

Series: Ephesians
Title: Are You Possessed?
Text: Ephesians 2: 2
Date: August 22, 2013
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Are you possessed? The majority of sinners are under the power of Satan. Our text is found in the second half of

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:...

Title: Are You Possessed?

Proposition: Men, as they are born into this world the first time, are under the power of the devil, who keeps sinners living in disobedience to God. That is what the text says.

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:...

God says the children of disobedience, right now, have the spirit of the prince of the power of the air, effectually working in them. Are you possessed of Satan? It is a frightening thought but God says, every unregenerate sinner sitting here now (or listening to this message) is walking “according to the power” of the devil, “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

Every believer sitting here now (or listening to this message) in time past, walked the same way—**v2: Wherein in time past ye walked...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:...**

Divisions: 1) Some of the ways Satan works; 2) The advantage he has over sinners; 3) How he is overthrown

I. SOME OF THE WAYS SATAN WORKS

Worldly Influence

Satan uses worldly influence, the course of this world—**v2: in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**

The devil's title “**prince**” does not mean he has power over God. It is by God's permission only that the devil does anything—as we noted Sunday, from the book of Job and from 1 Peter—“he seeketh whom he MAY devour.” (1 Pet 5: 8) God restrains what does not bring glory to his name.

The devil had no power to make Christ do anything. Christ said, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (Jn 14: 30) The devil had to ask Christ permission where they could go—Mt 8:31: So the devils besought [Christ], saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.” Only when Christ gave himself to be crucified did the devil have permission to exercise power upon our Savior (Lu 22: 53) And now is Christ risen—Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

In the context, the title of “prince”—means the devil is ruler—over unregenerate men throughout the world. In Revelation 12: 9-10 he is called, “the great dragon...that old serpent,...the Devil,...Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:...the accuser of our brethren...., which accused them before our God day and night.” Satan, by God's permission, rules unregenerate sinners. By that, the devil rules “the course of this [unregenerate] world.”

His name, “The prince of the power of the air” signifies his power over sinners. The word is used in this Epistle repeatedly to mean power superior to men.

Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The devil is not omnipresent. He is not everywhere at once like God is. But the devil does not have to be everywhere at once.

Illustration: “The spider weaves her web almost invisible in the air. So the spider can catch her prey even when she is not present. Immediately, she shows up. Well, the spider would be more like Satan if she could get the flies to weave the web, in which she catches more flies. The devil is able to persuade unregenerate sinners to weave themselves into an unbreakable bond with him, and so using “the course of this world” he entangles more sinners.

He plays upon what sin has already done to us. One of the great fears that sin produces in a sinner is a fear of not being like others. Sin makes us envious of others. Sin makes us crave the applause of man. The devil plays upon that sinful fear and that sinful envy using the course of this world.

Illustration: He uses worldly trends. When you are young, trends—in music, in dress, in homes, cars, decorations, in business, in politics, even in fleshly churches—all trends seemed new. And they are new to the youngest generation. But after 30 or 40 years you realize nothing is new. It is the same old trends being marketed to the new generation. By this, by the course of this world, the devil entangles the next generation of young sinners, in the course, the flow, of this world so that they cannot get out. It goes on one generation after another generation. And older sinners, though they have seen it all, just stay in the course of this world. Men approaching death with nothing better to occupy their minds than the latest trend and course of this world. Folks say, “What are my friends doing—cooking, I’ll occupy my time with that; motorcycles, I’ll buy a Harley; a bucket list, I’ll go sky diving.”—course of this world

Personal Influence

The devil not only uses the course of this world, he also personally steers individual sinners toward evil—v2: **The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”**

The devil and evil spirits are crafty—

Genesis 3: 1...the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.

Illustration: Without any noticeable effort, we breathe air and live thereby. But more, unnoticeably, without raising the slightest suspicion in us, evil spirits are able to influence a sinner like the wind. In 2 Timothy 2:26 we read “of the snare of the devil, [whereby sinners] are taken captive by him at his will.” A snare is not something that is set in way so that men notice it. These subtle snares are by evil spirits provoking “the desires of the flesh and of the mind.”

