

Message #33 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"What Is Demon Possession?"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about the concept of being demon possessed. This is a difficult subject for most people, and it is with this subject that Christians have the most confusion. There are many books on the subject of being demon possessed, and almost every preacher explains it in a different way. Some even deny the possibility that demons exist, and claim that the concept of demons, or devils, is just an Old Testament concept, and therefore does not apply anymore to Christians of today. Of course, if Jesus said that he cast out demons through the power of the Holy Spirit, then we either have to believe that demons can be in people or we have to believe that the Bible is false. We know the Bible is not false, but because of a lack of understanding of the word of God today, many preachers are deceived into thinking demons no longer, or ever did, exist. Also, some preachers go to the other extreme where they think demons are in everything and are little gargoyles running around all over the place. Hopefully this morning's explanation can sort out some of these things and help to comprehend the existence of evil spirits and how they actually work and how they actually may or may not appear.

We know that Satan is still at work in this world, therefore we know that he intends to deceive us if at all possible. One of the best deceptions he could use to keep us from being concerned about

demon possession is to convince Christians that demons don't exist. He has done this with many preachers who teach that demons are just an Old Testament symbolism, and that modern psychology better explains demon possession than the Bible does. Of course, this deception only causes the knowledge of Christians to be destroyed, which also causes their faith to be destroyed. And the bottom line for Satan is to destroy faith in God. Christians should beware of substituting modern psychology for the word of God, for if you do this, and become convinced that evil spirits are just ancient terms for mental problems, then eventually the logical thinking in this form will eventually bring you to accept the concept that the Holy Spirit of God is just a mental concept of the Old Testament too. But we certainly know that the Holy Spirit is real.

Now, let's continue with today's explanation by giving a definition of what a demon is. Without understanding what a demon is, it would be extremely difficult to understand the concept of demon possession, or any other subject involving demons. So, first of all, in the King James Bible a demon is called a devil. The word devil and the word demon come from the same original word in the Greek, which is daimonion. Now, the word, daimonion, in modern English is, demon. However, the word used by the translators of the the King James Bible is, devil. Words change over the years, and it sometimes brings confusion. However, whether you use the word, demon, or the word, devil, it is the same thing. Either word is a proper translation of daimonion. Both are correct. Either way, demon, or devil, both words refer to evil spirits.

Now, the next thing. As the Bible clearly tells us, God is a spirit. In fact, all heavenly beings are spirit beings. God is a spirit being, and all the rest of the host of heaven, including angels, are spirit beings. Satan also, because he was an angel, was a spirit being as well. However, when Satan and a third of the angels rebelled against God, they then fell into a different category of spirit being. They were evil, therefore they are now referred to as evil spirits. And because they are evil spirit beings, the Bible refers to them as demons, or devils.

Now there are two ways of referring to Satan. We can either refer to him as Satan, or we can refer to him as the devil. By referring to him as Satan, we are referring to the person who was an angel of heaven. But by calling him a devil, we are referring to him as a wicked being. So Satan is both Satan, a being that exists, and he is a devil, which is a wicked being. Whether we call him Satan, or call him devil, just depends on what we are referring to. The term, Satan, refers to who he is, and the term, devil, refers to what he is. Satan is wicked, therefore he is a devil, a demon.

Now, the next thing to understand is how Satan can have control over a person. Satan is a liar. Of course, that's nothing new. But in order to understand demon possession you have to realize that the only way Satan can have any power over someone is to have the person accept his lies. This is because the actions of a person depend on what the person believes. If Satan is unable to get the person to believe a lie, then he, Satan, cannot get access to the person. This is a simple truth of scripture, and in fact, the scripture tells us that the truth will set us free. If the truth sets us free, then we can easily see that the flip side of that is that the lies will capture us and put us in bondage. The whole power of Satan rests solely in his ability to lie. He can have no power unless his lies are believed. And this is important for some of you. Just realize this and let it settle in.

Satan can have no control over you unless you come to believe his lies. If he is controlling you in some way, then you need more truth. You are deceived in some way. It is Satan's lies which make us weak, and it is the truth of God which strengthens us.

