that make a pastor happy. Worldview actually has a dramatic effect on all aspects of your life.” A biblical worldview, he argues, could be a protective factor against certain mental health issues.

King David’s writings in the Psalms offer a powerful example for Christians today on [navigating times of mental and emotional distress](#). Throughout the Psalms, David openly voices his struggles with feelings of despair, anxiety and fear, giving readers an honest look into his inner turmoil. In Psalm 13:1, he cries, “How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?” revealing the depth of his personal hurt.

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Yet, David models a way forward by consistently turning to God as his source of comfort and strength. His words in Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me,” reflect his unwavering trust in God’s presence and protection, even in the darkest times. David’s faith reminds us that in moments of mental anguish, we can find hope and peace by reaching out to God, relying on His promises to provide strength and comfort.

In these times of growing darkness, the Bible provides us with comfort and reassurance, encouraging everyone who reads it that they can find peace in God. Psalm 29:11 states, “The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.” For those struggling, Barna’s research reveals that turning toward a relationship with God will provide solace and a renewed sense of hope in our sin-cursed world.

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Is Dr. Lester Sumrall’s 40-Year-Old Prophecy Now a Reality?

In a recent episode of “The John Bevere Podcast,” Darren Whitehead, founder and pastor of Church of the City, and [author, speaker and minister John Bevere](#) reflect on a striking prophecy delivered by the late Dr. Lester Sumrall over 40

years ago. Bevere emphasizes the profound implications of this word, which he believes is now coming to fruition in the digital age.

Whitehead opens the discussion by acknowledging the overwhelming influence of smartphones on contemporary life. "I've got to believe there has never been a more powerful piece of technology that is conforming people to the pattern of this world than these smartphones," he states. He highlights how this digital distraction hampers one's ability to hear God's voice. "It is very difficult to hear the voice of God when every discretionary quiet moment in your life is filled with doom scrolling," he adds, describing the pervasive "visual clutter" that smartphones create.

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Recalling a pivotal moment from 1984, Bevere describes a breakfast meeting with Dr. Sumrall, a renowned figure in ministry. "He said, 'God has shown me things that are going to happen in the future,'" Bevere recounts. Sumrall prophesied that people would one day carry a box in their hands that would control their lives. "We thought, 'Oh, bless his heart, he's off his rocker,'" Bevere admits, reflecting on their initial skepticism.

However, as he discusses the present-day ramifications of this prophecy, [Bevere highlights alarming statistics](#) about smartphone usage. He cites research revealing that over 50% of Americans grapple with anxiety, a condition he attributes largely to smartphone dependency. "Ninety-two percent of Americans have a smartphone ... what is that doing to people?" Whitehead asks. He stresses that excessive screen time—averaging between five to seven hours daily—alters social intelligence and fosters unhealthy comparisons.

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“Romans 12 talks about ... ‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world,’” Whitehead says. “I’ve got to believe there has never been a more powerful piece of technology that is conforming people to the to the pattern of this world than these smartphones.”

Together, they urge us as Christians to reflect on our relationship with technology and the need to reclaim our time with God and our joy. Dr. Sumrall’s prophecy echoes in their discussion, issuing a powerful warning about the unseen forces at play in a digitally driven world.

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Mike Signorelli: Finding Faith in Times of Pressure

At the Breakers Conference held at Now Arena in Chicago, Illinois, Pastor Mike Signorelli delivers a powerful message about faith, resilience and the divine purpose that underpins the struggles of believers. He emphasizes the importance of understanding one’s spiritual journey, particularly in times of adversity.

“Welcome to the birthing room,” he begins, encouraging attendees to embrace the pressure that comes with their spiritual journeys. He acknowledges the journey can be

difficult, but within those hardships God has a purpose for every one of us. "It's not about the algorithm," he says. "It's about the anointing." He stresses that true success and favor come from [a relationship with God](#) rather than worldly metrics.

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Signorelli shares his personal story of overcoming extreme poverty, recounting his childhood struggles. "Somebody has to say, 'I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired,'" he says. His journey from hardship to ministry leadership exemplifies his belief that change is possible when one is willing to embrace God's calling. "You can't cheat your way through this. You gotta go through," he emphasizes, urging the audience to remain steadfast in their faith, even when times get tough.

