

No.4, Doctrine & Danger of Demons

In last week's study, entitled *Satan & Demonic Activity*, it was pointed out that while Satan and his hosts are doomed to eternal wrath they are still active in this world, venting their wrath against the Church, see Rev 12: 13, 17. In these verses the *dragon* represents Satan, and he is portrayed as being engaged in making war against the Church. Thus, there is no doubt but that the powers of darkness are presently & constantly wrestling against the people of God.

DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

We noted last week that one of the main ways in which Satan & the demons militate against the Church is by spreading false teaching & error. As was noted 1 Tim 4: 1, 2 provide a clear revelation of the activity of demonic powers in N.T. times – not the possession of individuals but the promotion of false teaching.

Note in v.1 in relation to the great departure from the faith that Paul clearly teaches that some depart from the faith (apostatise) because they are deceived by *seducing spirits*. This term would refer to the presence of false teachers or false prophets in the visible church, who are under the control of these seducing spirits, see 1 John 4: 1. Here John gives as his reason for trying the spirits the fact that many false prophets have gone out. The language indicates that they are on a mission of sowing error & falsehood, and that they are impelled by *spirits*.

Moreover, in 1 Tim 4: 1 note that the seducing spirits -- or false prophets energised by these seducing spirits -- are linked with *doctrines of devils*, i.e. demons. The grammatical structure of this term "doctrines of demons" indicates, not *doctrines about demons*, but *doctrines that emanate from demons*. See as a parallel example James 3: 15 where the word *devilish* actually reads "demonic" – thus James speaks of *demonic wisdom*; i.e. supposed wisdom or teaching that emanates from demons. Hence, 1 Tim 4: 1, in predicting a great apostasy from the faith, shows that it is brought about by false prophets motivated by seducing spirits and imbibing and promoting doctrines that are of a demonic source.

However, the vital point to see is that demons cannot deceive while someone abides in the truth. Note – their departure from the faith precedes their seduction by demonic doctrine. The Word of God is our bulwark and safeguard against the doctrines of demons. Note the words *giving heed to* – they are the translation of one word in the original that means *to hold the mind toward*. It denotes that in these false prophets there was a leaning of the mind away from truth and toward error – they opened their minds up to demonic teaching and were then deceived by it and began to teach it.

Thus, it is revealed in these Scriptures that demons have the ability to infuse false teaching into the mind of the person who does not abide in the truth.

THE DANGER OF ADDRESSING DEMONS

The fact that demons are able to infuse false teaching into someone's mind is a solemn warning against the danger of communicating with the demonic world. In some charismatic realms there is a misguided focus on the exorcism of demons. It is taught in such circles that demon possession is widespread and that the exorcism of demons is still part of church ministry. At the moment it is sufficient to state that while there would seem to be some demon-possession in certain parts of the world, it is nowhere as widespread as some charismatics claim.

However, among those who teach that demon possession is widespread and that they have a ministry of exorcism, it is claimed by some that the name of the demon must be discovered before it can be exorcised; and that the demon's name can only be found by asking the demon. One charismatic leader once stated – "*I never call anything a demon until I have actually talked with the demon...I say: 'In the name of Jesus, I command you, spirit, tell me your name.'*"

The point is that such behaviour is in direct disobedience of the Scriptures because God has forbidden verbal interaction between His people and demons. It is true that Christ addressed demons that had possessed certain individuals; and so did Paul in Acts 16 in dealing with the young woman who was being used as a soothsayer. But these instances of addressing demons were integral to the sign-miracles that were wrought by Christ & the Apostles as authentication of Christ's messiahship and as proof of the Gospel message. These miracles signified that Christ had truly come to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John 3: 8. However, the Scriptures do not permit or prescribe conversation between believers & demons.

Deut 18: 10-12 is one of several O.T. absolute prohibitions of any kind of involvement with devils or evil spirits. Note that to practice contact with demons is to turn away from the Lord and look to another source for revelation. It is noteworthy that this passage of warning is immediately followed by a predictive promise of Christ the Prophet, v.14. Thus, by inference, to contact demons etc is to seek revelation from another source, is thus to deny the Lord's Word and its sufficiency. See Isaiah 8: 19, 20 – where the Lord again forbids contact with the powers of darkness and holds up the sufficiency of His own Word.

Note also from the Deuteronomy passage that direct communication with the demonic world is an *abomination* to God. The word means *detestable, loathsome or disgusting*. It indicates that demons are what the N.T. also calls them – *unclean spirits*. They are vile in their nature, full of hate, deceit, subtlety and deadly danger, thus we are absolutely forbidden to have any contact with them. One single demon represents a force for evil more loathsome and dangerous than we could ever imagine. In these verses the Hebrew words cover every range of contact with the world of darkness – séances, spiritism etc. The word for *wizard* in v.11 means *spiritist* – prohibiting all kinds of practices such as clairvoyance, 'fortune telling' etc.