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Can Christians be Occupied by a Demon? Part II

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← Read Part I first: Can Demons Occupy a Christian?

As I mentioned last week a Christian can't be "possessed" by a demon because the word speaks of "ownership." Believers belong to God. This reality brings us to another question: *Can a believer be indwelt by a demon?* Last week I pointed out five reasons some deny a demon can occupy a believer. This week I'll share another point of view. **First, demons can't occupy believers because they are the temple of God and are occupied by the Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 6:19). The idea is that within a believer the Holy Spirit cannot share space with a demon anymore than light can dwell with darkness. For most of my Christian life I found comfort in this belief. That was before I realized Satan entered the presence of God when he asked God for permission to test Job (Job 1:6-12)? If Satan could enter the throne room of God and engage in a face-to-face conversation with God, couldn't a demon enter a believer and share space with the Holy Spirit? It's also noteworthy that the Holy Spirit lives within believers along with their sinful nature (the flesh, old man, or sinful propensity). The idea that the Holy Spirit can't share space with an evil demon ignores the biblical teaching about the sinfulness of man. Jeremiah 17:9 says, " The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure." In Romans 2:9-18 Paul writes: "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. [10] As it is written:
'There is no one righteous, not even one; [11] there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. [12] All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.' [13] 'Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.' 'The poison of vipers is on their lips.' [14] 'Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.' [15] 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; [16] ruin and misery mark their ways, [17] and the way of peace they do not know.' [18] “There is no fear of God before their eyes.'”

Those Verses Describe Us

You might think those verses describe Satan and his demons. But no, they describe fallen humanity. The same humanity where the Holy Spirit lives if someone is a Christian. Does God sanctify our flesh when we become believers? No, he gives us a new nature but he doesn't eradicate the old one.

In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul describes the deeds of the flesh, "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; [20] idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions [21] and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like." Since such evil exists within a believer, along with the Holy Spirit, couldn't a demon?

A Foothold, Not a Takeover

The idea that for a demon to enter a believer it must first overpower the Holy Spirit is thoughtful. **But it fails to recognize that a demon can't enter a believer unless first given permission.** Paul warned us of this danger when he said, "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, [27] and do not give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27). The English word for "foothold" is from the Greek, "topos."

According to *Strong's Concordance* the word refers to "an inhabited space, as a city, village district . . . the condition or station held by one in a company or assembly, power, occasion for acting." Paul clearly says unresolved anger provides the devil with an opportunity to establish a beach-head or base of operation in a believer. It's like someone leasing a room in his home to a stranger.

The owner has the deed to the home, it's his, but he let someone else occupy it. Evil spirits enter a believer when he or she gives them a room in their soul. How? By refusing to forgive or repent of a sinful thought or behavior. Or by clinging to an idol. Remember, Paul said behind every idol is a demon (1 Corinthians 10:20). And an idol is anything we trust to meet a need that God wants to meet.

A demon doesn't have to overpower the Holy Spirit to enter a believer, it has to deceive the believer . . . snare him or her with lies (2 Timothy 2:26).

Cast Out, Not Cast Away

Those who say a believer can only be "oppressed" by a demon and not "indwelt" might consider the fact that there's *no record of Jesus ever commanding a demon to "go away" from a demonized person. He cast them "out" of people*. Furthermore, Jesus didn't commission his disciples to "cast away" demons but to "drive (or cast) them out" (Mark 16:17) In fact, there are 25 instances in the Gospels where Jesus cast out demons.

Finally, the idea that anyone who thinks a believer could be occupied by a demon must be relying on personal experience rather than biblical revelation needs to acknowledge that experience is often used to validate biblical truth.

When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus, "John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus to ask: "Are You THE ONE who is coming, or should we look for another?"" (Luke 7:19)"John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus to ask: "Are You THE ONE who is coming, or should we look for another?""en-ESV-25209" class="text Luke-7-22">Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

Set Free

Finally, my personal experience and biblical study have convinced me demons can inhabit Christians. Fortunately, they can be set free.

Jesus said: "Now which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" "The one who showed him mercy," he answered. "Go and do likewise," Jesus said. Bethany As they were traveling, He entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home." (John 8:36).