

Old Man Nature versus Possession

There is some confusion about how the Adversary operates. Let's read what God has recorded in His Word regarding man's first transgression against Him, the time of original sin.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Is possession by the serpent mentioned? No. It was a discourse between man and the seducing serpent, the Devil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Again is possession mentioned? No. Devilish influence? Absolutely!

This verse stated that Eve **saw** three things. First she utilized her senses in seeing that the tree was good for food, and then that it was pleasant to the eyes, and finally a tree to be desired to make one wise.

She saw, then she acted. She saw by employing her five senses. Then she acted on that information. She deliberately disobeyed God. She weighed the evidence and made a decision based on the senses not the spirit.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

They were afraid and hid themselves. Fear and broken fellowship are still the results of disobedience, of sinning, of not doing the will of God.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Adam freely ate. He made a decision by utilizing his free will. He gauged the facts and made a decision based on the senses evidence. Not because he was under the control of any spirit. He willfully disobeyed. Devilish information was involved in the facts he gathered, but he by his own choice made the decision to walk by the flesh and not by the spirit.

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

The serpent beguiled, seduced Eve, not possessed her! She decided her course of action by free will. This is still the standard mode of operation the adversary utilizes. He uses subtlety to try to deceive the believer away from Christ.

II Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

According to Webster's Dictionary, possession is the state of having or controlling.

In the case of devil spirits, it is when one or more devils control the mind or body of an individual. The individual is controlled by the spirit to act a certain way. There is no freedom of will. There is no choice. The person is not in control, the spirit is.

The Greek word *daimonizomai* means possessed of a devil spirit or spirits. A person may be possessed either by one or by many. In possession it is devil spirits working under the devil or Satan's command.

Matthew 4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

This verse mentions many sick people. However, only a portion of the sick were possessed with devils.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I can do. Not God or the devil, but I will to do. This is the purpose of the renewed mind. It is to take in information and make the right decision according to what God says in His Word, or in certain circumstances by revelation.

As the Adversary, the Devil can deal directly with mankind, his devil spirits and worldly circumstances. He is the author or instigator of these circumstances which he uses to confront Christians indirectly as Satan.

Satan as the great accuser of the true God's believers is the indirect cause of people's problems by way of situations or circumstances or other people which he arranges and controls. He is the influence of these situations, circumstances, and people.

II Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Was Satan Paul's thorn in the flesh? Not directly, not by direct involvement; but indirectly through having his messenger influence and at times actually possess people to hinder Paul.

Before a person gets born again of God's Spirit he is more susceptible to the ideas of the Devil.

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Until a person is born again of God's Spirit, he walks according to the standards of the world which the god of this world has orchestrated.

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Our behavior was according to the world's standards. Our nature was as a child of wrath, whose actions were to do the desires of the flesh only. One had no choice. Since he had no spirit, he could only walk or live according to the world's standard, by the senses.

This is the nature of body and soul man. He is born into the world this way, without spirit. They are easily manipulated but not necessarily possessed. They are blown about by every wind of doctrine set up by Satan to keep them from first receiving the gift of holy spirit, and secondly, to stop them from trying to walk with and for God.

I Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

In the book of Galatians God lists the works of the flesh. Devilish influences exist, however, a person does not necessarily need to be possessed to do them. They are manifested forth because they are part of his old man nature.

The natural man, a man without body and soul, by nature, will do these things when they are influenced by the devil. These will be the fruit of his actions. Possession by devil spirits may happen but it is not always the direct cause.

Galatians 5:16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Walk in the spirit and you will not disobey God and what He wants you to do.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

God then lists the attributes that one would see when they walk by the new nature once they are born again. Again it is free will and not possession when one chooses to not walk after the spirit.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Ephesians discusses the actions of the old man and the new man; both have free will. The man who listens to or abides by the world, versus the man who lives by the spirit nature that is born within him at the time of the new birth.

The true God never possesses anyone to get His work accomplished. His children walk in their new nature of love and by freedom of will chose to do His will.

Devil spirits do not need to possess to have the works of the flesh manifest themselves. It is the nature of the old man. The old man nature will manifest itself because that is its nature, it's makeup, it's seed. It doesn't need any prodding by devil spirits, it will happen automatically because that is all the old man can manifest, the fruit of the old man nature.

Ephesians 4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Free will. Devil spirits do not have the power to enter into anyone anytime they like unless they are born of the devil's seed, or the individual allows them.

I Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

The devil is looking for an opening. He can't come in and possess at will. The saint is exhorted to be spiritually sober and vigilant on where he receives his information to live by. He can live above the darts of the wicked one because he has already triumphed through the accomplished work of Christ.

II Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The born-again believer has the power to overcome the adversary, to not allow him to have control of his life. It is still based on free will though. The saint can be tempted and enticed away from God.

James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

The individual is drawn away by his lust and enticed by devil spirits, not possessed.

There is no record of direct dealing with devil spirits in the Church Epistles, the part of God's Word that is addressed to us today. If this was of vital concern don't you think God would have instructed us on it? This indicates to the serious Bible student that possession is the exception, rather than the rule.

There are a few records in the book of Acts, so the believer is to be aware of their presence, but they are not to be the focal point of our walk with God, God is! Many times the one who has "devils on the mind," is the one carrying them about.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

This was Paul's manner of entering in. He taught the Word about the resurrected Christ.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.
The teaching of God's Word about the accomplished work of Christ was the catalyst that led to the deliverance of many.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

An exorcist is one who exercises devil spirits, evil spirits; usually by having a larger devil spirit that commands the lesser devil spirits to obey him. These Jews were trying to be like the great Apostle Paul and demonstrate the power and control they thought they had.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The seven sons of Sceva were involved with something that they did not fully understand. They had no idea what they were doing. In fact, they were just being used by the adversary to try to mock the power of God. Instead God utilized this incident for His glory.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

This is just a quick overview of this subject. One can read many other like records in the Bible emphasizing free will decisions by the believer. He is responsible for his actions. It is too easy to blame all his short comings on “the devil made me do it,” instead of taking responsibility for one’s own actions.

Yes, Satan is the god of this world, but his power is limited. He cannot possess the believer at will. The old man nature is what is the cause of most problems in the believer’s life, including our children.

There are many verses in the Bible that inform us that we are to instruct our children in the ways of God. If they are not instructed properly, they do not get possessed, but rather they live by their old man nature, and reap the consequences of their unbelief just like adults do.

I John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

We are responsible for our actions. We stay in control of our lives. We put on the mind of Christ and we decide whether or not to renew our minds to act on the will of God.

There is a devil and he wants to deceive us. He wants to keep us under condemnation, under sin-consciousness, so that we won't confess our righteousness, our sonship rights. He wants us to be too ashamed, too conscious of our shortcomings, so that we won't even try to walk for Him.

We need to not let the road downhill get into a position of control in our lives. When we see or hear of division or lack of concern we need to address it with the truths from God's Word. When there is rejection of reproof and focus on personality traits, and intense questioning of other's decisions, we need to realize the adversary is at work with his fiery darts and come to the Word of God and humble ourselves to the will of God.

We need to learn the secret to a holy life and get our eyes off our own inadequacies and onto the Father and His glory. To walk worthily is to walk with thanksgiving to God, seeking His will first and foremost. Our love and labor is to Him because of who He has made us in Christ. We are already well pleasing to God, so we can live a life of service joyfully to our God who cares for us.