

## THE DANGER OF UNCLEAN SPIRITS PART ONE

*For the leaders of this people **cause them to err**; and they that are led of them **are destroyed**.*

*Isaiah 9:16*

Tonight I'm going to talk about something that's not only unpopular and unpleasant, but at times it's downright scary. We're going to look at the reality, the work, and the *danger* of unclean spirits. I'll have to finish this message next week because tonight I'm simply going to lay some important ground work regarding the subject. I will be using the term "unclean" spirits instead of demons because I want to highlight the that they are spiritually unclean. There's no difference between the actual terms we use to describe these spirits. Unclean spirits are demon spirits or evil spirits.

Even though the reality and work of unclean spirits is a somewhat unsettling subject, learning how to recognize them, and understanding what they are capable of doing in your life, is very important. You can't possibly defeat an enemy you don't know how to recognize—and the fact is, we *must* defeat the works of these spirits in our lives. Defeating them is not an option. They have declared an eternal war on us and they are actively seeking to destroy us every moment of every day. A war has been declared on you and I and there is nothing we can do to stop that war, or get away from it, or make peace with the enemy. We only have *two* choices. Either we will learn how to recognize them and conquer them, or we will stick our heads in the sand and deny what's happening—in which case they will conquer us.

Spiritual warfare is a skill that must be learned, just as natural warfare is a skill that must be learned. As a matter of fact, *where* do you think mankind has gotten his knowledge and wisdom regarding the art of natural war to begin with? We have been taught the principles and tactics of natural warfare from Satan. One of the most important strategies in any war is to *confuse* the enemy by keeping your actual strength concealed. The *less* the enemy knows about your strengths and how you operate, the harder it is for him to defeat you. Therefore, one of Satan's primary tactics has been to keep us confused and ignorant regarding how he operates and what he is capable of doing.

Many of God's people have been, and continue to be, hindered and defeated by unclean spirits because religious leaders "*cause them to err*" in this area of truth. They cause them to err because they teach them all kinds of doctrines which negate the possibility of a Christian being hurt or destroyed by spirits. Many people who listen to these deluded leaders "*are destroyed*" by this error.

The *reason* I teach about unclean spirits is because we must *overcome* them, and we're not going to overcome them if we don't know how to recognize them or understand what they are capable of doing in our lives. My purpose in speaking of these things is not to create fear in people or exalt the power of the enemy—though I am often accused of exactly that. My purpose is to *equip* the saints so they can *defeat* their enemy. Are you concerned about the glory of God? Then understand that you are not bringing any glory to God by allowing yourself to be defeated by His enemy, which Jesus defeated 2000 years ago. If you want to glorify your Father, then learn to walk in *the victory* Jesus has made available for you. The Lord didn't defeat Satan so you wouldn't have to defeat him yourself. He defeated Satan so you could receive the power and the wisdom you need to defeat him yourself! If we don't defeat him ourselves, we will bring disgrace (not honor) to our King!

Whenever I try to warn people that unclean spirits can deceive them and even destroy them, right away I'm faced with a whole range of arguments that preclude such a possibility. People are taught they are eternally secure. So naturally, they don't think anything can destroy them, including unclean spirits. They are also taught that a Christian can't "have" an unclean spirit because: (1) accepting the gospel drives them all out; and (2) the Holy Spirit cannot  *dwell*  in the same vessel an unclean spirit dwells in. They are taught that Jesus defeated all these spirits at Calvary, therefore, we don't have to defeat them ourselves. They are taught that God loves them too much to let an spirits destroy them. They are taught that God is totally responsible to keep them safe from spirits. They are taught that because God is sovereign and He chose to save them, nothing (including unclean spirits) can thwart His purposes concerning us. They are taught that because salvation is by grace  *alone* , that grace will keep us from being deceived or destroyed by unclean spirits.

There are literally  *dozens*  of doctrines being taught to God's people which  *preclude*  the possibility of unclean spirits being able to touch them, deceive them, harm them, or destroy them. Each of these doctrines, in and of themselves, are dangerous because any one of them can put you into a state of false security and spiritual unreality. But when people go to church and hear all of these errors  *combined*  and presented in various different ways, week in and week out, they form a foundation in a person's life which is not only unscriptural but extremely dangerous. Each one of these errors are like spiritual "bricks" which, when joined together, form a spiritual "wall" of error that the truth simply cannot penetrate.

