

# Direct Attack! (Satan's "Extraordinary" Work)

—God at War, Week 8—

## I. \_\_\_\_\_ of Satan's \_\_\_\_\_

- Distinct voices heard in one's head, speaking blasphemous, or mocking words
- Distinct voices heard in one's head that sound benign, like a friendly spirit guide
- Attacks in the night, involving terror, choking, or sexual contact from a spirit
- Especially dark, terrifying, or blasphemous dreams
- Visual apparitions, such as clouds, people, animals, etc., visible only to the oppressed
- Visual apparitions, such as clouds, people, animals, etc., visible to all present
- Physical attacks of pain, such as headaches, sickness, vertigo, anxiety, etc
- Dizziness or mental fog when trying to go to church, read the Bible, or pray
- Various troubling phenomena provoked by the presence of holy things (church, Bibles, prayer, crosses, etc)
- The movement, materialization, or dematerialization of objects
- Unexplained sounds or voices heard in one's presence
- False appearances of angels, the dead, or other spirits, appearing good or evil
- Obsessive bondage to particular sins or substances
- Drive to self-harm or suicide
- Strong and unexplainable negative emotions.
- Periodic complete takeover of the person by an alien spirit (classic "possession" phenomena)
- Though not really "attacks," the enemy can also grant supernatural power, for example: strength, sexual prowess, clairvoyance, speaking in unknown languages, knowledge of secret info or of the future, telepathy, magic, etc. Sometimes these masquerade as spiritual gifts (But all these often come with a cost, usually along the lines of the above bullet points).
- Some Biblical Cases: 1 Samuel 16:14-15; Mark 5:1-13; Mark 9:17-27; Acts 16:18

*CAUTION: It becomes obvious here that many of these effects mimic various mental health conditions. Indeed, one of the challenges in this area are differentiating between the physical, mental, and spiritual. Similar symptoms can be caused by a mental health issue, a spiritual oppression issue, or both. In differentiating the spiritual and the psychological, caution is called for, and we need to remember that we are wholistic beings. We need to pay attention to the body, as well as to the spirit.*

## II. Can a Christian Be " \_\_\_\_\_ " by \_\_\_\_\_ ?

*This question invariably presses on us when we discuss the demonic. This is really an imprecise question, which clouds the issue in unfortunate ways. My short answer is, "yes"; my long answer is, "It's complicated." Many evangelicals have uncritically assumed, or have been taught, that Christians cannot be afflicted by demons to this degree. There is, however, a fairly strong agreement among Christians who actually deal with spiritual warfare and write about it, that yes, in fact, Christians can be afflicted even to this degree. Unfortunately, it plays directly to Satan's hand if we assume we are automatically safe from such attacks.*

- **Although many translations use terminology of possession, which is common in English, this is not actually biblical terminology.** Rather a more literal biblical terminology is "to have" an unclean spirit, "to be in" a demon, or "to be demonized." Consider NIV vs. ESV in this regard. Mark 9:17-18 (NIV): "Teacher, I brought you my son, **who is possessed by a spirit** that has robbed him of speech..."; (ESV) "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for **he has a spirit** that makes him mute" (see also Matt 8:16). The biblical terminology of "having a spirit" (maintained in ESV) or being "demonized" allows for different degrees of demonic influence and does not muddy the waters by bringing in imagery of "ownership." Thus, Christians can be demonized or influenced by a demonic spirit to various degrees.
- **Potential Objection 1: How can a demonic spirit coexist with the Holy Spirit?**  
While on the surface this statement seems logical, it breaks down upon examination. A parallel situation exists between the sinfulness of our flesh (i.e., who we are in our humanness, as part of the world). When we become believers, we receive the Spirit and we participate in the reality of the presence of the New Age of fulfillment (2 Cor 5:17). Yet at the same time we retain our flesh, and there is a struggle between our flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:16-15). It may surprise us that the Holy Spirit can coexist in us with sin, but this is an experienced fact. So just as the Holy Spirit can coexist with our sinfulness, the Holy Spirit can apparently coexist with the presence of demonic spirits. In both cases, however, there will certainly exist a state of conflict between the Spirit/Flesh and the Spirit/Demon. To say this coexistence is possible is not to say that it is acceptable!
- **Potential Objection 2: What about passages showing we are safe from Satan (Luke 10:18; 1 John 5:18; Rom 8:37-39)?**  
It is best to see these passages talking about our positional security in Christ. No direct attack of Satan can ultimately harm the true believer in Christ or tear us from God in this ultimate sense. We are positionally secure in Jesus! Yet in our day to day practice and life, we are still vulnerable to Satan's attacks, and Scripture presents Satan as a real enemy with real ability to do us harm. Consider these passages that show this threat: Ephesians 6:10-13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 12:7

