



Conducted by
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DEMON POSSESSION (2)

A question, left over from last month's topic, which remains to be answered is,
"Why do we read of so many cases of demon possession in the N.T.?"

Well consider for a moment. Let me ask another question,
*What, since the Fall of Man, has been the greatest and most important event
in human history?*

The answer must surely be; the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus Christ. His birth marked the culmination of God's plan of redemption, first hinted at in **Gen. 3:15**, when, after the Fall, He promised that the seed of the women would bruise the head of

the serpent. In **Eph. 1:10**, Paul writes about that redemptive plan, which, he declares, God '*set forth in Christ.*' It was to be a plan intended, '*in the fullness of time,*' that is, *when the right moment ('chronos') came, 'to gather together in one all things in Christ.'*

The phrase, '*in the fullness of time*' in the 'Authorised Version' is the rendering of the word '*anakephalaioo*', a word which literally means '*to head up*' or '*to gather together under one head.*' In his definition of this word, Thayer states that; "*In Eph. 1:10 God is said to bring together for Himself, all things and beings hitherto disunited by sin, into one combined state of fellowship in Christ, the universal bond*".

In other words, God's plan, in sending His Son into the world, was that the unity and harmony destroyed by the first temptation, and constantly opposed by Satan, should be fully restored.

In **Galatians 4:4** Paul reveals that, when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son into our world, '*born of woman*' - that is becoming truly human - born '*under the law*' - that is, Himself subject to law - in order that He might redeem those who are also under law.

To accomplish this restoration, Satan and his works had to be defeated, and this is why the Lord's brief period of earthly life and ministry, was marked by a greater demonstration of miraculous activity than any other period of human history.

The Gospels tell us that, as He presented Himself as God's Champion sent to overthrow Satan, Jesus performed no fewer than 40 miracles, the details of which are recorded for us by the Gospel writers. Furthermore, John explains in **John 20:30-33** and **21:25**, that these recorded miracles of the Lord, represent only a small selection from '*many other signs . . . which are not written in this book.*' These miracles both fulfilled the prophecy and established His Messiah-ship, and constituted a proof of His deity.

The Conflict with Satan

Since, therefore, Satan, who had made himself '*the prince of this world*' (**John 12:31** and **14:30**), was being challenged and was to be defeated, should it surprise us, that the period of the life and ministry of Jesus witnessed an increase of Satanic activity? The aim of Satan has always been to oppose God's plan. He had established a kingdom for himself (**Matt. 12:26**), and had demons who served him (**Luke 11:13**). Is it surprising that he should do anything within his power to attempt to defend his kingdom, and to intensify his efforts to impose his control on men and women?

This is what is signified by the increased number of instances of demon-possession about which we read in the Gospels.

Satan defeated by One stronger than he

2nd Cor. 4:4 describes Satan as '*the god of this world*' and in **1st John 5:19** the apostle states that '*the whole world lies in the evil one.*' Jesus Himself figuratively refers to Satan, in **Luke 11:2**, as a '*strong man, fully armed, guarding his own house.*' But also in that chapter, Jesus is presented as the '*One stronger than Satan,*' who has come into the world to defeat Satan and strip him of his possessions.

Furthermore, the Lord said, '*Now is the judgment of this world; now shall see the ruler of this world be cast out*' (**John 12:31-32**).

That sentence has already been passed, '*the prince of this world has been judged*' (**John 16:11**).

Hebrews 2:14 tells us that, it as by means of His own death that Jesus destroyed that

one who had the power of death, *'that is, the devil'*.

Satan saw this defeat coming, and therefore we read, in **Rev. 12:12**, that Satan has *'great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.'*

In fact, Jesus revealed that the final punishment of Satan is already prepared for Him, when in **Matt. 25:41**, He spoke of *'the everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.'*

A Foregone Conclusion!

For this reason I regard cases of demon-possession and satanic activity, about which we read in the Gospels, as Satan's most intense and most futile attempt to prevent the Lord Jesus from accomplishing His great purpose.

Although a defeated and weakened Satan continues to seek to do as much harm as he possibly can before he is eternally destroyed, (**Rev. 20:10**), his resistance was certain to fail, because of God's promise in **Gen. 3:15**.

In his book, familiarly referred to 'the *Pilgrim's Progress*,' John Bunyan likens Satan to a defeated, toothless giant, who sits in a cave, impotently gnashing his teeth at the pilgrims to whom he can no longer do any harm!

Satan may still be roaring! But he can do no harm to those who have been *'delivered from the dominion of darkness, and translated to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins'* **Col. 1:13**.

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REJOICE EVERMORE

The exhortation of the first Thessalonians 5:16 is to "**rejoice evermore.**" A common thread running throughout the scriptures is for God's people to be happy, thankful and glad. The Greek word used here is *chairō* and is used 74 times from Matthew to Revelation.

The word is found in Matthew 2:10 when the wise men saw the star over Bethlehem. It is said they *rejoiced* with exceeding great joy. When the prodigal son returned home the father told his elder son "**it was meet that we make merry, and be glad**" (Luke 15:32). In Philippians 2:17,18 the word is translated *joy*. When Gabriel came to Mary he said, "**Hail, thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women**" (Luke 1:28). The word "hail" here is the same as rejoice. James sent *greeting* to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1). The word is translated *God speed* in 2 John 10,11. At His resurrection, Jesus met His disciples, saying "**all hail, and they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him**" (Matt. 28:9). As Jesus talked with Zacchaeus, he came down out of the tree "**and received him joyfully**" (Luke 19:6). It is also translated *farewell* in 2 Corinthians 13:11.

CAUSES FOR REJOICING

Our rejoicing should be continual. Let us note some things about which we should rejoice. Just as many rejoiced at the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:14), even so should we rejoice at the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:10,20); for without it, He could never have walked this earth to give us a perfect example. We should rejoice at Christ's triumph over death and the grave, for it was not possible that He could be held by it (Acts 2:24).