When you try to warn people who have been taught all this error that unclean spirits are real, that they have declared war on them, and that they have the ability to deceive them and even destroy them, such a warning falls on  *deaf*  ears. It does not compute. They can't hear it or receive it because it goes against  *all*  the error they have been taught—error which has become the very foundation of their spiritual life. The only way they will ever be able to really hear the truth is if you spend a lot of time with them, tearing down that "wall" of deception, brick by brick. This is part of what I have been doing in this chat room for the last two years. I've been exposing each one of these "bricks" as the error it is, so people can really hear the trumpet I'm blowing.

Unfortunately, most people won't stick around long enough to have that "wall" torn down. You may pull a brick or two out, but soon enough they will realize what you are doing and they will drop you like a hot potato. They have no intention of letting go of the doctrines that make them  *feel*  secure. They have no intention of accepting more responsibility for their own salvation or spiritual safety. They have no desire to face the reality of invisible beings who are seeking to destroy them. Such a reality is much too unsettling, even frightening. They want to believe God is totally responsible to keep them safe. They want to believe that because Jesus defeated every spirit at Calvary, they don't have to defeat them. When they realize you are leading them away from the (false) security they have found in all these errors, they run for the door and they don't look back!

The first thing I want to look at with regards to these spirits is the fact that they are "unclean"; and what that means for New Testament believers. Under the Old Covenant, people could  *not*  be made completely "clean" in actual experience, on the inside. They could have their sins forgiven, they could be justified, and they could receive the imputed righteousness of Christ, just like we do. Also, they could walk in  *human*  righteousness. In fact, God demanded that His people walk in righteousness! He blessed them and honored them when they did walk in that kind of righteousness. However, in order to be made spiritually clean on the  *inside* , in actual experience; in order to be able to possess and manifest God's  *perfect*  righteousness, a person must be regenerated and have the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. That's why the Old Covenant wasn't sufficient to bring us to perfection and a New Covenant had to be established.

The “cleanness” God demanded of those under the Old Covenant was an *external* spiritual cleanness. This was what the Law was all about. That was its purpose—to make and keep the people of Israel spiritually “clean”. This is why they had “clean” and “unclean” food. The animals, in and of themselves, were not *spiritually* clean or unclean. This is made clear in the New Testament. Under the New Covenant, there is no clean and unclean meat. Go back and look at the verses in the Old Testament where God tells the people which meat is clean and unclean, and you will notice that every single time He said a certain animal is clean or unclean, He said it would be clean or unclean “*to you*”. He didn’t say the animals were spiritually clean or unclean in and of themselves. He simply made certain animals clean and unclean *to Israel*.

You read in the Law where people are made “unclean” by touching certain things (like dead bodies), or by eating certain foods, or by not adhering to certain Hebrew social customs and religious rituals, or by sinning. They couldn’t wear garments with mixed threads, like wool and linen. They couldn’t mix certain kinds of seeds in their gardens. Everything in the Law—including the moral code—was designed to make the people of Israel different and unique. It was designed to make them a *human* reflection of God’s justice, righteousness and mercy. It was designed to make the *spiritually* clean through obedience to external commandments. The concept of being “clean” and walking “clean” before God was deeply ingrained in the calling and purpose of Israel.

When you get into the New Covenant, spiritual cleanliness is still a vital aspect of being God’s chosen people, just as it was under the Old Covenant; but the cleanliness God requires now is an *inner* cleanliness because the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us. The focus shifts from walking in external spiritual cleanliness as a result of obeying the external commandments of Moses, to walking in internal cleanliness as a result of obeying the internal commandments of the Holy Spirit. But the need to *be* clean and *walk* clean before God does not change at all. This is why you find the following kinds of statements in the New Testament:

*For this ye know, that no whoremonger, **nor unclean person**, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.***  
*Ephesians 5:5*

