

## DEMONOLOGY

### Message 11

Scripture: Matthew 8:28-34

INTRO: One of my daughters encouraged me to read Randy Alcorn's books written in story form of how demons work in people. And at the end of one of the books he says this, "Theologian G. C. Berkouwer said, 'There can be no sound theology without a sound demonology'" (298). That is a thought worth thinking through. And a little later Alcorn writes, "Paul took a particular course of action 'that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes' (2 Corinthians 2:11)." Then he says, "The degree to which Satan outwits us will correspond directly to how informed - or ignorant - we are of his schemes against us" (300).

When Paul says we are not ignorant of Satan's devices, the idea is that we know how the devil thinks and thus how he operates. Today, the occult is everywhere in North America. From the Harry Potter books to Walt Disney children's videos, the occult is everywhere. The popular series such as 'Christi' or 'Little House on the Prairie' have parts that make the occult seem friendly. One of our folk sent me a link to Walt Disney's connections to the occult. Once you know what to look for you will find the occult all over. The occult is anything that has to do with finding hidden information through other means than using the Bible or the five senses God gave us. I understand in our community it is quite common to determine if a child is a boy or a girl by a needle on a string. This is dabbling with the occult. Every book on the occult I have read that deals with the subject of water witching says it is occultic.

Satan's devices are his ideas, his ways etc.. But the facts are that many Christians hardly give him a passing thought. We might say, "Oh, I would never get involved in the occult. I do not do needle on a thread, or water witching or such like." Well, what about music? What about how we dress? What about giving in to the flesh? All of these may lead to the occult. By some of these things we show we are ignorant of Satan's schemes. For any parents who have television in their homes, you need to watch what your children are allowed to watch. They may well be beginning to be indoctrinated in the occult.

So, let me briefly bring us back to where we left off. In our last message we said there are various levels of demonic influence and then we said there are various levels of demonization. I told you that I do not find the word 'possessed' anywhere in connection to demons and that I think it should be called 'demonized' not demon possessed. A demonized person has a demon or demons inside, but the person is not necessarily 'possessed' or 'owned' by the demons.

And so, this morning I want us to look at that debated subject regarding whether a Christian can become demon possessed.

#### 4. Believers and demon possession

And so, to begin this subject, because demonized people are called 'demon possessed' by all who deal with this question, I will use that phrase while dealing with those who say a Christian cannot become demon possessed. You see, on this subject there are two major positions regarding demon possession. The first is that a believer cannot become demon possessed.

Hal Lindsey, who believes a believer can have demons says, "The main argument advanced against a Christian being demon possessed stems from the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian. Therefore, a demon cannot dwell in the same place where the Holy Spirit dwells" (160). I am not sure Lindsey is right that that is the main view. I think possibly the main view is the view that says that God and Satan cannot both possess, or have ownership, of the same person.

Among those who hold that a believer cannot become demon possessed there are two further views. We will look at these two views separately.

##### a. A believer cannot be demon possessed

- 1) No part of the Believer can be inhabited by demons

The first view we will look at here says that no part of a believer can be inhabited by demons; not the body, not the soul nor the spirit parts of man can be inhabited by demons. The argument for this first view is that the body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore demons cannot dwell in any part of the believer. First Corinthians 6:19 says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you*, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

Donald Grey Barnhouse holds to this view. In his book, "The Invisible War" he writes, "Even though Satan may travel with the speed of thought and even though he be overlord of a vast host of subordinates that report to him, he can never be on the throne of God nor can he (sic be) ever come inside the body or being of one who has been born again and whose body has become the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19; pg 166).

He says, "We know of no more insalubrious (unwholesome, unhealthy) idea than that which would turn Christians to introspection, looking for attacks of Satan within..." And later he says, "There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness. There is no communion between light and darkness. There is no concord between Christ and the devil. There is no common dwelling ground for faith and infidelity. There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols" (II Corinthians 6:14-15; 166-67). From that he argues that no part of a believer can become demon possessed.

It would seem to me that those who hold that a believer cannot become demonized are those who do not work with demonized people. If they did, they would find Christians who have demons.

2) The spirit part of the believer cannot be inhabited by demons

The second view of those who hold a believer cannot become demon possessed says, that it is the spirit part of man that cannot become inhabited by demons, but they may inhabit the soul and body of the believer. The explanation is this: It is the spirit part of man that is born again. John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." From this they argue that since the spirit of man is born again, and that is where God dwells by His Spirit, therefore demons cannot dwell in that part of man. The spirit part of man is born again and belongs to God, so that part cannot have demons. But, spirits may have access to the body and the soul. As I see it, this is then called, not demon possession, but demon oppression.