Signorelli then passionately opens up about his belief in the faithfulness of God by recounting a personal story that began with a simple stove. "The Lord told me this morning, 'Michael, when you walk into the stadium today, you need to know that it all started with the stove,'" Signorelli says. He explains that, 25 years ago, when his family was struggling in poverty, a pastor delivered a donated stove to their home, sparking a journey that would transform their lives. "I took your poverty and I used it to deliver a stove," God reminded him, connecting that moment to his presence on the conference stage.

Reflecting on the parallels between his journey and God's promise to Abraham, Signorelli adds, "When God gave the promise to Abraham, it was 25 years until he had his son, and 25 years from the story of the stove, I stand on this stage today." His story is a testament to the perfection of God's timing, and His promises are always fulfilled, even if they take years to come to fruition.

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As the conference unfolds, Signorelli implores fellow believers to seize the moment and deepen their [relationship with God](#). “Sometimes you’ve got to get in the [birthing] room so something can be released to you,” he says, reminding everyone of the power and presence of God even in our darkest moments.

This powerful testimony and call for a renewed faith in the Lord leaves us with a call to action: Dig deeper into your relationship with God. Push through and endure the difficult times. As it says in James 4:8, “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” This is a reminder that faith is an active journey, one Christians must embark on to pursue a closer connection with Jesus Christ.

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How Deliverance from an Evil Spirit Shaped Tony Merkel’s Mission

Tony Merkel, host of the “Confessionals” podcast, opened up in an exclusive interview with Charisma Media about a powerful experience in his life that prepared him for the supernatural topics he explores today.

Before starting his podcast, Merkel went through [an intense spiritual battle](#) and ultimately needed deliverance from a demonic spirit. “I didn’t totally have an understanding as to the depths of the spiritual realm,” he reflects, adding that his journey into podcasting has taught him how “real and involved” the spiritual realm is in everyday life.

In 2014, Merkel says, he rededicated his life to God in a powerful moment of transformation. He recalls it as a “miraculous day” where the Holy Spirit touched him, radically changing him “instantaneously.” This change was noticed by everyone around him, he says, and Merkel remembers that from then on, he became deeply connected with his faith, constantly praying, listening to sermons and building connections in his community.

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One such connection was with a man he met during his delivery job, whom he describes as a lost soul who seemed unfamiliar with God. “He doesn’t even know what God is or who Jesus is,” Merkel says, recounting how the man [unexpectedly opened up](#) about his struggles. When he asked the man about his future, the response he received was chilling: “I don’t know. I’m probably going to kill myself.” Merkel instinctively responded, “Man, you don’t want to do that. God’s got plans for your life.” This comment, Merkel says, stirred something in the man, leading to a deeper curiosity about faith.

The two arranged to meet at the man’s home to discuss faith further. But before Merkel visited, he felt forewarned by the Holy Spirit, telling him that he would face “very dark spiritual warfare.” Arriving at the man’s house, Merkel’s instincts were immediately heightened. The house was dark, and strange décor lined the walls. “It was completely black ... and there were pictures of pinup girls almost as wallpaper,” he recalls. Guided by the Holy Spirit’s directions, Merkel chose

a specific chair, feeling that God was directing him away from sitting near a particular door.

Over the next three hours, Merkel spoke with the man about hobbies and life before turning to the topic of faith. When he invited the man to accept Christ, the man became visibly uncomfortable, almost agitated. But Merkel persisted, and the man finally agreed, praying to accept Christ. However, his reaction was unlike anything Merkel had seen before. "He starts shaking his hands real violently," Merkel says, describing how the man claimed to feel energy rushing through his body. Following this, the man tightly embraced Merkel, exhaling deeply in a way Merkel found unnerving.

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Merkel's own battle with a dark presence began shortly after that intense encounter. Despite his dedication to faith, he found himself weighed down by a lingering, oppressive feeling that seemed to follow him. "It was something I couldn't shake," he says, describing how he felt spiritually and mentally exhausted. Merkel eventually sought help from his church, recognizing that he needed deliverance from a force beyond his control. "I realized it was spiritual warfare in a way I hadn't understood before," he says. Seeking the support of his church community, he received prayer from elders who guided him through deliverance, ultimately finding relief from the oppressive spirit.

Reflecting on his journey, Merkel emphasizes that his deliverance was both liberating and transformative. The experience deepened his faith and gave him a powerful sense of purpose. "God allowed me to go through that darkness so that I would know just how real spiritual battles are," he says. Merkel says this deliverance set a foundation for his work, giving him firsthand knowledge of the spiritual conflicts he

would later discuss with guests on his show.