If you want to be part of God’s “chosen people” you must be spiritually “clean” and walk a clean walk before Him. Unfortunately, the people who have accepted today’s Antichrist gospel can’t possibly understand or believe this truth. When Paul said an “unclean” person—that is, and unclean *Christian*—will not inherit the kingdom of God; that does not compute for the average Christian. The only thing they can say is: how’s that possible? How can a *believer* be unclean? Didn’t the blood of Jesus make us spiritually “clean” when we were born again? And doesn’t the imputed righteousness of Jesus *keep us* spiritually clean? Most of today’s Christians just assume, because of all the error they are taught, that they are made clean and kept clean by virtue of their faith in Christ. If this were the case, then what Paul said to the believers in Corinth would make no sense:

***Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:** for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore*

*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

*II. Corinthians 6:14-18*

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”, said Paul. There is no way around the fact that he is addressing genuine Christians in this passage. He certainly would not be telling “professing” (fake) Christians to not be yoked with unbelievers. That would be like telling *two unbelievers* not to be yoked together. God was speaking through Paul and telling the *believers* in that church that if they would touch not “*unclean thing*”, He would receive them and be a Father to them.

But wait a minute! I thought God was *already* our Father (if we are really born again). Why is He telling *Christians* He will be their Father *if* they touch not the “unclean” thing? The reason He said that is because there is a level of relationship with God that is only available to those who will (as believers) walk “clean” before Him. The cleaner your walk is, the more intimate a relationship you can have with the Father. Unfortunately, because of all the false doctrine people are being taught, they are missing this deeper union with God because they are spiritually “unclean” and He is not receiving them (into that deeper union).

Many of today’s Christians are spiritually unclean because they have been taught that since they are saved by belief *alone*, and since nothing they *do* or *fail* to do can make them any better or worse in God’s eyes—our standing with God is based *solely* on the imputed righteousness of Christ, is it not?. Since this is what they have been taught, they involve themselves in all kinds of things that have made them unclean before God. They don’t realize it’s God’s will that we not be involved with anything that is spiritually unclean—and this would certainly include unclean spirits.

*And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against **unclean spirits**, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.*

*Matthew 10:1*

When referring to demons, the Gospels repeatedly call them “unclean” spirits. They are unclean because they are evil. They are unclean because they are wicked. Just as we are not to be unequally yoked with *people* who are evil (ie: unsaved), likewise, we are not to be involved with *spirits* that are evil. The problem is, many preachers and Bible teachers (both inside and outside the system) are telling God’s people these unclean spirits can’t touch them, can’t defile them, can’t deceive them, and certainly can’t destroy them. They have come up with all kinds of doctrines to convince people that once they become a Christian, they can no longer have to worry about becoming involved with, or made unclean by, unclean spirits.

That’s precisely what Satan wants you to believe. Satan wants you to believe unclean spirits can’t touch you. He wants you believe you can’t become involved with, or be affected by, spirits. He wants you to believe you can’t possibly be made “unclean” by them. He wants you to believe you are automatically protected from them by virtue of receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ. Satan wants you to believe that Jesus defeated all these unclean spirits *for* you at Calvary, so you don’t have to defeat them yourself. He wants you believe all these lies, and more, because he knows if you do, those spirits will be able to move and work in your life *undetected*. If you’re

not even looking for the enemy, you'll certainly never recognize him—and neither will you ever defeat him. That's the point; that's the plan; that's the purpose for all these false doctrines. Those spirits want to entangle themselves in your life *without* you realizing it. They want to make you spiritually unclean.

But making us spiritually unclean is not all these spirits want. They eventually want to completely destroy us—and they will destroy us if we let them work in our lives, undetected. If we don't learn how to recognize and defeat them, we *will* end in deception and we could even end up lost. This is a possibility the enemy doesn't even want us considering. He wants us to live in a religious fantasy world where God does everything for us, including making sure we aren't deceived or lost. In order to get us into that kind of a fantasy world, he has convinced many of the religious leaders we follow that he can't hurt us. Those leaders have, in turn, deceived the vast majority of us with that same lie—and it *is* lie my friends, regardless of how it's packaged or who's propagating it.