Ken Lodbell, for instance, in his book on demons says that demons can enter the believer's body, and the soul can be filled by demons in believers, but demons cannot enter man's spirit. He writes, "As we have seen from the Scriptures mentioned above, the body, and soul of the BELIEVER can come under the attack of Satan and demons, but it is the spirit that is 'born again' (John 3:5-7) and becomes 'one with Christ' (I Cor. 6:17) and therefore 'sinneth not'. It is in the soul and flesh that the person sins, so Satan and his forces can gain an advantage in those areas (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15-25)."

Henry Warkentine writes, "Some people believe that Christians cannot have demons living in them" (pg. 52). Then he shares how we are made up of body, soul and spirit and that for a Christian, demons cannot inhabit the spirit, which is born

again, but they can inhabit the body or the soul, which is not born again. Then he says, "I belong to God, therefore, I cannot become demon-possessed, only oppressed. (Ownership belongs to God.)" (pg. 53).

Let me say that I have great respect for men who work in this very challenging field. Yet I have not necessarily come to the same conclusion as some of them have. I spoke to brother Warkentine about this matter and he believes that if a demon could enter man's spirit, that would be demon possession, indicating the person is then owned by the devil. Henry Warkentine did not know if having a demon in one's soul or body was what one might call demon oppression. But in his book he writes, "I belong to God, therefore, I cannot become demon-possessed, only oppressed. (Ownership belongs to God.)" (pg. 53). Ken Lobdell holds basically the same position. But both men had not studied the word, *daimonizomai*, translated 'demon possessed'.

So, this second position held by Christians is that a believer can never become demon possessed, but a Christian may be oppressed by demons in the soul or the body. I expect that those who hold the position that a believer cannot have spirits in any part of their being do not work with demonized people.

Those who have worked with demonized people have found that frequently Christians also carry demons. But since they view the phrase 'demon possessed' as biblical, they have to explain how demons cannot possess a person while they can still reside in them. To explain how this is possible, they then say a believer may have an evil spirit in their soul or body, but never in the spirit part because that

is born again and is where the Spirit of God resides.

So, to conclude the views that a believer cannot become demon possessed here is how I would summarize this. The first view said that a demon could inhabit no part of a believer. A believer cannot be a carrier of demons. The second view that a believer cannot become demon possessed says that demons cannot inhabit the spirit part of man which is born again, and cannot sin. But demons can inhabit the soul or body part of man. This is then not viewed as demon possession, but rather as demon oppression.

b. Yes, a believer can have demons

There are others, however, who say a believer can become demon possessed. That is a Christian can be a demon carrier. Now, personally, if we left the question like this, "Can a Christian be demon possessed?" I would have to answer with a *no*. But when we realize that the word 'possessed' is not biblical when connected to this subject, then we may do well to reconsider that answer. Christians who deal with demons in other people, which is often called a deliverance ministry, know from experience that those who name the name of Christ do often suffer from indwelling spirits. We have seen that those who believe a Christian cannot be possessed explain this by saying that a demon cannot inhabit the spirit part of man but may inhabit the soul or the body. If that is true, the facts are still there, that a Christian can have demons.

So it is first of all important to understand that being demonized does not mean being possessed or being owned by a demon. We get that from the unbiblical phrase 'demon possessed'. Nowhere does the Scripture indicate that the residence of a demon in a person indicates ownership by the demon. When a demon resides in a believer, he is there to

destroy, to derail the believer from the faith. Only when demons are successful in derailing a believer from the faith could it be said that Satan now 'owns' that person, but if such were to happen to one who was once a Christian, that person would then no longer be a believer. So, the only time the devil becomes the owner of one who was a believer is when that believer gives up on God and rejects his salvation.

Let me respond to Donald Grey Barnhouse, whom I quoted earlier where he said this: "We know of no more insalubrious (unwholesome, unhealthy) idea than that which would turn Christians to introspection, looking for attacks of Satan within..." end quote. But if he is incorrect and if it is possible for a Christian to carry a demon, what would be more unwholesome or unhealthy than for a Christian with a demon within to think that demons could not possibly be the problem because Christians cannot have demons?

But how do we answer Donald Grey Barnhouse's proposition that, and I quote, "There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness. There is no communion between light and darkness. There is no concord between Christ and the devil. There is no common dwelling ground for faith and infidelity. There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols" (II Corinthians 6:14-15; 166-67).