“It’s why I do what I do,” he explains, affirming that his podcast aims to shed light on spiritual realities, including the importance of deliverance and protection through Christ. As Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, “For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.”

Merkel’s story highlights the Bible’s teachings on spiritual warfare. Scripture emphasizes that evil can only be conquered by God’s power, not human strength. In the words of Matthew 12:28, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Merkel’s journey is a reminder that God’s presence is a source of protection and deliverance amid unseen spiritual battles.

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Ex-Church Secretary Facing 280 Years in Prison

A former church secretary in Louisa, Virginia, may spend the rest of her life in prison after being convicted of [embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars](#) from her longtime place of worship. Brenda W. Ragland, 64, who has been a member and employee of the unnamed church for over 20 years, was found guilty on Monday of 14 counts of embezzlement. Each count carries a potential maximum sentence of 20 years, adding up to a possible 280 years behind bars.

The church discovered Ragland's alleged misconduct when attempting to donate funds to support another local congregation's building project earlier this year. Unable to locate Ragland to retrieve a necessary bank letter, church officials reached out to their financial institution directly. To their shock, they learned their account lacked the funds needed for the donation.

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"It is a sad day for the church," said Louisa Commonwealth's Attorney Rusty McGuire, emphasizing the trust the church had placed in Ragland. "They put their faith in Mrs. Ragland to manage the church resources, and she violated that faith by turning church resources into her personal piggy bank."

Investigators later found that Ragland had diverted [more than \\$670,000 in church funds](#) over the years, including tithes meant for the church, which she funneled into her personal bank account via Cash App. Authorities suspect the total amount may be even higher, as they were only able to review seven years of bank records.

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Senior Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Megan Riordan, who worked with McGuire on the case, expressed hope for the church's recovery, noting the impact of Ragland's betrayal. "Ragland wreaked financial havoc on the church that she was supposed to be helping," Riordan said. She also thanked the Louisa County Sheriff's Office for its "thorough investigation."

Ragland's sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 27, 2025.

This case serves as a stark reminder that God is purifying His

church, exposing wrongdoing within its ranks to strengthen the body of Christ. Scripture tells us this in 1 Peter 4:17: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins first with us, what shall the end be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

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Essential Preparations Ahead of the Red Heifer Ceremony

A full-dress reenactment of the ancient water libation ceremony has taken place in Jerusalem, drawing attention from religious observers and prophecy watchers alike.

The event, held during the Sukkot festival, mirrors the actual ritual that was performed in the temple, with Kohanim (priests) and Levites leading the ceremony dressed in traditional vestments. Starting at the Dung Gate in the Old City, participants proceeded to the historic Shiloach Spring, with joyful music and prayers echoing through the streets.

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[The Temple Institute](#) assisted in the event, creating a special gold-plated silver vessel to carry water from the spring. The group is dedicated to preparing for the third temple, a topic of deep significance in both the Jewish and Christian faiths. For Christians, the construction of a third temple plays a

critical role in end-times prophecy. According to many interpretations, the rebuilding of the temple is connected to the final events before the return of Jesus Christ. As referenced in Daniel 9:27, the prophecy of the Antichrist standing in the temple signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation, a time of great suffering that precedes Christ's Second Coming.

The Pool of Siloam, where the reenactment took place, has deep biblical roots, tied to the rituals of purification in the temple era. The pool, fed by the Gihon Spring, was a key site where pilgrims cleansed themselves before entering the temple to offer sacrifices. Its reemergence in discussions about the third temple fuels anticipation among those who see these developments as prophetic markers.

Events like the water libation reenactment and the highly anticipated red heifer ceremony are flashing indicators of the approaching end times. According to biblical prophecy, [the red heifer](#), which is necessary for the purification rituals of any future temple, plays a crucial role in preparing for the third temple. Numbers 19 also outlines the significance of the red heifer's ashes in ceremonial purification. Many Christians and Jews believe the preparations for these ceremonies as fulfilling prophetic milestones that signal the nearing return of the Messiah. As these events unfold, they align with Scriptures pointing to the rebuilding of the temple and the acceleration of end-time events described in Daniel and Revelation.