Application: I guarantee you evil spirits are whispering into the minds of some one hearing this right this minute, saying, “Don’t believe that there is a devil or that he has power over you. Your will is free.” By that, the devil maintains power over your mind, your lusts, your will, keeping you deceived, keeping you believing what he wants you to believe—that you are free.

II. THAT LEADS US TO OUR SECOND POINT, THE ADVANTAGE THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD HAS OVER A SINNER.

We Are Easily Deceived

First of all, Satan has an advantage over us because by the fall, sinners became the most easily deceivable creatures that exist. By the fall we became haters of God and lovers of that which is ungodly. When we lost the wisdom of God, sinners became utter simpletons. Satan has that advantage.

Satan is the Master of Lying

In addition to our ignorance, Satan has advantage over us because he is a master liar. Christ said, “[the devil] abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (Jn 8: 44)

The scriptures teach that Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light, likewise his ministers. (2 Cor 11: 13-15) The devil works in the pulpit. False teachers who are preaching that sinners have a spark of life that just needs to be fanned into a flame by the will of man; false teachers who are preaching that God gives man a will then the man can choose Christ or reject him so that ultimately their god’s salvation rests upon the sinners shoulder.

The course of this world is all for religious tolerance to the god of their minds: the god who loves all men one day and casts them into hell the next. That’s the god natural man loves and so does the devil because that god is at the mercy of the sinner—that god is the sinner.

Christ said as soon as sinners hear the truth, “Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.” (Mr 4: 15) He convinces men that God treats man unfairly, unrighteously.

Illustration: “That is unfair! All men deserve a chance!” That is the most common objection men use when they hear the truth that God elected a people unto salvation in Christ before the foundation of the world. Satan keeps back the truth that all are sinners, that election kept open the door of salvation that otherwise would have been forever slammed shut when Adam sinned in the garden.

Example: From the beginning, in the garden, the devil’s first words were crafted to make God appear as being unfair and unreasonable.

Genesis 2: 16: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:”

But the devil crafted his words just the opposite, he said to Eve,

Genesis 3: 1:...Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Satan does the same in the minds of sinners soon as they hear the gospel of:

- Divine Predestination—Romans 8: 29: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—though men predestinate every day, the devil wants men to call God unfair for doing so!
- God’s sovereignty to work his will—Eph 1:11: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”—The devil wants sinners to think their will is free, but to condemn God whose will is the only true free will!
- Particular redemption—John 10: 15: “I lay down my life for the sheep....26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”—Every day fathers provide life particularly for their sons and daughters. Yet Satan wants sinners to

condemn God for doing the same for his!

- Irresistible, invincible grace—John 6: 44: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”—Satan knows God will not share his glory with another, so he persuades sinners to glory in bringing themselves to God in order to keep them from submitting to the true and living God and giving him all the glory!

Application: Sinner, you hear the gospel, but immediately, Satan enters telling you the lie you love. He tells you your will is free, when Satan has you bound in chains of darkness.

Convinces Sinners it is Wise to Disobey God

In addition, to our ignorance and Satan’s craftiness, a third advantage the devil has is that he is able to convince sinners that true wisdom is found by doing things God expressly forbids. God told Adam

Genesis 2:17:...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 3: 4: And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Application: Sinner, be honest. As you hear the truth right now, is there not a voice inside of you objecting, telling you that you will become wiser by being a man of the world, by experimenting with things of the world, by befriending the world? God says just the opposite,

James 4:4: Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

God says,

1 John 2:15: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

God says, of the believer, “Ye are not under the law but under grace.” Acts 15: 1: “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” Satan still moves men to do the same thing today.

God says, salvation “is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Rom 9: 16) The devil whispers to sinners, “It is of your will, it is by your works.”