Well, you and I, as Christians, have done some things as Christians that could not be called light or right. We have seen other Christians do the same. We have said bad things. We have heard others say bad things. We have seen them sin. We have sinned. Paul said in Romans 7, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwells no good thing." How could he say that if God and darkness could not dwell in the same person? Paul was a believer and he recognized that within himself was that which was not good. So, this is what I say to Dr. Barnhouse,

'residence does not mean ownership'. Because we may have bad thoughts, which proceed from the heart according to Scripture, does that mean we belong to the devil? Not necessarily. We know that we, as believers sometimes have sin within us and that we must repent to take care of it. 1 John 1:8, says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And it is all such evil things God wants to root out of us in our salvation. God wants not only to be resident in us, He wants to be president in us.

Like Israel, when they first entered the land, they had many enemies to drive out; so people who become Christians have many bad things to drive out. But because there is some bad within them does not mean God does not dwell there. There is both light and darkness within us all, if we will but admit it, but God wants to make it all light.

Second, what do I say to the view that it is man's spirit that does not sin and therefore no demon can be there? The idea that man's spirit does not sin is taken from 1 John 3:4-9. For the sake of time I will briefly reduce that passage from another one in 1 John that is used to show this. So turn to 1 John 5:18 (read). The reasoning is that since a born again believer cannot sin, it must refer to the spirit of man, since we know a believer does sin.

Well, we know from experience that all believers do sin. So what is the meaning here? Well, some conclude that these passages must refer to man's spirit, since man still sins. However, when it says the born again believer does not sin, the tense is always present. The truth that is taught in these passages is not that it is not possible for a believer to sin. The teaching of the present tense is that a born again believer cannot habitually continue in the same sins. A person who habitually continues in the same sins is not a believer. A truly born again believer will deal with sin



as he goes along. This passage says nothing about a believer's spirit being sinless.

But let us briefly see if the spirit part of man is sinless. Go to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (read). "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." Here we learn by implication that the spirit can be defiled just as well as the soul and the body. Then the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." If the spirit is born again and sinless, then it is already perfect. There is no further need to be cleansed from filthiness of spirit.

So, on the side of the argument that a believer can become demon possessed is Kurt Kock, the German writer I have quoted a number of times. I want to quote him here rather extensively. He says, "This is the question whether or not a Christian can be possessed. Many years of experience lead me to the conclusion that those who have no experience of dealing with the possessed say no. Those, who have counseled many possessed ones, know that even believers can be controlled or ruled by demons. These facts do not follow anyone's preconceived ideas. Our ideas must be formed, rather, on the basis of the facts. I have had many discussions on this subject, particularly in America. I am therefore all the more thankful for the men who confirm my own experience. Among these are Dr. Edman, former president of Wheaton College, Professor Unger, already mentioned, the psychiatrist Dr. Jackson, of Milwaukee, who is a doctor both of medicine and of theology, the psychiatrist, Dr. Reed, and others. When I lectured in various countries, there were other men in conversations who declared they had counseled more demon-possessed believers than unbelievers."

Then he says, "I must also mention Pastor G. Birch. In a letter of September 21, 1973, he wrote: "My wife and I had experience in Borneo of casting out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here at home (Canada), we have seen 120 people delivered from demon possession in eighteen months. All these people were Christians." My friend Pastor Birch is not an extremist. You will find his name mentioned again in the chapter on Speaking in Tongues. My most detailed account of a case of possession is to be found in my book, *Unter der Fihrung Jesu*, beginning on page 250. Dr. Lechler, an experienced psychiatrist who, like me, recognized the fact of demon possession, described this account as the best-established example of possession in modern times.

"In England I have also found a few psychiatrists who share my conviction. Several years ago I was invited by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones to address some psychiatrists at Westminster Gate on the subject of possession. In the discussion, one psychiatrist came up with the usual argument, that what the Bible describes as possession would today be regarded as a mental illness. I did not have to try and correct this view. Two of the other psychiatrists contradicted him. One of them said, "I have had seven cases of possession in my practice." The other said, "And I had eleven cases of possession." This last-mentioned psychiatrist became a friend of mine. We held a seminar together for 200 Anglican clergy. During the week, this fellow believer told me: "Your book, *Christian Counseling and Occultism* confronted me with the problem of possession. I have now, for several years, observed typical cases which cannot be classified in the normal language of psychiatry. It was there that I discovered the truth of the thesis you maintain." If there were no demons, Christ could not have disarmed (spoiled, King James Version) them (Colossians

2:15" end quote. (Kurt E. Koch. Occult ABC: Kindle Locations 785-789. Kindle Edition.)