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The Bible, particularly in the book of Revelation, speaks of end-time events that will unfold [around the temple](#). In Revelation 11:1-2, the apostle John describes the measuring of the temple, a moment that is tied to God's plan for the end

times. While these events are significant, Jesus emphasizes the need for vigilance, stating in Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord will come."

The Parable of the 10 Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 also serves as a powerful reminder that we as Christians must be prepared for Jesus' return at any time. Like the wise virgins who kept their lamps ready, believers are called to live in a state of spiritual preparedness. Regardless of when these prophetic events occur, we are to obey the words of Jesus: "Therefore you also must be ready, for in an hour when you least expect, the Son of Man is coming" (Matt. 24:44).

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Chris Reed Publicly Apologizes to Rick Joyner

Chris Reed, former president and CEO of MorningStar Ministries, has publicly apologized to ministry [founder Rick Joyner](#), expressing regret for the way he handled his departure. In a heartfelt message, Reed acknowledges the hurt caused on both sides and emphasizes his deep respect for Joyner, whom he calls "a man of integrity."

"I apologize for the things that I said against an elder when I felt like I was being thrown under the bus. I was wrong, and I was in rare form," Reed says, explaining that his actions stemmed from hurt and misunderstanding. He admits that he and

Joyner did not communicate extensively before or after his resignation, which led to a “vacuum of suspicion.”

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Reed goes on to affirm his admiration for Joyner. “I respect Rick Joyner. He has been faithful to his wife, he’s a man of integrity, he’s a true man that has heard from God, and he’s a prolific author,” Reed states. Despite their differences, Reed expresses his continued love and support for the MorningStar leader: “I miss him, and I love him.”

In addition to [his personal apology](#), Reed condemns recent allegations of abuse within the ministry, defending Joyner’s character. “Rick Joyner in no way had any knowledge of Ericson’s abuse. ... He would never put up with that,” Reed says firmly, distancing Joyner from the misconduct of others while supporting the victims.

[As Charisma News previously reported](#), MorningStar Ministries is in the midst of legal battles related to volunteer ex-police officer Erickson Douglas Lee, who has been convicted of sexual abuse and misconduct against minor boys in the church.

Reed went on to emphasize the biblical principle of honoring spiritual leaders, citing the importance of turning “the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers.” He believes this principle, from Malachi 4:6, is crucial to the health of both the church and the nation.

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“I’ll never let the fear of man dictate a decision I ever make again,” Reed explains. “I’ll do what’s right. I’ll listen to a multitude of counselors, but in the end, I’ll never let fear

influence a decision I make again. So I apologize to the people that I hurt. I apologize to Rick and Julie. I sincerely apologize to them, to their family and to MorningStar, our family, in any way that I mishandled this. I want to take the low road and I want to be humble about it.”

Reed’s apology highlights the power of [repentance and forgiveness](#), aligning with scriptural teachings. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Reed’s public statement reflects a commitment to humility and reconciliation, key elements of the Christian faith. As Proverbs 28:13 reminds us, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

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Witches Admit Curses on Trump Aren’t Working

In a recent interview with Charisma Media, former Satanist-turned-Christian evangelist John Ramirez weighed in on a viral Reddit post revealing that [witches are casting spells](#) on former President Donald Trump.

Despite their best efforts, the spells don’t seem to work. Ramirez points to the power of prayer and the spiritual protection surrounding Trump, explaining that “the reason they can’t touch Trump is because you can’t penetrate the blood.”

[Breaking News](#). [Spirit-Filled Stories](#). **Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!**

The Reddit post describes how witches are shifting focus away from Trump after their spells proved ineffective, citing what they referred to as “some kind of protection around him.” Ramirez, now a leading advocate against witchcraft, attributes this protection to the prayers of believers. “I pray for Trump every other day because I understand God’s plan and purpose for the earth,” he says, noting that Christians around the world are interceding on behalf of the former president.

☐ *BREAKING – Witches posting about casting spells on President Trump:*

“He seems to have some kind of protection around him.” ☐

DON’T STOP PRAYING SAINTS ☐☐☐☐ pic.twitter.com/8DRiDEps6K

– Sean Feucht (@seanfeucht) [October 22, 2024](#)

Ramirez explains that witchcraft, while often portrayed as harmless or even positive, is rooted in the devil’s schemes. [Citing his own past](#) in the occult, Ramirez makes it clear that witchcraft is anything but innocent. “I was ignorant for 25 years, right? And God saved me, so they deserve salvation, too,” he says, referring to those caught up in occult practices. He is adamant that salvation through Christ is available to all, including witches, but underscores the spiritual danger of practicing witchcraft.