Preachers and Bible teachers who have been seduced by these spirits approach the issue of demons differently. Some of them come right out and deny the possibility of a Christian having an unclean spirit, or being hurt by spirits. They will say: "God is holy. He's too holy to dwell in the same vessel an unclean spirit is dwelling in". Well that's pretty funny because these same ministers have no problem believing Jesus can dwell with evil. They have no problem believing Jesus can dwell in a *heart* that's still "desperately wicked and deceitful above all things"! They also have no problem believing a holy God will dwell in the same vessel where "sin" dwells. Hello? We all still have a "sin nature" and that nature is wicked. It hates God and refuses to obey Him. So how can a holy God dwell in the same vessel a wicked and hostile sin nature resides in?

Oh, and let's not forget the "*It's all of God and none of you*" doctrine. Remember, we're all just "sinners, saved by grace", right? We're not righteous—only "Christ in us" is righteous. We're still wicked. We have no righteousness of our own and we never will. Even if we live righteously, it's just "Christ in us" who is living righteously. *We ourselves* are still wicked. If we ever actually became righteous, we would be stealing the glory from God. We would be establishing our own righteousness. We would be justified by works and not by faith. So that being the case, naturally, there's still a lot of *unrighteousness* residing in these vessels. Yet, the same people who tell us we will never be righteous and that our hearts are still desperately wicked, have no problem believing a *holy* God can dwell in such *wicked* vessels! They believe God can dwell in vessels where all kinds of sin and unrighteousness resides, but He can't possibly dwell in a vessel that has an unclean spirit!

They also say that when a person accepts the gospel and is saved, all the unclean spirits are automatically driven out of his life. Well, if that's the case, then why did Jesus bother to give us power to cast out spirits? Why did He say the *first* sign of those who believed on Him would be the power to cast out unclean spirits? Who needs power to cast those unclean spirits out when simply *accepting* the gospel cast's them all out?

Others ministers who are under this delusion take a more deceptive approach. They don't come right out and deny the possibility of a Christian having an unclean spirit. What they do is basically ignore the battle we must fight against unclean spirits and continually emphasize the battle with "the flesh". Occasionally they will pay lip service to the work of unclean spirits, but in reality, their message "die to self".

Some of you may recall that last year I got into a battle with a group of women who were using this tactic. All three of them have blogs and one of them was emphasizing the battle with "the flesh" to the *exclusion* of the battle we must fight against these unclean spirits. In fact, one of the articles she wrote, which I originally quoted from, was called "*The Greatest Enemy*". In that article, she said "the flesh" was our greatest enemy. When I exposed

that as error, the other two women went berserk and instantly became my enemies. The error all three of these women propagate is that evil spirits can *only* move through our flesh nature. They have concluded that the best way to deal with spirits is by *denying* the flesh. They don't usually come right out and say it that way; but that's the *bottom line* of what they are teaching. If putting the flesh to death *automatically* closes any door for Satan to touch, deceive, or destroy you, then the only logical thing to do is focus on putting the flesh to death. That way you kill two birds with one stone.

Unfortunately, this isn't the case. Even if we had no sin nature (or "flesh"), we would still be vulnerable to attack and defeat. Satan doesn't have to move "in" you or "through" you in order to tempt you and defeat you. This is the lesson revealed by the account of the Fall. Adam and Eve had no "sin nature". They had no "flesh" (in the sense of a flesh nature) for Satan to touch. They were created sinless. Their hearts were *not* desperately wicked; they were righteous. There was no *hidden* evil lurking somewhere in their beings that the Serpent could touch. There was no desire in Eve to disobey God. That desire had to be *created* in her, and it had to be created in her from the outside because there was no fifth-column (*ie: flesh nature*) inside of her which Satan could manipulate. From the outside, the Serpent was able *create* a desire in Eve to disobey God.

That statement didn't sit too well with one of those women and she wrote me a scathing letter of rebuke. She said not only was I wrong for thinking Adam and Eve didn't have a "flesh nature" before the fall, I was also on the verge of blaspheming God because I was attributing "*creative powers*" to Satan. The fact that she accused me of placing Satan on the *same level* as God shows just how little she understands the issue. Any salesman who knows his stuff can "create" a desire in people for a product they neither want or need. Some salesmen make a fortune every year creating desires in people that were not there *before* they met them. Does that mean a good salesman has the same type of creative powers as God? It's stupid to even think such a thing. Satan is the *original* salesman. He created an evil desire in Eve from *nothing*. He created a desire to disobey God in a woman who was sinless an un-fallen. That's not just my own personal opinion. It's a fact.

