

HOW DEMONS CAN DWELL IN CHRISTIANS?: AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPT OF BEING POSSESSED

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Introduction

WITH THE development of Satellite TV channels, the African continent experiences globally a spiritual revival led by famous preachers whether amid or outside the continent. Eventually, all claim to work directly for Christ; some spiritual leaders dangerously reduce human struggles in life to a spiritual warfare.

The deliverance ministry being one of the main characters of these TV shows, affect Church members inside the Seventh-Day Adventist's denomination. Some see how these celebrated preachers deliver believers, at times, even pastors from demon possessions. Today many Adventist church members have crossed the temptation of being healed by any means, and then go asking to these *men of God* deliverance from sickness, or from demon possessions.

The Church leaders have not practically addressed this issue in Africa; usually, SDA pastors make only some criticisms based on Matt 7:21-22. However, *the modus operandi* of spiritual warfare which is reduced to a set of methodologies or techniques is incorporated by many elders

and pastors among SDA's clergy in many places. In addition, Church members reproach that pastors lack the power seen by the Pentecostal men's of God or other noted televangelists around the world.

In Cameroon, for example, those who tend to reduce life to a spiritual warfare imagery engage in rituals and use devices like salt, holy oil, and incense for praying for the sick persons while others are being more secularized. The latter accuse the former of being animists or magicians. In fact, the former are accused to use Satan's tactics to defeat him, for they tended to be excessive and more triumphalistic.¹

Nevertheless, Paul clearly states that with God's armor any Christian can oppose and resist the evil one (Eph 6:12-13; cf. 1 John 2:13-14); in spite of that, what about Christians who do not stand by the side of God? We live in an era of rampant African occultism through traditional religions.

Some Christians enter in intermarriages with non-Christians having *totemistic* emblems, thus, they may spiritually be connected with evil spirits (cf., 1 Cor 6:16). In the other hand, many Christians in the African continent stills practice dual religions, which cause the increased satanic activity among many professing Christians today. If one considers these realities, the question is to what extent a demonic spirit can enter the life of Christians? Different answers have been offered for this question by scholars.

For example, some reason that the Bible does not deal with this question since the Scriptures do not give support to the theory that demons can live in the regenerated or

¹See A. S. Moreau, "Spiritual Warfare/Territorial Spirits/demons," *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 370.

not.¹ While others believe that being Christian will not shield anyone from satanic attacks or harassments, and even keep one from being under demonic possessions,² yet others think that not only the evil spirits attack by inducing to sin and by trying to control believers, but also, if not repulsed, it may lead to a demonic and harmful experience.³ Others modified their view, and suggested that a believer cannot be possessed by evil spirits in the same way that unbelievers do.⁴

The battle continues to rage on both sides, and both sides often misinterpret the Gospels' view on demonic activities as from the epistles. In particular, many have failed to see that after Christ's ascension, the Gospels emphasis on demonic activities, as we see it today, was not practiced by the early church as far the epistles are concerned. The Bible testifies how sin was rampant in the early Church, but does not talk at all about demonic activities within the members of Christian's community as well as in the Gospels account.

Because popular preachers have flared up the interest on demon possession these last years, mistakenly, Christians focus too much their attention to the primary manifestations as if the enemy would not vary his methods. Sometime we need to ask to the Bible what will be the most suitable forms

¹Eg., C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian: A new Perspective* (Chicago: Moody Presas, 1987), 73-148.

²Eg., Dennis McCallum, *Satan and His Kingdom: What the Bible Says and How it Matters to You* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2009), 56, 99.

³Eg., Merril F. Unger, *What Demons Can Do to Saints*, foreward Mark Bubeck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 55-56.

⁴Mark I Bubeck, *The Adversary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 87-88.

of demonic influence in the world and amid believers that will be advantageous for pulling down God's people?

Also, deliverance ministries around the world, and specially in Africa, seem to reject the responsibility of negative results on others; the focus being laid on consequences, encourages people to look in that direction. What are the possible causes the Bible gives that will allow a Christian to be under the power or influence of evil spirits?

