

ADDENDUM

"Can a Christian be possessed by wicked spirits?" This is a question often asked today.

In order to understand the question and to answer it correctly it is necessary to define some terms.

The English word "possession" is a translation of the Greek word $\epsilon\iota\eta\mu\omicron\upsilon\iota\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ which is used in the New Testament thirteen times, (Matthew 4:24; 8:16,28,33; et al.). The lexicon translates the word "be possessed", "afflicted" and "vexed." Strictly the word would mean "demonized."

The translators also used the word "have" to refer to an individual troubled by wicked spirits. The Greek word is $\epsilon\chi\omega$. It is used eighteen times in the New Testament in this regard. It simply means to "have" as one would "have a disease" or "have a wife." Once this term is used synonymously with "possessed" (Mark 5:15). Some samples would be Luke 4:33 and Acts 16:16.

The Greek word $\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ is also used in the New Testament to designate individuals who were "troubled." It means "enter into". It is used six times. Examples would be Luke 8:30; 22:3; John 13:27.

The Greek word $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ is used once in the New Testament in reference to our subject. It means "oppressed", "to rule", "to tyrannize." It is found in Acts 10:38.

We also find the word "in" $\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ used in the New Testament to describe those who have been invaded by wicked spirits. Some examples would be Mark 1:23; 5:2.

All of these terms indicate the seriousness of the subject. As one looks up these references and reads the verses in their context one realizes how difficult it is to choose definitive words to translate the Greek text. The translators have done a good job. Such words as "possession", "have" and "oppressed" are good choices. "Possession", however, does not mean full-control.

We must ask now as to the meaning of these terms today. The term in question is that of "possession." The dictionary defines the word in reference to "domination", "ownership", "control." Can a Christian be "dominated", "owned" and "controlled" by wicked spirits? My answer is "No." The believer belongs to God and he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. One of the facets of the Fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

Most of the time, when the above question is asked, the questioner means by "possession" such an interpretation as "full-control." Therefore, in the light of this modern usage of the term I reject the view that a Christian can be "possessed" by wicked spirits. He cannot be "fully-controlled."

I do believe, however, that a Christian can be "invaded." He can have wicked spirits on the "inside" and can thereby be greatly hindered in living the Christian life. Even the Gadarene Demoniac, however, could come to the Lord Jesus and worship Him! This, incidentally, is a strange thing for a non-Christian to do -- worship the Lord Jesus! The Greek word is *προσκυβέω*. It is used fifty-seven times in the New Testament and always indicating "worship." Can a non-Christian worship God?