No, we can't have an unclean spirit *dwelling* inside of us without first having a flesh nature. If we could, Satan would have entered Eve *before* she fell. But the fact is, we don't have to have an unclean spirit dwelling inside of us in order to be deceived by one! Unclean spirits can deceive us and take us to Hell from the outside. We can be totally deceived from the outside, just like Eve was. So if you want to know just how dangerous these spirits can be, consider what happened to Eve. If the Serpent can cause a woman who had not a stitch of evil or rebellion inside of her to rebel, what do you think he's capable of doing to you and me?

There is another minister out here who also likes to downplay the danger these spirits pose, and he does the same thing. He doesn't come right out and say unclean spirits can't hurt you. He just ignores them and emphasizes the battle with "the flesh". Basically, every problem in the world is caused by our flesh, according to him. In order to support this view, he mis-applies (*intentionally, I believe*) the words of the apostle James.

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

*James 1:14-15*

He will quote this passage and say: “*The Bible says it’s your own lust that draws you away and tempts you to sin. It doesn’t say demons draw you away. It’s the lust of your flesh that’s the problem. People who say their problems are coming from demons don’t want to admit that they still have a wicked heart, and they are choosing to follow the wicked desires of that wicked heart. Your problems aren’t coming from demons. They are the result of you not “dying to self” enough. So quit blaming the ‘works of the flesh’ on demons and die to self more.*”

Of course it’s true, many times we are enticed to sin by our own lusts. But it’s also true that many times we are enticed to sin by unclean spirits. He is *mis-applying* the words of James in order to minimize the role these spirits play in tempting us. He’s using one of the oldest tricks in the book to deceive his extremely gullible followers. By separating James’ statement from its *context*, he can put his own “spin” on that passage and change the entire meaning of what James was trying to say. Listen to that same statement in its proper context:

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, **count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing...**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life,** which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

*James 1:1-4 & 12-17*

James begins by telling the brethren to “count it all joy” when they fall into temptation. What kind of crazy talk is that? Why in the world should we be joyful when we fall into temptation? Because falling into temptation is a trial of our faith and it works patience in us: “...*the trying of your faith worketh patience*”, said James. Then he says: “...*let patience have her perfect work*”. And what is the end result of that perfect work? The result of that work is that we will be: “...*perfect and entire, wanting nothing*”. In other words, falling into temptation is a good thing and it should bring us joy—as long as we resist and overcome it!

Falling into temptation is a *bad* thing if we don’t resist it and overcome it because James said sin “*bringeth forth death*”. Nevertheless, it’s a good thing if we overcome it and have patience worked into our personalities as a result. The point James is making is that we should not be afraid of temptation because it’s absolutely necessary. Temptations *must* come. If they don’t, we will never learn to exercise our wills to resist sin. If they don’t, we will never have patience worked into our lives. If they don’t, we will never be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Temptations are absolutely necessary if we want to go on to perfection. He reiterates the point again, in verse 12: “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life*”. He didn’t say: “Blessed is the man who God keeps from being tempted (by removing the desire to sin from him, by grace)”. He said the one who faces and overcomes temptation is blessed.

The one who faces and overcomes temptation will not only have patience worked into his character and be made perfect and complete, he will also receive the “crown of life”. Do you get the picture yet? We must overcome in order to receive the crown of life. We don’t receive that crown simply by believing, or simply by trusting. We have to attain that crown. We have to win that crown. This is why, in the book of Revelation, Jesus said things like: “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10); and “*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*” (Rev. 3:11). Not only do we have to win that crown, we have to make sure no one takes that crown from us! All these things are the reward for actual victory in the life of the believer.