In this brief paper, we will see in what circumstances evil spirits may partly or totally control a Christian and what is the meaning of the term *be demonized*,¹ which is at best vague and its counterpart "demon possession" remains misunderstood by many today. We will discover how demonic possession may be the control whether of the mind or of the whole being.

The New Testament View on Demonic Influence

When the Gospels are read metrically, the NT's understanding of demons corresponds to the late Jewish view.² For example, Luke uses the term *daimonion* the most, for more than twenty-three times he uses it.³ The term appears only ten times apart from the Gospels (Acts, 1 Tim, and James use the term only once, 1 Cor 4 times, and Rev

¹The term *daimonized* is coined by Timothy and Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Greek New Testament* (1994), s.v. "*daimonizomai*."

²Werner Foerster, "*daimón*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (1964), 2:16. Though in ancient Greek belief, the term refers to a divinity or supernatural being of a nature between gods and humans.

³Mark has the term 13 times, Matthew 11 times, and John 6 times.

3 times).¹ The other Gospels refer to demons differently. There is the simple appellative *pneúma*, “spirit” once by each Gospels writer. Besides, Mark, in a Jewish way, uses *pneúma*, “spirit,” with the adjective *akathartos*, “impure,” “unclean” twelve times,² also, it is used with the adjective *ponéros*, “bad,” “evil” Mark (12:45), Luke (7:21; 8:2; 11:13,26), and Acts (19:12,13,15,16) uses *pneúma*.

Also peculiar to Mark, is the fact that an unclean spirit may be called by the disorder it creates, “mute and dumb spirit” (*to alalon kai kôphon pneuma*, 9:25). Though Satanic activities will increase at the end of time; more likely on working on miracles, deluding, and preparing the world for the great battle of Armageddon (16:14), the more we move from the Gospels, the more the image of demons weakens from Acts to Revelation.

Satan imagery in Revelation coexists along with the Church peregrination (Rev 2:9,13,24; 3:9); he is represented as deceiving the whole world (12:9) until he will be bound for 1000 years, and then released for his destruction by the fire (20:2,7,9). The humankind meanwhile are worshiping evil spirits or demons as the characteristic of the fallen Babylon of the last generation (9:20; 18:2).

Yet, there is no deliverance ministries as in the time of Jesus, as if the Gospels writers linked it to his presence on earth. That is why Satan himself was personally involved in

¹While John uses six times (7:20; 8:48,49,52; 10:20,21), he takes πνεῦμα as a means of identifying the evil spirit (1 John 4:1,3,6). In Revelation do we find *daimonion* thrice and *pneúma* with adjective *akathartos* twice and *pneúma* once.

²Mark 1:23; 26,27; 3:11,30; 5:2; 6:7; 7:25;8:13; 9:25^{bis}; it appears twice in Matthew and Acts, and six times in Luke, Acts 5:16; 8:7; Matt 10:1; 12:43; Luke 4:33,36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24.

the work of destruction of Christ's kingdom and influence.¹

In Paul view in Eph 6:12, the cosmic conflict of the Christians concerns the spiritual realm of heavenly being in origin (*ta pneumatika tēs ponērias en tois epouraniois*). James, too, precisely tells us that it is an earthly battle that proceeds from these demonic influences of heavenly origin (3:15). Thus, James admonishes us to avoid considering any spiritual activity passively, but to make a critical examination of the spiritual realities that our wrong ideologies may bring to the Church (1 John 4:1).

This applies to theological and doctrinal tests for discerning whether the source of teachings is from the spirit of truth. If demons today are living within Christians, it is because this century has been the century of the almost complete departure of the faith, for the church has accepted another spirit, it has been thought by another reality and drank at another source (2 Cor 11:4; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 16:13; 18:2).

