

The Origin and Nature of the Old Self



The Old Self and the New Self (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of the new week, sharing with you out of truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same in yours.

First, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who" have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

This week I'm going to talk about two persons who occupy a position of unique importance in the total revelation of the New Testament. In fact, it would be correct to say that we can never properly understand the message of the New Testament until we become thoroughly acquainted with these two persons, their origin, their nature and their destiny.

And yet, for all their unique importance, they are never once named in the New Testament!

Doubtless you are beginning to wonder who are the two persons I'm referring to. My answer may at first surprise you, and yet everything I've said about them is absolutely correct. The two persons are the old man and the new man. That's the rather picturesque language of the King James Version. In the more recent translation they are called "the old self" and "the new self." But whichever way we describe them, the fact remains that we cannot fully understand the New Testament until we are familiar with what it says about these two persons.

For our opening Scripture today we're going to turn to Ephesians 4:20-24:

> "But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus..." (NAS)

It's significant that Paul is writing to people who are committed Christians, and yet he leaves open the possibility that they may not really have heard the truth that God wants them to hear concerning their position in Jesus. And I believe the same is true today for many people who are sincere

Christians and yet they haven't heard the truth that I'm going to be sharing with you today about the old self and the new self. Paul then goes on in verse 22, this is the truth:

> "...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (NAS)

So there are the two selfs: the old self and the new self. And you see that as Christians the Scripture requires us to take specific action about these two selfs:

(a) to put off the old self and

(b) to put on the new self.

Obviously, if we are going to be able to do this, we must know what is involved. We must be able to identify both the old self and the new self. Otherwise, how can we know we're putting off the old self and that we're putting on the new self. In other words, knowledge is essential. We have to be able to identify both the old self and the new self.

Well, today I'm going to explain the origin and nature of the old self. It's summed up in the words that Paul used in Ephesians 4:22. He says, "the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit."

There are three key thoughts: corrupt, lust and deceit. We'll begin at the end with the word deceit, or deception. The origin of the old self is deception. The old self is the product of deceit or deception. Specifically, Satan's deception. He's the result of man heeding Satan's lie.

In order to understand the full nature of the lie, we have to go back to the record of man's creation and the origin of human history. You recall that after Adam and Eve had been created, God gave them a warning that there was one tree in the garden they were not to touch or to eat of, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and God said to them very solemnly, "In the day that you touch that and eat that, you will surely die." In the next chapter, Satan in the person of the serpent, comes to the woman Eve and tempts her. In essence, his temptation is to ignore God's warning and to disobey what God had told them and, in persuading Eve to do this, Satan brings forth his lie, the lie. The lie is the direct negation of what God had said. God said, "You will surely die." Satan says, "You surely will not die." This is found in Genesis 3:4:

> "And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die.'" (NAS)

Now that's a direct lie! And it's that lie, the negation of God's truth, which originates, which gives birth to the old self. The old self is the product of deception, of Satan's lie. We need to bear in mind that Satan's primary activity against the human race is always deception. In Revelation 12:9, Satan is called "the great dragon... the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..."

Have you even seen a straight serpent or a straight snake? Never! A snake is always crooked! And the product of the snake's lie is as crooked as the snake himself. That's the old self. It's corrupt. It's dishonest! And for that reason, in the very next verse of Ephesians 4:25, Paul warns Christians specifically against falsehood. He says:

> "Therefore... [In other words, 'because you're to put off the old self and put on the new self,'] Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." (NAS)

Now deception sets in motion a process of degeneration. Deception produces lust. Lust is perverted, rebellious desires. Desires which are contrary to the will of God and contrary to the well-being of the one who entertains those desires. Lust in turn, produces sin, and sin produces death. This is stated clearly in James 1:13-15:

> "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." (NAS)

So there's the total process: deception produces lust, lust produces sin, and sin produces death.

Now we're going to look at the nature of the old self, the nature that is produced by deception and lust. There's one key word which describes it. It's the word "corrupt" or "corruptible." The old nature is corrupt and corruptible in every area, spiritually, morally and physically. The word that describes that old nature, that old self, is "corrupt."

Secondly, it is the seed or the offspring of Satan. In Genesis 3:15, immediately after man's disobedience, the Lord spoke to the serpent and spoke about the serpent's seed, that's the offspring of Satan. Because the old self is the offspring or seed of Satan, it reproduces the nature of Satan.

You remember that Jesus in one place said to the religious leaders of His day, "You are of your father, the devil." So the devil is the father to the children of disobedience and his nature can be summed up in one word: "rebellion." His is the leader of all rebellion in the universe. Hence, the behavior of the old nature is inevitably rebellious behavior. In Isaiah 53:6 it's stated like this:

> "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way..." (NAS)

That's the mark of the old nature in behavior, it turns to its own way. It goes its own way. It turns its back on God and seeks its own will and pleasure, satisfaction, without reference to God. This is described in greater detail in Ephesians 2:1-3, where Paul says:

> "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [that's Satan], of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. [That's the product of Satan's lie and rebellion, the sons of disobedience. It's a description of those who have the old self, the sons of disobedience. Satan is able to work in them because of their disobedience. And Paul goes on to say:] Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." (NAS)

Notice that phrase "by nature children of wrath." Why? Because by nature we are "sons of disobedience" and disobedience always brings down God's wrath. So we have in us a rebellious nature which is the product of Satan's deception and of lust. Sum it up in a simple sentence: "There's a rebel inside each one of us." And that rebel is called in Scripture "the old man."

So we can sum up the process that brings the old man into being:

Satan's deception produces lust.

Lust produces sin.

Sin produces death.

And the nature that's produced in this way, the nature of the old self, has two distinctive marks. First of all, it's corrupt, spiritually, morally and physically. Second, it's a rebel.

All right. Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this same theme. I'll be explaining God's solution for this universal problem, the problem of the old self.

Radio Program

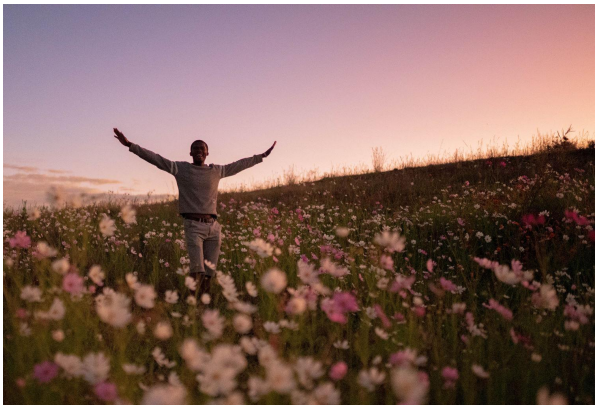
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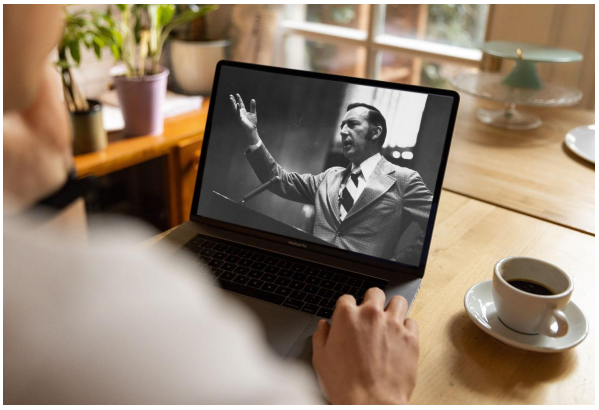
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