God says of the believer in Christ, “Ye are complete in him.” Satan says, “But there are some things you must do by your flesh to make yourself more holy, more sanctified, more perfect.”

So the prince of the power of the air deceives men into thinking his word is wiser than God’s word. That is how we fell into sin the first place.

III. HOW IS SATAN OVERTHROWN?

Isaiah 49:24: Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? 25: But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

How does Christ accomplish this deliverance of his people? In a three-fold way: redemption, regeneration and resurrection.

Redemption

First, Christ frees us from Satan by redemption. Justice had to be paid for our sins against God. By making Adam transgress the law of God all God's elect became Satan's lawful captives. Our chains are as strong as God's holy law which we violated in Adam! How strong is that? The LORD told Moses, "I will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex 34: 7) "The wages of sin is death." (Rom 6: 23) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Eze 18: 4)

Therefore, every sinner shall die—either in a Substitute or in their sins. But every sinner shall die. The holy justice of God demands it. The reason God sent his own Son is to pay those wages for his people—for those who by his grace shall believe on Christ. He sent him to pay what his people owed to his own justice—death—and thereby destroy the power of the devil

1 John 3:8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Satan tried to prevent Christ coming into the earth by destroying the children of Israel over and over again. He even tried to destroy Christ as soon as he was born into the world, using Herod.

Revelation 12: 4:...the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Finally, the devil thought he had Christ. Satan enflamed the lusts of men and "the course of this world" nailed Christ to the cursed tree. Satan watched as Christ's bore the sword, as his sheep were scattered and the devil thought he had won the day. But Satan and his wicked host were doing "what God before determined to be done." (Acts 4: 28) For it was written concerning Christ,

Zechariah 13:7: Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Jeremiah 31: 10: Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11: For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.

By suffering faithfully unto death, Christ put away the sin of his people, satisfied justice, brought in everlasting righteousness for his people, crushed the serpents head and by his gospel, Christ is gathering out his sheep and by his gospel he is keeping his sheep.

Regeneration

Secondly, through the gospel Christ delivers his people from Satan's power by regeneration and continues to do so through the gospel. This is the very reason Christ sends forth his messengers with the gospel, because his redeemed must be born again and freed from Satan's power unto God and kept. Christ told Paul he was sending him forth to preach for that very reason:

Acts 26:18: To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Read our text and we will see it,

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:... 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

- The entrance of Christ the Life conquers death.
- The entrance of Christ the Light conquers darkness
- The power of Christ conquers the prince of the power of the air.
- He binds the strongman and spoils his goods

Satan shall spew out floods of heresy trying to carry away God's church with the flood,

Revelation 12: 15: And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. [with the course of this world] 16: And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Christ our Sovereign Governor even uses the reprobate of the world to swallow up the flood, so the Lord's church is protected (1 Cor. 11:19) The Lord Jesus promises, "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine:" (Matt. 16:18)

Resurrection

Thirdly, once and for all we shall be delivered by resurrection. God our Savior shall keep us, continue to save us by the gospel, and until that last day when he raise us up incorruptible.

Ephesians 1: 10:...in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In that day, the "accuser of the brethren" shall be finally, forever cast down into hell with all those that follow him.

Application: Remember these three things. First, the way God's people overcome is by the blood of the Lamb—believe on Christ. Take refuge from the accuser in Christ.

Secondly, we overcome by the word of our testimony—by Christ the essential Word, by the word of the scriptures, by hearkening to the preaching of the gospel. God saves—in the beginning and throughout—by the gospel. Never forsake assembling with your brethren to hear Christ high and lifted up in the gospel.

Thirdly, we overcome by not loving our lives unto death. If any man love his life and saves it by denying Christ and his gospel, Satan will conquer you. But if you lay down your life for Christ, lay down anything in competition with Christ and his Gospel; through faith in Christ we shall overcome Satan by Christ. Read all three in Revelation 12: 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Amen!