As a result, the danger of deception is real (2 Thess

¹In the book of Revelation evil spirits have different names: (1) *angelos*, "angels" (twice in 12:7^{bis}, 9), (2) *daimonion*, "evil spirit" (thrice in: 20; 16:14, 14), (3) *pneuma*, "Spirit" with adjective (*daimonion*, "demons" or *akatharton*, "of unclean," (twice in 16:14; 18:2), (4) *diabolos*, "Devil" (five times in 2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:9, 10); (5) *ophis*, "serpent" (five times in 9:19; 12:9, 14, 15; 20:2), (6) the *drakôn*, "dragon" (thirteen times in 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4, 11, 13; 20:2), and *Satanā*, "Satan" (eight times in 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2, 7). See the exaggerated statistics in Edward Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, rev. and up. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 292, while he acknowledge that there is no warfare ministry in the book of Revelation, he emphasized the task of casting out unclean spirits. All in all 38 times does Revelation addresses the issues accenting of Satanic destructive character, and miraculous deeds of demons, without any deliverance ministry.

2:3), for Church members, almost everywhere, are accepting misleading and deceptive demonic doctrines uncritically, and by so doing, they show evidence for themselves that they do not love truth (1 Tim 4:1; 1 John 4:1).

In the Churches, testimonies of deceptive teachings, inspired by Satan and his coworkers are disseminated (2 Cor 11:13-14). For example, Satan himself took control of Judas, and he betrayed his master (cf. Luke 22:3), this alone suffices to indicate that his work to control the minds of believers who wander from the sound and intellectual godly truth and from God's realm is likely.

Moreover, whoever is aware that false teacher pretends loyalty to God's truth while they spread their doctrines of evil, need to be careful and protect himself against unsound philosophical presupposition.¹

The bible teaches that all those that are not free from every form of mental and spiritual excess and confusion or are being self-controlled by the help of God's Spirit (Gal 5:23) may as well be under the control of Satan. For example, Peter says that Satan is seeking by any means to corner believers when he declares, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Pet 5:8).

The book of Revelation metaphorically points out that the apostate churches from God's truth will be wholly demons possessed: "And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And She has

¹For ex., 20 of December 2009, Evangelical church opens doors fully to gays, notwithstanding the clear "thus says the Lord," they based this shift on humans justice, since, "It's not a sin to be gay or act in accordance with your nature." Article available from http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_REL_GAY_AFFIRMING_CHURCH?SITE=FLTAM&SECTION=US.

become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.” (Rev 18:2). Some have seen this as a special reference of modern spiritism¹ Commentators see the phrase “Fallen, Fallen is Babylon the great” (*epesen epesen Babulôn hé megalê*), which appears also in Rev 14:8 as an allusion to Isa 21:9.² D. E. Aune consider this phrase as an example of the *perfectum propheticum* or prophetic perfect, which is used for describing an event not yet accomplished though the verb is in the past tense as if it had already happened in the perspective of God’s prophet.³

The Meaning of *Daimonizomai*

What is the meaning of the frequent use of the passive participle verb *daimonizomai* together with the method adopted by our Lord Jesus when dealing with them? Is it possible that demons can take control over men on the level of the faculty using one’s will? The present passive form of the

¹“devils” (Revelation 18:2), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1977), 7:860 see Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 273; Idem., *Great Controversy*, 558, 588, 624.

²D. E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52C (Dallas: Word, 1998), 985. He says, “The term *piptein*, ‘fall,’ was frequently used in the ancient world in the metaphorical sense of a person’s violent death, usually in war (Exod 32:28; 1 Sam 4:10; 2 Sam 1:19, 25, 27; 3:38; 21:22; Job 14:10 [LXX only]; 1 Chr 5:10; 20:8; 1 Macc 3:24; 4:15, 34; 2 Macc 12:34; Jdt 7:11; Gk. 1 *Enoch* 14:6; 1 Cor 10:18; *Barn.* 12:5; *Iliad* 8.67; 10.200; 11.157, 500; Xenophon *Cyr.* 1.4.24; Herodotus 9.67).”

³Ibid.

thirteen occurrences in the NT shows not “a demon caused passivity”¹ nor someone who is mentally out of control, but the high degree of demonic control.