To simplify this, let's explain the process of Satan's control. His control starts with a twisting of God's truth, and it goes like this. First, Satan or one of his angels plants a suggestion in the mind of a man. The man, not having a sufficient understanding of God's word to dispel the lie, believes the lie. And because the lie is believed, it affects the actions and words of the man. The evil spirit continues to plant suggestions in the man's mind, and as the man continues to be deceived, and believes the lies, the man continues to act according to what he believes. Little by little, the man's behavior becomes more and more wicked. Eventually, the demon brings other lying spirits in which contribute to the man's deception, and as the lies are continually received, the behavior of the man becomes worse and worse. Eventually, the man has become so deceived that he can no longer maintain sufficient truth to resist the control of the demons, and the demons begin to control the man at will. It is at this specific stage of deception that the demons are said to possess the man. In essence, possession is nothing more or less than having the ability to be the chief authority over a person. When the demons have more control over the actions of the man than the man does himself, the man has lost control, and has actually lost ownership of himself. I use the term ownership in that an owner of anything has authority over that thing. Any time a man comes under the control of demons, they in essence possess him. They own him. The man has sold himself, and no longer owns himself, no longer has the say so of what his actions will be in a given situation.

At this point, let me explain the difference between demon possession and demon oppression. Oppression is when there is sufficient evil spirit influence to cause oppression of the person, which means to be pressed down, as in being under a heavy load. We have all experienced demon oppression from time to time. But possession implies ownership, which implies the ability to have the say so over the person, or in other words, have the authority over the person. When demon oppression occurs, a spiritual battle for possession of the individual is being waged by evil spirits. But when possession is accomplished, the person has been overcome, and brought into complete bondage. It is at this point in the New Testament writings that Jesus would act to cast out evil spirits who had such a foothold in a person that the person could not act or speak sufficiently for himself to maintain control.

It might be a good thing if I explained, at this point, that evil spirits do not possess physical bodies, and therefore cannot be seen by physical eyes. The only way a spirit can be seen is to be seen in a spiritual sense by the discernment which comes by either one of two ways. One way to discern evil spirits is by the work of the Holy Spirit of God which can enable a human being to spiritually see something that is not a physical thing. The other way is for an evil spirit to put the concept of seeing it into the person's mind who is controlled. Some Christians actually have seen a spiritual being when God allowed it, such as prophets in the Old Testament who saw an "angel of the Lord." Mary, the mother of Jesus, also saw an angel, and there are other known instances in the Bible where people saw spiritual beings. However, some people claim to be able to see evil

spirits and claim that they are ugly little gargoyle type beings with horns, claws and tails. I can't actually say that they didn't see them, but what I might suggest is that what they saw was a manifestation of the "character" of the demon, and that the sight of it was formed more by the description of its evil nature than by actually seeing its actual true form. In the first place, evil spirits are spirits, not physical bodies. And although spirits have form, they do not have physical form. The only people who have physical forms are human beings. We have physical bodies, but spirit beings do not. The only exception is God himself who, as it says in the first chapter of John, became flesh and dwelt among us.

Also, we must remember that because Satan and his evil angels do not have physical bodies, therefore their form is that which God created. They were angels in heaven. They weren't little gargoyles or ugly dwarves. These concepts are figments of the imagination, brought about by the deception of Satan himself. As an angel in heaven, Satan was lifted up because of his own beauty, not because of his own ugliness. Although the character of Satan became decidedly deformed, nowhere in the Bible does it refer to Satan being changed in spiritual appearance to become ugly. Of course, I would have to admit that there is some benefit to seeing evil spirits in an ugly form, for this helps to recognize their true character. In that sense, I can see why a person could say that he "quote, saw" an ugly little monstrous demon. At least it helps to keep the wickedness of the demon in proper perspective.

However, the danger of describing evil spirits as ugly little monsters is that baby Christians will not understand, and may be deceived into operating in a make-believe realm of monsters and gargoyles instead of the true spiritual battle between the lies of Satan and the Truth of God. But the lies of Satan and the Truth of God is where the real battle is being fought. It is all a battle between good and evil, between truth and the lie, between spirit and flesh, between God and Satan. At the bottom line there must be a realization that Satan is a liar, and that the only thing Christians have to worry about is being deceived. And once again, 2 Thessalonians 2:10 makes it perfectly clear that deception is fostered upon those who do not have a love for the truth of God, but would rather be stimulated through fleshly desire for the things of this world. Colossians 3:2, tells us plainly that we are to set our affections on things above, and not on the things of this world. Satan's whole purpose on this earth is to tempt man to do just the opposite. He lies to us, telling us that it is perfectly all right to set our affections on things of this world. He twists the word of God so that people will believe that when we seek worldly things, we are obeying God's truth. But God's truth is that we should not love the world, but that we should love the heavenly things of God.

