

## Does the Devil Have Any Power?

[This article is controversial. If you think that I am wrong, please write me and point out scriptures to the contrary. I have been wrong at times, and I am open to correction.]

The devil doesn't have any power of his own and cannot operate any spiritual gifts or work any miracles. He only deceives people into using God's power and gifts for evil purposes. If he had any ability of his own to work miracles, or operate any spiritual gifts, he would not need to deceive people. He could give his own power to work miracles to those who are willing to submit themselves to him.

Now, do we have any evidence in the holy scripture that the above statement is true; that the enemy uses or misuses God's gifts [rather than the devil's own gifts], but the gifts came from God? Please notice these verses:

When the two magicians withstood Moses [Exodus 7:12] and accomplished their evil deeds, these are the things they were using: prayer, faith, meditation, and fasting. [In those days, magicians were required to do a 40-day fast before they entered the magicians' school.] Did they have faith? Would they have thrown their rods down if they did not believe that their rods would turn into serpents? But isn't faith a gift from God? Doesn't the Bible tell us that all men have been given a measure of faith? [Romans 12:3] So, weren't Pharaoh's magicians using one of God's spiritual gifts?

I have also noticed that many people whom God entrusted with his gifts, later started using those gifts for selfish purposes: making themselves rich. They didn't lose

the gifts, they mis-used them. So, does God permit people who mis-use his gifts to retain/continue using those gifts? Check out this verse: "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" — Romans 11:29 NKJV, NAS. The King James version say "...are without repentance."

Isn't that why most people who seem to be mis-using God's gifts are people who at one time seem to have been genuine servants of God? Doesn't this explain why many of the greatest revivals in the world later turn into centers of demonic activity, money-raising schemes, hatching nests for man-centered (rather than God-centered) ministries?

It is simple: the devil noticed a group of people who seem to know how to operate in the gifts of the spirit, and he sent one of his emissaries to whisper in their ear. "I've got it now! I can manipulate this crowd into giving me anything that I want. I'll just be careful how I handle this situation, and they will hand all of their money to me."

In the case where Paul cast the demon out of the fortune-telling girl, I noticed that this girl was preaching the truth: "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." The Bible tells us that the devil is a liar and the father of it—John 8:44, so, is it possible that the devil influenced the girl to speak the truth? Or was it one of the gifts of the spirit of God that prompted her to say those words? [Acts 16:17]

Now the Bible says that this girl had 2 evil spirits. [KJV: divination and soothsaying] But, what are evil spirits? Aren't they spirits that take God's gifts and use them for evil purposes? [In this case, her owners were misusing her gifts, making them more guilty than she was.]

Please note that in the original Greek, both of these words are translated from the same root word: wise men

[Matthew 2:1] and sorcery [Acts 8:9]. [Yes, I, the writer of this message, am a Greek man.] The Matthew account portrays the wise men who visited Jesus at his birth as godly men who were in God's will; however, the Acts account portrays a girl/woman who was practicing black magic arts or sorcery. Doesn't that seem to say that the wise men had a gift from God and the man in Acts 8 was using that same gift for evil or selfish purposes?

One time a man said to Jesus: "Sir, we know that you are a teacher sent from God, because no man can do these miracles unless God is with him." [John 3:2] Were these words from God, or did a man originate them? They originated from the man, but Jesus did not correct the man by saying, "No, sir, there are evil people that use the devil's power to do miracles." He let that saying stand: [...no man can do these miracles unless God is with him (or the gifts of God are with him)]. That seems to include those miracles that are done at the hands of false prophets, witch doctors, occultists, Satan worshipers, etc.

Here is an example: If a man amasses a huge fortune, and he uses that fortune for evil purposes, isn't he using a fortune that was a blessing from God? So, some people use spiritual gifts for evil, selfish purposes, and some people use financial gifts for evil, selfish purposes. Both are deceptions by the same devil.

Also, please notice, in the Old Testament, the true prophets arose first, and then the false prophets arose imitating the true prophets. They were copy-cat ministries, trying to imitate such servants of God as Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, and many others. Most were not trying to imitate the devil or Satan.

A recap of the above:

If the enemy had any real power of his own, he wouldn't have to deceive the people, he could offer them his own power. We could say that the only power he has is the power of deception. He deceives people into using or misusing God's power because he doesn't have any real power of his own to offer them. This is why Jesus frequently admonished the people: "Be watchful so that you may not be deceived."

I know that many people will disagree with me that the devil doesn't have any power other than deception. If you can show me from the Word that I am wrong, please write me.

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Yes, somebody did point out two verses that seem to say that the devil has power to give to whomever he wishes: Revelation 13:2-4 tells us that the dragon gave his power to the beast. Now, is it possible that the dragon gave the beast power to deceive—which is the only power that the devil has? And the same with the passage when the devil came to Jesus to tempt him after his 40 days of fasting. Didn't the devil think he could deceive Jesus?

Or, perhaps this is the right way to say it: When a person sins, he gives the devil an opening to come in and do his dirty work. However, when a person is faithfully doing what God wants him to do, the devil has to get permission from God to touch him.—as was the case with Job.

I offer these explanations asking my readers to look to the Lord for guidance in the Truth. I acknowledge that I could be wrong.

Your brother in Jesus: Brother James

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