When we look into the Gospels, the demoniacs are uniformly perceived and addressed as unaware of their helpless situation. The term is derivative of *daimón* and the translation “being under the control of demon(s),” gives some understanding of the action itself. Being *daimonizomai* is to identify one personality and life with the demonic power that control ones’ life and act at his place. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary commenting on John 10:21 suggests that being under demoniac control may involve the mind when it says that:

When a demon takes control it usually disorders the mind, confuses and beclouds the thinking, and produces incoherent speech and reasoning. Under no circumstances could one possessed by an evil spirit perform a miracle so outstanding as the opening of the eyes of a man born blind. There is evidence in this verse of the presence of the presence of a better group among the Sanhedrin.²

Yet we still do not know what it means to be *daimonized*. Therefore, in this stage, a word study needs to be done from an etymological-grammatical and contextual point of view. The descriptive term has three components. First the

¹Dickason, 15. Those under the influence of demon(s) are somehow active in front a Jesus, since they felt that deliverance should come from him. Also, by the fact that demons are badly dashing their victims (Luke 9:42).

²“That hath a devil” (John 10:21), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1977), 5:1007.

nominate *daimón*, which identifies the main participant in the activity. Second, the process of doing something in the *demonized* life is shown by the suffix *-iz*, which is a formative element inserted in the word, and it shows that the verbal idea expresses not causation, but the simple idea of action.¹ Third the passive ending *-omai* denotes the passive voice of the verb in which the recipient undergoes the verbal action. Grammatically, Greek passive portrays a person who is acted upon. The passive voice indicates that a grammatical subject is also the semantic patient. In that sense the *demonized* serves as a receptacle or experiences the state of demon(s) that is present in him but not seen. Hence it shows the state of disabilities caused by the evil spirit(s).² Therefore, it is the verbal idea that is exhibited, for in the NT usage; being out of mind or be insane also was equated with “to have (*echô*) a demon” (Luke 4:33; 7:33; 8:27; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20)

And finally, the accusative case shows that *daimonizomai* is used as an integral part of the object of a transitive verb for example *prospherô*, “bring”. (Matt 4:24), the action denoted by the participle being itself that which one perceives. *Daimonizomai* also is used substantively since the action of being under the dominion of a demon is enforced.

Even when it is not in the accusative case, it does show the verbal force for example in Matt 15:22, “my daughter is cruelly tormented by a demon” (*hê thugatêr mou kakôs*

¹William Douglas Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941), 15. The term has an analogue formation with another term marking the degree of the possession of a disease *seléniazetai*, “moonstruck,” “epileptic.” See James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*: vol.2 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1976), 406.

²A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1934), 815.

daimonizetai). In the Gospels, the term refers to the result of an ongoing, and visible state of someone who is under the influence of demon(s), this is seen in his disabilities to care for himself. It is the reason why *demonized* would be carried out or brought to the healer (Matt 4:24; 8:16; 9:32; 12:22) because they have attained a state of disability.

These limited physical or mental conditions restricting a person's movement, senses or activities may attain a high degree and cause severe handicaps. However, a demonized may also be hindered to see God's light in his truth. Being *daimonizomai* is thus to have a spirit so that when it is forcibly driven away the recipient is fully restored (e.g., Matt 8:16).

In that sense, when Paul says: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the **minds** of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:3-4), he speaks of the battlefield of great spiritual reality between both God and Satan on the human *psyche*.

The battle between Christ and Satan, from the Gospels account to the letters, seems to move from the awful demonic possession to the battle of the human mind, in this sense, Satan may possess many. Scholars have come to acknowledge that as striking as cases of exorcism may be, the mind is one of the most common battlefield against Christians by the principalities than deliverance ministries may imagine.¹

¹Stephen F. Noll, *Angels of Light, Powers of Darkness: Thinking Biblically About the Angels, Satan, and Principalities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 151. Cf Timothy M. Warner, *Spiritual Warfare: Victory over the Powers of this Dark World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 22-32; Murphy, 28-29, 35-44; 119. Modern spiritualism, a prominent example of the "doctrines of devils," is merely a revival of the demon worship and witchcraft of

Dennis McCallum points out that:

We have no evidence that Satan can *take* control of our mind in direct way. This is particularly true of Christians who have the indwelling Spirit of God. *If he does gain control of our thinking, it's because we have given him control.* The control he exerts is not forceful in the sense that he compels us to think in a certain way, instead, he persuades. When we end up thinking Satan's thoughts, it's because we have believed so many of his lies that we lose track of reality. The slippery slope of his persuasion leaves our minds tumbling downward into darkening understanding. Even in case of demon possession, people usually (or maybe always) have given themselves up to it.¹

Satan plays the role of the adversary, thus he can inspire directly to the faculty of consciousness and thoughts of human being. For example, he led astray David to number the children of Israel (1 chron 21:1). He also motivated king Ahab through the agency of Jezebel so that the king sold himself to do evil before the Lord (1 Kings 21:25).

Jesus gave cautionary advices about this mental communication, the coming thoughts into our head when he says that: "...The devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved."

the past. Its seductive influence will eventually sweep the world, Christian and non-Christian alike, and prepare the way for Satan's last great delusion. See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 662, 688-89; Idem., *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 686.

¹Dennis McCallum, 93 (emphasis is his).

(Luke 8:12). Craig Evans in his interpretation says, “Luke naturally thinks of what has been heard as stored in the heart (Luke 1:66; 2:19, 51; cf. 2 Esdr 8:6), so that, it is where the Devil must take it from.”¹

In other words, most of the contemporary evidence of *demonization* in Christian’s circles and consequent exorcisms may be the result of the abandonment of God’s word. If not, how could we account for the deceptive forces that drive Christians to believe mostly only sensational messages? To be so easily ensnared by false teachings and false apostles? This helps to a better understanding how the enemy works beneath and leads Christians to accept his wrong theological ideas, for behind the scene there are many bench of demonic influences.

This matter of fact has philosophical roots. Schleiermacher’s drawn consequences from Kant’s criticisms of reasons and his attempt to ground faith in human religious experience rather than divine revelation has been widely adopted among believers. Many believers from all Churches methodologically exclude God from their decision-making, even by scholars whose personal piety seems unquestionable.

Because leaders are accountable to their congregation, Satan seeks to control leaders, and scholars; he uses them to carry certain groups of believers into false teachings, away from God and His truth. The enemy does not necessarily come into the life of Christians to make them insanes, but he comes to take control of their minds for his purpose.²

¹C. Evans, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35A (Dallas: Word, 1998), 384.

²Also there are amid Christian Churches many false believers who work not for God’s Kingdom (see 1 Cor 11:12-13; Luke 13:27; Heb 3:12).

Modern Christianity seems to have bowed down to a culture of science and to an hermeneutic of humanism. However, this seems anti-Christian. Eta Linnemann says: "God's Word is no longer the standard in humanism but is rather, judged by the standard of humanistic culture. In this way culture—the product of the created spirit—replaced the Revelation of God the Creator. Faith in God, the Creator and Redeemer, was perverted into a subdivision of culture and the life of the human spirit. As a consequence man now regarded God's Word as just a product of the activity of this human spirit."¹

When Demons control the saints: Three Case Studies

While it is true that Dikason's thorough review of the evidence lead to the conclusion that the Bible neither affirms nor denies the possibility for a Christian to be demonized,² nevertheless, the Bible in its global teaching has something to say for one direction or for another.

The Bible clearly teaches by example that any Christian has never been possessed, for no case is being mentioned; salvation means that believers by hearing the word of Christ, and believing it are sealed until the day of redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30). In particular, whether a Christian falls on the control of evil spirit may also originate in the unfaithfulness to God's law. In this section, we analyze three cases that can help to understand in which occasions do evil spirits can control Christians partially or totally. Paul, many times, warned Christian that the love of truth aimed to preserve Christians against the demonic activity that God allows in

¹Eta Linnemann, *historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* Trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 26, 74.

²Dikason, 81-127.

some believers who have chosen false teachings founded on mistaken presuppositions rather than on God's eternal truth (2 Thess 2:10-11; cf. Eph 4:15).