[Order John Ramirez's "Exposing the Devil's Playbook" on Amazon.com!](#)

According to the Bible, witchcraft is condemned as evil. Galatians 5:19-21 lists sorcery as one of the “works of the flesh,” warning that “those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Additionally, Deuteronomy 18:10-12 explicitly states that anyone who practices witchcraft is “detestable to the Lord.” The biblical warnings leave no doubt that [witchcraft is a tool of the enemy](#), designed to lead people away from God.

Ramirez also shared his personal experience with spiritual warfare. He recalled a time when, as a satanist, he tried to curse a neighborhood but was unable to do so because the Christians there knew how to engage in spiritual warfare. “They chased me out of the region in the spirit,” he says, noting that it was their prayers and understanding of spiritual authority that made the difference.

“You have believers that were armed and dangerous. They knew

how to play, and they knew spiritual warfare,” he adds.

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In today’s America, Ramirez believes the spiritual battle is intensifying. He warns Christians that as the country faces moral and spiritual decline, the church must rise up in prayer and spiritual warfare or risk letting satanic forces gain ground unchecked. “The kingdom of God will always reign,” Ramirez declares, but only if believers stand firm in their faith and take action.

As America faces increasing spiritual warfare, Ramirez urges Christians to remember that “no weapon formed against you shall prosper,” (Isa. 54:17). But victory requires active participation in the battle. “If you want to frustrate the devil, frustrate Satanists, frustrate the darkness, you need to expose the devil’s playbook,” Ramirez adds.

For believers, the stakes are clear: the spiritual battle is ongoing, and it’s time for Christians to take their place on the front lines.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

John MacArthur Reacts to the

Steven Lawson Scandal

Recently, Pastor John MacArthur returned to Grace Community Church for the first time since undergoing a medical procedure that kept him sidelined from preaching. MacArthur sat down for a Q&A session led by Nathan Busenitz, executive vice president of The Master's Seminary and an elder at GCC, as reported by Church Leaders.

The conversation quickly turned to the topic of leadership failures within the church, most notably [the downfall of Steven Lawson](#). Busenitz asked MacArthur how GCC should process the "adversity that comes from inside the church when people that we respect and trust turn out to be different than we thought they were.

"I know you're talking about Steve Lawson, and I say that with the deepest agony in my soul," MacArthur says. Lawson, a former leader at the church and a long-time friend of MacArthur, had recently been exposed for sexual misconduct with a younger woman. MacArthur was candid about the pain of the situation but emphasized that God's hand is at work in exposing such behavior.

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"The first thing you have to understand is [that] God is blessing this church in many, many ways. And that is one of the ways He is blessing us: to expose someone who is in a position they have no right to be in to purify the church," MacArthur explains. He adds, "It is fatal to a church to have [that kind of behavior in leadership.](#)"

MacArthur points out that God knew the hearts of the many pastors who have fallen into sin. "The Lord said, 'For Grace Church, that's enough. For the Master's Seminary, that's enough'."

MacArthur sees this painful experience as part of a larger divine plan to purify the church. "As we get closer to the end, I think the Lord is purifying His church, and I'm so thankful for that," he says. However, MacArthur expressed deep sorrow for his former colleague, saying, "My heart and soul aches for Steve, obviously, a friend."

Despite his disappointment, MacArthur continues to pray for Lawson, adding, "I pray constantly, in fact, I find myself almost every night praying for him in some point in the middle of the night."

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The situation with Steve Lawson, and in churches around the world suffering from fallen leadership, is a sobering reminder of the biblical requirements for pastors and church leaders. According to 1 Timothy 3:2, a pastor "must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, able to teach." Leaders in the church are called to a high standard, and when they fall, the damage to the body of Christ is profound.

These reflections show the need for continuous prayer, not just for those in leadership but for all Christians. As more leaders fall into sin, it is crucial for believers to support their pastors in prayer, regardless of denomination. The spiritual war is real, and if the church does not stand firm, Satan's influence will grow unchecked. As MacArthur emphasizes, "We would be foolish to think that there wouldn't be an effort made by the enemy to plant in this church someone who could have a corrupting influence."

The church must remain vigilant, praying for purity in leadership and trusting that God is at work in consecrating His people.

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