- A “Classic” Model of Demonic Influence (from the R. Catholic, G. Amorth, *An Exorcist Explains the Demonic*, 66-75)
  - **Oppression** (or “vexation” or “harassment”): “Diabolical vexations are ... far and away the most numerous.... Here the Devil acts without any dominant and prevailing influence over the body and the mind of the victim, as happens in the case of possession. Vexations are true and actual aggressions, physical or psychological attacks that the demon works against a person.”
  - **Obsession**: “Diabolical obsession are disturbances or extremely strong hallucinations that the demon imposes, often invincibly, on the mind of the victim. In these cases the person is no longer master of his own thoughts....This usually does not completely deactivate the mind and the will of a person who remains conscious and alert. It does, however, heavily condition him in his relationship with the world.”
  - **Possession**: “Without a doubt, diabolical possession, the invincible influence of the devil on a person, is the most striking and serious form of the extraordinary action of the devil. When the demon is able to take possession of a person, he can make him say and do what he wishes. It is necessary to clarify that the devil is not able to take possession of the soul of a man (unless the person expressly consents to it), but only his body.... When possession is manifested, the obsessed goes into a trance and loses consciousness, leaving space for the evil spirit to speak; to agitate the person; to curse; to vomit nails, glass, or other objects, and to demonstrate herculean strength—in brief, to take over.... I also add that the demon does not particularly like exercising his extraordinary action; he prefers by far to act through temptation. In the first case, the external manifestation clearly unmasks his existence. In the second, hiding himself behind ignorance and slight faith, he can act more easily because he is undisturbed. The devil is content when no one believes in his existence or when people consider him solely a mediaeval relic; then he is truly able to act tranquilly!”
  - **Infestation** (demonization of places): These are “disturbances that act on houses, objects, and animals, rather than on people. It does not mean that they produce less suffering in the individuals who are associated with this satanic action.... doors and windows that open and shut, day and night, without any apparent cause; lights, lamps, televisions or computers that turn on and shut off without any human intervention...; the sound of footsteps; violent vibrations; mysterious voices or cries; and powerful blows to the walls, all of which can make life difficult for the inhabitants....”  
[See these passages for biblical hints of ties between demons and geographical places: Dan 10:12-19, 20-21; Mark 5:9-10]

- A “Numeric” Model of Demonic Influence (from evangelical, Charles Kraft, *Defeating Dark Angels*, 148-51).

Weak			Medium				Strong		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- **Levels 1-2**: “Demons at these levels are very weak and have little control over a person, though they can be pesky in their harassment. They can make a person feel uncomfortable in worship or Bible study, affect dreams, apparently lower a person’s resistance to illness and perhaps contribute to misjudgment and confusion.”
- **Levels 3-4**: “At these levels, demons can exert more control over their host. They can cause uncontrollable anger, fear and greater discomfort in worship, and at times they are accompanied by near panic and a strong desire to run. People with demons at this level frequently ask themselves, *Whatever made me do that?*”
- **Levels 5-6**: “Demons at this level specialize in compulsive behavior. As the wife of a pastor whom we delivered of a demon at this level said, “Everything my husband did was compulsive.” These demons have greater control over their hosts and for longer periods of time. If there are spirits of anger or fear or hate, the person’s personality will be slanted in those directions.”
- **Levels 7-8**: “Rarely do we find Christians demonized at this high a level unless they have been involved in the occult. Demons at these levels are able to exert a lot of control over their victims, sometimes for long periods of time. At this level of demonization, a person may seem to have two or more quite different personalities. When the demons take control, it is common to observe ... violent or other uncharacteristic behavior that the person may be ashamed of later.”
- **Levels 9-10**: “Rarely, if ever, are Christians demonized at this level. At this level, the characteristics of level 7-8 are all to be found and often escalated. That is, demonic control will be greater and occur more often.”

The Bottom Line

Recognize \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ “\_\_\_\_\_ Man”!  
 ...by being \_\_\_\_\_ giving any \_\_\_\_\_.  
 ...by \_\_\_\_\_ for fellow \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ ways.  
 ...\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Christ \_\_\_\_\_ all evil.