Ensnared by Satan

Paul has depicted another possibility of what the enemy can do to Christians in 2 Tim 2:25-26. The last farewell of Paul to the elders is significant for the Church today, he commanded them to God and his word (Acts 20:32) to be protected against the false teaching. Nowadays, the word of God is relativized among Christians, and people build their relationship on modern reflections and not on God's words; no wonder why do we find among Christianity demonic influences in great proportion.

Though Satan is mischievous, but he is a clever adversary, he passively takes captive the mind of any Christian that loves lies rather than loving the truth.¹ Satan's activity apes those of Jesus' disciples who have to go fishing for God kingdom (Luk 5:10). He wins souls that are not abiding by God's word. It is not without surprise that the epistles move forward to meet this last danger, from the insanely demonic possession to the new tool of satanic stratagems that entrap too many Christians. The enemy of souls is highly active in all Christian heresies. Satan endeavors to get the mind of believers to lead them to think wrongly, and accept intentional false doctrines to ensnares them.

Paul portrays this battle for Christian minds when he says:

¹"Forms of Demonic Control" *SDABC*: 5:576. Says, "At time Satan can accomplish his sinister purposes more effectively by letting his victim retain his mental and physical faculties quite intact and stimulate piety.... Those only partially under the control of demons, or who do not manifest symptoms popularly associated with demon possession, are often more useful to the prince of evil than those who may be more obviously under his control."

“ . . . in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and **they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil**, having been taken captive by him unto his will. ”(2 Tim 2:25-26).

In this case, the will of the believer becomes one with Satan's one, and whether he is conscious or not, he becomes an opponent of God's will. And clearly, that believer seems to be unaware of being trapped by the enemy. Only through careful and tactful counseling can we bring them to face their mistake in order to gain God's repentance and deliverance.

The captivity, according to Paul, is the result of a misbehaving attitude and moral life (1 Tim 3:7), and of an allurements to be attracted to sin (1 Tim 6:9). Therefore, the Trojan horse in the life of many believers is the many defiant sins that, at the outcome, ensnare them (Prov 11:9; 18:7). Only through righteousness and God's truth do we receive deliverance and soberness.

When someone has sin against the Holy Spirit

Another Claire example that evil spirits can totally control a believer comes from the life of the king Saul in 1Sam 16. In the book of Samuel, the Spirit endowed him as kings of Israel with special capabilities. God anointed Saul with the gift of prophecy (1 Sam 10:11-12; 19:24), whereas He anointed David with true kingship (16:13).

However, Saul did not uphold the good qualities of the Holy Spirit in the light of his deeds since when the Spirit is poured out the result would have been justice, righteousness, and obedience (cf. Isa 32:15-20). Beginning with the charismatic anointing, and genuine prophetic gift, he came to nothing except to idolatry because of his fierce disobedience

(1 Sam 13:13; 14-43-46; 15:9). When God assessed his life, the judgment would be plainspoken: “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (15:23). As the result of Saul insubordination, “The Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul, and an evil Spirit from Yahweh troubled him” (16:14, my translation).¹

The absence of *wayyiqtol* form in v.14 shows that this verse is consequential to David’s anointing in v. 13 (*wayyimšāḥ*), and to the coming of the Spirit of the Lord upon David (*wattišlah*, “and he cut through” or “and he crossed.”),² was the consequence of the cause of Saul’s abandonment by God’s Spirit.

The Spirit of the Lord cannot be in connection with someone who is casual with God’s will and Law. The LXX’s rendering of *rûḥ-rā‘āh*, “evil spirit” is *pneûma ponéron*, and indicates that a demonic spirit assaulted Saul. What we learn from this story are threefold: (1) God’s will is supreme over believers, (2) an evil Spirit, can control a believer and God

¹I deal with Saul’s control by an evil spirit in my book Patrick: A. Etoughé; *La Démonologie: Qu’en dit la Bible?* (Yaoundé; 2009); 62-66.

²The meaning of the verb is still debated. Suggestions include (1) to have an effect, (2) stride through, and (3) to break in, (4) to force entry. See L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, rev. W. Baumgartner and Johann J. Stamm (1994), s.v. “*slh*,” suggests for this *qal* the meaning of “to have success,” “be successful.” The LXX has *ephallomai*, “to spring upon,” “to come upon,” See Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, comp. *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, rev. ed. (2003), s.v. “*ephallomai*.”

allows it, and (3) before an evil spirit comes on controlling believers, God's spirit must shun him first.¹

Once delivered, delivered for how long?