After establishing the fact that temptation is necessary if we are to be changed in the image of Christ; that it’s necessary if we want to be perfected; that it’s necessary if we want to receive the crown of life; and that it’s *God’s will* that we fall into temptation (in order to gain these things); James tells them not to assume this means God is the one who tempts us. James is doing the what Paul often did in his epistles. When he anticipated that people would draw a wrong conclusion from what he was teaching. He would answer that wrong assumption as part of his argument. James is doing the same thing. He realized that it would be easy for someone who heard what he was saying about temptation being necessary, and that it was part of God’s plan to perfect us, and that it’s actually God’s will, to assume that God must be the one who is responsible for tempting us.

He destroys that whole line of reasoning by saying: “*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man*”. Then he says that when we are tempted we are tempted by our own lusts (not by God). He wasn’t trying to say that the only way we are ever tempted is by our own lusts. He wasn’t saying unclean spirits are never responsible for tempting us. All he was saying was, God is never responsible for tempting us because He is holy. He cannot be tempted with evil, and He tempts no one with evil.

The idea that demon’s are not responsible for tempting us, but that *whenever* we are tempted we are tempted by our own lusts, is being *imposed* on what James said by this Bible teacher. You can only turn what James said about people being drawn away by their lust into the kind of false doctrine this guy is propagating by divorcing what James said from the context in which it was said. And you also have to intentionally ignore what James said just a few chapters later, which is that we are to “*resist the devil*” (James 4:7).

If James were preaching the same kind of error this Bible teacher is propagating, he wouldn’t have told the brethren to resist the devil. He would have said “*Resist your wicked old hearts*” or “*Resist your own lusts and die to self more*”. But’s that’s not what he said. He told us to resist the devil—and he isn’t the only one who told us to resist the devil. Paul said we are not to “*give place to the devil*” (Eph. 4:27). He also told us to put on the whole armor of God so that we will be able to “*...stand against the wiles of the devil* (Eph. 6:11). Peter said Satan walks around seeking whom he can devour. Therefore we should be sober and vigilant and “*resist steadfast*”. That is, resist the devil stedfastly (I. Pet. 5:8-9).

*For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our **labour be in vain**.*

*I. Thessalonians 3:5*

It's funny how one little statement in Scripture can destroy a whole pile of false doctrines. This simple confession of Paul reveals some very important truths. First of all, it reveals is that he did *not* believe the doctrine of Eternal Security. If he did, he would *not* have been afraid the Thessalonians had fallen away. You don't worry about someone falling away from the faith if you believe they are eternally secure. Paul said he was afraid the people in that congregation had fallen away—that's what it means to establish a church *in vain*. As a matter of fact, he was so tormented by the possibility that they had fallen away, he said: "*I could no longer forbear*". That means, he could no longer take the anguish of not knowing if they fell away or not. He had to know if his labor had been in vain; so he sent Timothy to find out.

Secondly, it reveals that Paul believed *the cause* of them falling away (if they did fall away) was not their own lusts or their flesh, but Satan. He said he was afraid "*the tempter*" had tempted them, resulting in their falling away. The "tempter" is obviously Satan. But just in case someone doubts the identity of the tempter, you will find the devil being called that very title in Matthew 4:3. Paul was afraid the Thessalonians had been *seduced* by an invisible, supernatural power. In other words, the apostle Paul believed Satan and his unclean spirits were powerful enough and dangerous enough to destroy an *entire* church!

Now think for a minute. If Paul thought Satan was capable of destroying a whole congregation, who do you think it is that's telling us these spirits are not that dangerous? What kind of *spirit* would be directly contradicting Paul's belief and concern? I'm not exaggerating when I say those who teach that unclean spirits are no real threat to the church have been deceived. If you can read how Paul was afraid the tempter had destroyed *the church* at Thessalonica and still claim these spirits are no real threat, then you have already been seduced!

If you are one of those people who denies or downplay the threat Satan and these unclean spirits are to God's people, then don't even bother talking to me because you are wasting your time. The very fact that you say such a thing shows me a DEMON HAS YOU! That's right. You need to forget the debate about whether or not a Christian can have a demon. An unclean spirit has you. An unclean spirit has CONTROL of your mind (at least in this area of understanding) to such an extent, you are utterly incapable of understanding the obvious meaning of Paul's words in First Thessalonians.