When a person's heart is more centered on the things of this world than on the things of heaven, then they become prime candidates for Satan's lies. Because they do not really care for heavenly things all that much, but they really love the niceties of earth, then when Satan tells them lies, saying that they should be rich, or that God wants them to drive fancy cars or to dress in fancy clothes, they believe the lie because their heart has already gone after the world. But if a person has true affection for heavenly things, and remembers to be moderate in earthly things, then they will reject Satan's lies when he tries to get them to go after riches.

And let's go back again to 1 Thessalonians 2:10. This verse specifically tells us why people are deceived. And the reason is, is that they did not have a real love for the truth of God. If they did, then they would receive the truth, and they would reject anything that was contrary to it.

You know, there are thousands and thousands of Christians in today's churches who have swallowed the lies of Satan, and have therefore become convinced that God wants them to be rich. That God wants them to dress in expensive clothes, and deck themselves out with gold and silver and other costly array. But yet, when the Bible says not to seek the riches of this world, and not to decorate themselves with gold and silver and costly array, they ignore it because they would rather believe their preacher who drives an expensive car and is decked out in gold and silver and costly array himself.

But you know what? If these same people continue to be caught up into the love for the fancy and delicate things of earth, they can very easily become possessed by Satan. Satan can end up owning them. Sure, they might be still walking around on earth having a good time, but they are no longer giving a true witness of Jesus Christ. In fact, there are some people who call themselves Christians who have already crossed over the line. They have come to love their pastor more than they love Jesus, and they have accepted their bishop's doctrine in place of the true word of scripture. They are already possessed by Satan, they are already owned. They don't really control their own lives anymore. They only do what Satan wants them to do, and they keep making excuses for their words and actions. You see, when Satan gets you to do whatever he wants you to do, he's in charge. He has become your master. You are not your own master. And when you think about what you're doing, and get a funny feeling that maybe you're going in the wrong direction, well, you seem to find out that it's already too late, and even though you try to stop what you're doing and turn your life around, you find that you just can't seem to muster up the strength to actually break away from the worldly lifestyle of today's church. You find you're hooked by the lies of Satan, and he has become your head.

The Christian church is overloaded with the lies of Satan in these last days. Churches everywhere are freely inviting the lies of Satan into their congregations, and denying the truth of the Bible. Of course, deception comes to ALL of us in some way or another, but those who live their lives lusting after the things of the flesh, and after things that flatter the eyes, and with the pride of wanting to appear to be more than they really are, are deceived. And they are deceived because they do not have a sincere love for the truth of God. It is the word of God that is truth, and there are many Christians who have little desire for God's truth, let alone love it. To have a true love for the word of God means that you seek after it fervently with the intent to apply it to your life. If you say you have a sincere love for the truth of God, but treat it as if it were a casual thing, then you have been deceived to the extent your soul is in danger of hellfire.

The lies of Satan are very subtle. In fact, we read in Genesis that the serpent that tempted Eve was more subtle, meaning more deceptive, than all the other animals of the garden. And think

about that. The Bible is actually saying that the animals were deceptive. But then, what the Bible is actually doing is making a symbolic reference to the animal nature, which is more concerned for the selfishness of fleshly desires than for the word of God. Satan, who has the most evil animal nature of all, is very good at instilling this same animal nature into unsuspecting Christians. Many of today's Christians have become so deceived that they no longer have any fervent desire for the things of God, and only go through the ritual of church with a form of Christianity. The Bible refers to these people as those who have a form of religion, but who deny the power of it. But that same scripture encourages those of us who love the truth to turn away from these people. If we don't, we will soon find that just like the parable of the sown seed that was sown among the tares, we will have our faith choked out of us, and will perish along with those wicked people.

Well, before I run out of time there is one thing that I would like to emphasize. Satan cannot control you without convincing you of his lies. He cannot manipulate you except by deceiving you. If he could physically do anything to a human being without his lies, then he would have killed the baby Jesus at birth himself instead of moving Herod to attempt it. In every sense, Satan can have no power over you unless your mind is confused by his lies. If you have enough truth, you can dispel his lies. And if you dispel his lies, you will be free from his control. Possession, meaning ownership and mastery, by evil spirits, can only be accomplished by Satan's lies. But it is the truth of God which will set you free. If you are being oppressed by evil spirits, and find yourself controlled way too much, then begin to put the word of God into you. It is the truth of God which will dispel the lies of Satan, and the truth will set you free.