Jesus addressing the Jewish generation of his time in a parabolic manner says: "But (or whenever)² the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. ⁴⁴ Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. ⁴⁵ Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation." (ASV Matt 12:43-45)

Dierchetai di' anudrôn topôn, "through dry place" refers to desertic place where the "wicked generation" hearing understood the dry place where evil spirits manifested regularly according to Jewish traditions, but there is no reliefs or respite for him. Then rather than trying to control a new man, which task seems laborious, he returns to his home (*eis ton oikon mou*) metaphorically used for the man (cf. 44). It is supposed here that through exorcism, he has been driven away. However, when he comes back, he find his ancient home empty (*scholazô*), that is, the man would have nothing to

¹Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 643-44. "The Spirit of the Lord Departed" (1 Sam 16:14), *SDABC*, 2: 530-31, says that Saul committed the unpardonable sin.

²Which could be the meaning temporal particle of ὅταν "at the time that, whenever, when." See Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed rev. Frederick W. Danker (1957), s.v. "hotan."

do with spiritual activity or he ceased to do them (cf. Exod 5:8). Here again, Jesus applied it as a metaphor of vacancy; everyone that God has restored has to fix his mind in the thing above (Col 3:1-2).

God was absent from his new life; that is why he is being swept and being more spiritually attractive for an evil spirit than to the Holy Spirit. Thus the three participles *scholazonta sesarômenon kai kekosmêmenon* show that nothing positive has actually replaced the evil power's emptiness. The third word *kosmeô*, "put in order," means also "make beautiful or attractive."¹ Seven other spirits suggest the very great state that will result from the coming of the evil spirit, and his hearers also understood it as to mean severe punishments (Lev 26:18). It may also shows that the *akatharton pneûma* wants to be sure that his prey will not escape through deliverance again. This last account for the fact of the difficulties of driving demons in many cases among the believers in modern time.²

Though this story is clearly figurative, the main trust here is that a man that had an experience with demons, and then when these evil spirits are cast out, then, the Spirit of God must replace and fill the gap. Whenever God's Spirit does not lead someone who has been exorcized in truth and conduct, there is chance that the old demons come again.

Conclusion

I have tried to suggest a change in our focus on insanely demoniac activities among Christians, and on the exacerbated

¹Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon*, s.v. "*kosmeô*."

²Craig Barnes, "Demoniacs Have names: A challenge for Ministry," *The Christian Century* 126 no 23 (Nov 17, 2009): 10. Who account his failure to drive demon away from the comfort he takes in the passage of Mark describing the disciples failure to exorcize a demon.

focus that popular preachers and other deliverance ministries have laid on demonism that tends to distract our attention from the very fundamental characteristics that is going beneath the battle over the mind of all of us.

In brief, we ought to understand that possession is not only to “be under the control of an evil spirit,” but it may also encompass the spiritual acceptance or rejection of God’s truth. The Gospels’ writers have shown that the control of demons over men may lay in the region of conscious volition and that the consequence of the sufferers could be pathological.

In addition, in the Gospels, Satanic influences worked much on the physical side, and later Satan made the shift on the spiritual and intellectual sides. The determinant factor for whether or not someone demonstrate the indwelling of the evil spirit(s) is the refusal to be obedient to God’s truth as it is in Jesus. In that sense, *Daimonizomai* expresses the result of evil spirits’ direct influence and the patient’s mind which is surrendered to satanic power.

Satanic devices may ensnare Christians to work for his kingdom rather than God’s kingdom. The same result may also be attained among believers whenever they openly think that they can reject God’s truth at ease. The implication of my analysis is that Christians are protected within the frame of God’s will and love, yet also within the frame of God’s obedience. The God of love is also the God who has given his holy law, thus love will not surpass the law since it is the manifestation of God’s love. The result of this study may help us to review our misconceptions on the enemy’s strategy.