Hal Lindsey, though a strong proponent of the 'once saved always saved' position surprisingly writes as follows: "Semantics separating demon possession and demon influence seem important to some people. A person who is demon influenced is under the power of evil spirits which may result in anything from mental torment to extreme abnormal behavior. Both believers and non-believers can be subjected to demon influence.

"Most Bible scholars and missionaries who have studied or dealt with the problem understand demon possession as the indwelling of one or more evil spirits in a person's body, resulting in the personality of the demon taking dominant control. In a demonized condition the personality of the victim is enslaved and the demon virtually exercises complete control.

"Dr. Unger has an excellent study on whether a Christian can be demon possessed. He states that a non-Christian can be totally controlled and manipulated by demonic power, but a Christian rarely has the same degree of complete subjugation. This is my position also. However, I've talked to many missionaries who have had to deal with these things personally, and I must say that it seems to be possible for a Christian to have a certain degree of demon possession.

"An example of a demon-possessed Christian was given me by Dick Hillis of Overseas Crusades. Dick is a man who knows the Scriptures, not just as a theologian, but as a warrior of the faith. A certain discernment, not given to sensationalism he has spent most of his life on the mission field. Hillis told me of one incident which happened while he was in China, before the Communist takeover, when one of the elders of his church, who was unquestionably a believer became so demon possessed that his

personality changed. He became vile and profane in his language and extraordinarily strong. Some of the members of the church locked him up in a room and sent for Hillis.

"When Dick walked in the door, this man became violent and a strange voice shouted, 'I know who you are.'" Hillis said, "And I know who you are,' and began to speak to the demon. This was a case when a believer was actually possessed by a demon who spoke in another voice.

"In countries where there is open worship of idols such as in China, a person is much more susceptible to demon influence and possession. As Unger says, "In lands where demon-energized idolatry has flourished unchecked by the Gospel for ages, new believers who were delivered from demon possession have been known to become repossessed when they return to their old idols", end quote(159-60).

Now, the view that a person cannot be shared by both the Holy Spirit and demons as far as residence is concerned, I think cannot be supported from Scripture nor from human experience, as we have seen before. You see, if a Christian sins, before he repents of that sin, both God and the devil have a share in a person who has sin. As a matter of fact, when a person becomes a Christian, like Israel when they entered Canaan, there is a lot of ground to be conquered. But when a person is born again, ownership of the person goes to God. So, as far as residence, the Holy Spirit and demons may both be there, but as far as ownership, a born again person is owned by God. While a person is not born again, no matter how much good he does, ownership goes to the devil. The devil can trouble a believer in some instances from the inside and in others from the outside, but he cannot own him unless that person rejects the Lord.

Now let me explain that last point I made. it has to do with whether a Christian can lose

his salvation or not. A cousin of mine visited us a while ago and we discussed that. And he said that he had just spoken about this to another Christian who said, "A Christian cannot lose his salvation. He must reject it." I had never heard before but wonder why I never have thought of that. I am fully in agreement with that. Nobody will ever inadvertently lose their salvation, but they may throw it away by choosing sin as a life-style.

So, can a Christian be demon possessed in the sense that the devil owns that person? No! Then he would no longer be a Christian. And I think all those I have read on this subject would agree with that statement. But can a Christian have demons somewhere within? Yes! And most of those who work with demons would agree with that. It is the phrase, 'demon possessed' that creates our problem when it comes to this question.

So, what is the bottom line to the question as to whether a Christian can be demonized? The bottom line, in my view is that a believer can become demonized. But that does not mean such a person is owned, or possessed by a demon or demons.

CONCL: And so let us bring this subject to a close. What we have covered this morning would take a lot of thought to digest. Our subject has been the question: Can a believer have demons within? We have considered two positions. The first we looked at said, "No, a believer cannot have demons." Some of those said a believer cannot have demons in any part. Others said a believer can be oppressed by having demons in the soul or the body, but never in the spirit part. The spirit part of man is that part that is born again and cannot have sin or have demons residing within it. It belongs to God.

Then there are those who say a believer can have spirits within, in any part. Being demonized does not mean they own you. They have entered to destroy you. Satan can never own a believer. As long as one is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, one belongs to God Almighty. Only if one were to

reject the faith by giving heed to seducing spirits could one become owned by Satan, but then a person would no longer be a believer either.

Let me give this assurance to anyone who thinks they might be troubled by spirits from within. If you have repented of your sins and you are trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation, and as long as you continue trusting, you will never belong to the devil. It is possible for demons to reside in believers, but it is not possible for them to own a believer as long as that believer continues to trust in Christ. I will answer more questions related to this in later messages.