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. **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.** For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*

*II. Corinthians 11:2-4*

Once again, Paul confessed that he was afraid for the believers of a church. This time it's the church at Corinth. He was *afraid* the serpent would beguile the Corinthians and trick them into receiving another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel. If this would happen, they would be lost. That's *why* he was afraid for them. Please notice that, once again, Paul was afraid a church he had planted would be drawn away from Christ by a supernatural power, not by their own lusts. More specifically, he was afraid they would be introduced to another Jesus and another spirit by Satan's ministers who were themselves moving under the power of Satan. Paul didn't

say: “Brethren; I’m afraid you are going to be drawn away and enticed by your own lust, and when your own lust has conceived it will bring forth sin and you will depart from the faith by accepting another Jesus and another spirit”. He said he was afraid the Serpent would seduce them by sending them ministers who were doing his bidding and manifesting his power.

Poor Paul! I guess he never read the book of James. If he would have, I’m sure he would have chosen his words more carefully when talking about being afraid that Satan had caused these churches to fall away. I’m sure he would have realized that even if the Thessalonians or the Corinthians had fallen away, it would only be because they were drawn away by their own lusts, not because they were *seduced* by the tempter. I’m sure he would have realized that he was being totally irresponsible in blaming Satan for the “works of the flesh”. I’m sure he would have repented for even thinking the deceiving power of Satan could be responsible for the fall of believers. What raving folly! I’m also sure he would have repented for giving ammunition to all the “demon hunters” who like to blame everything on the devil and from that point on, would have preached the same error this deluded Bible teacher is propagating.

***Stop depriving one another [of sexual relations], except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.***

*I. Corinthians 7:5 NAS*

This is a very interesting passage on several different levels. I won’t delve too deeply into the aspect of it which reveals that when the writer of Hebrews said the marriage bed is holy and undefiled (*Heb. 13:4*), he *didn’t* mean anything goes in that bed. Marital relations can become “lust” for a married couple, just as it’s lust for unmarried couples. There must be “self control” in every area of our lives, including the marriage bed.

But the thing I want you to notice is the fact that even when temptation *is* clearly said to be an issue of our own lust, even then, Satan is right there, in the thick of it, to make things worse. Paul didn’t have to include Satan in this particular situation, you know. He could have just as easily said something like: “*Don’t deprive each other of marital relations, except by mutual agreement; and then, don’t make it too long, lest your sexual desire goes berserk and you end up sinning when you come back together*”. I mean, why even include the devil in this whole thing? After all, the issue is really just about keeping a proper desire for marital relations from becoming an improper one. What’s the devil got to do with that?

The reason Paul included Satan in this situation is because he was trying to let us know how much the enemy tries to involve himself in every area of our lives. He was letting us know that Satan and his demons are *constantly* watching us. They never stop watching us. They never stop looking for a chance to either tempt us directly, or take advantage of something in our lives that isn’t right and use that to tempt us. Paul’s saying: “*Hey people, the enemy is watching you, even in your most private and intimate moments. So be sure you don’t let him take something that is proper and God ordained and turn it into a sin that can destroy you.*”

The Bible teacher I’m talking about does give lip service to the fact that it’s possible for a Christian to “have a demon”—but only *after* committing the same sin over and over and over again, for months or maybe years. Framing the issue this way allow him to keep all the focus on denying “the flesh”. Oh yes, he says, we can eventually “get a demon”—but only if we are extremely negligent about “dying to self”.

He goes to great lengths to make sure that admitting a Christian can “have a demon” doesn’t interfere with, or take away from, what he *really* believes, which is that the *real* battle is with the flesh. In his mind, if we battle our flesh properly, we won’t have to worry about battling unclean spirits.

This kind of teaching is not only wrong, it misses the point. We don’t have to “have a demon” in order to be deceived by one. Unclean spirits don’t have to be dwelling *inside* of us in order to deceive us and take us to Hell! We can be totally deceived from the outside, just like Eve was. The fact that Jesus could be tempted shows that these ideas are nonsense. Did Jesus have to sin *repeatedly* before the enemy could tempt Him? Did Jesus have to be walking “in the flesh” before Satan could tempt Him?

*And when **the tempter** came to him, **he said**, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil **taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him**, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil **taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him**, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

*Matthew 4:3-11*

Have you ever considered the temptation of Jesus? How do you think Satan came to Him? Do you think Satan came to Him dressed in a red suite with a pitchfork? Do you think he came to Jesus as a big black angel with a gargoyle-like face and smoke emanating from his body? Is that how he comes to you?

The only thing that would make those temptations *real* was if they were something that could *possibly* be coming from the Father. They had to come in a way that was familiar to Jesus. They would have to be something He was used to experiencing, or something He could recognize as potentially coming from the Father. Therefore, I believe the first temptation came as a *thought* (or possibly a voice), planting doubts in His mind as to whether or not He really was the Son of God. I don’t believe Satan walked right up to Jesus and started talking to him. That would be a dead giveaway. This whole temptation thing was a lot more *subtle* than we think. It had to be or it would not have been a real test. Satan probably shot that question into the Lord’s mind.

How about the next two temptations? Do you think Satan walked up to Jesus and told Him to take hold of his cloak, and then transported Him to the temple and that high mountain? What kind of a temptation would that be? Only if those temptations were done in such a way as to be *possibly* coming from God would they be any kind of a real challenge. I think Satan gave Jesus a couple of visions. Don’t you think Jesus had visions? The Scripture says He had the Spirit *without* measure. Visions are part of the Spirit-filled life, even for us. So how much more would they be a part of the life of one who was Spirit-filled *without* measure?

I believe Jesus was used to having visions, so that's the avenue Satan used to try and deceive Him. At first Jesus probably wasn't sure *who* was giving Him the visions. But during each of those experiences the devil showed his hand. When he told Jesus to jump off the Temple, the Lord knew right away the Father would not be telling Him to do something like that. When Satan told him he could have all the kingdoms of the world *without* going to the Cross, the Lord knew right way that couldn't be the Father because He knew it was the Father's will that He go to the Cross. He knew the Father would never offer him a short-cut to the throne, especially one that would have left mankind dead in their sins, without a Sacrifice, and on their way to Hell.

My point is, I don't believe Satan proudly strolled up to Jesus in all his wicked majesty and tried to deceive Him. The chances of him tricking the Lord that way was *zero*. Satan isn't stupid. He's a fallen cherub. God created him the *wisest* of all his creatures. He knew the only chance he had at deceiving the Lord was by speaking to Him the *same way* the Father spoke to Him. He knew he would have to imitate the Father's voice and the Father's way. Otherwise the whole thing would have been a joke. And this is precisely how unclean spirits come to us. They watch us and take note of how the Spirit leads and speaks to us. Then they try to imitate it.

Whenever you deal with people who have been deceived regarding the reality of these unclean spirits, it doesn't matter what angle they use or what kind of arguments they come up with or how they try to package their errors, their intention is always the same. They want to avoid truth that believers can be deceived by demon spirits to the point that they end up in the Lake of Fire. They don't want to face that truth because they want to *feel safe*—and you can't feel safe if you believe there are invisible entities all around you who are constantly watching you, who are seeking to destroy you, and who *can* destroy you if you provide them the opportunity. Most of today's Christians simply don't want anything to do with that kind of Christianity. But the fact is, *that kind* of Christianity is the *only kind* of Christianity there is! That kind of Christianity is Biblical Christianity. Those who don't want to that kind of Christianity have chosen to follow *another kind* of Christianity which is in fact, a counterfeit. They don't want the real thing, so God has given them precisely what they want.

I can tell you from personal experience that it *is* possible for Christians to have unclean spirits dwelling inside of them because we've cast them out of genuine believers. However, that's not the point of this message. My point tonight is that we need to understand these spirits don't have to be dwelling on the inside in order to talk to us and deceive us. They have the ability to speak to us and tempt us from the *outside*. They have the ability to create a wrong desires in us from the outside. Of course, they don't have to *create* wrong desires in us because wrong desires are already residing in our sin nature. Usually, all they have to do is *stir up* those wrong desires. But they *can* create desires in us if they had to. So even if the "*Christian-can't-have-a-demon*" doctrine is true (which it ain't) I wouldn't take too much comfort in that if I were you. There's going to be a lot of people in Hell who were absolutely sure they couldn't possibly "have" a demon!

*To Be Continued Next Week*