

Do We Have a Dark Side?

Written by K B Napier

Wednesday, 18 March 2015 11:51

In the very successful sci-fi films, Star Wars, A major character, Luke Skywalker, was always urged to “join the dark side”. In many books and films, and even in everyday life, people refer to our ‘dark’ side.

The idea is that everyone has a dark side that competes with their ‘good’ side. This has nothing to do with the Bible or Christianity – it is a commonly-held notion amongst all men. It is why the penal system tries to ‘rehabilitate’ prisoners. The belief is that if we only give sufficient time to a man, his ‘darker’ side will give way to his better, good side, and so stop him committing crime. The fact that it does not work seems to be ignored. A similar idea is used on alcoholics (drunks) and drug addicts. Again, the vast amounts spent on most programs is wasted.

Do we have a ‘dark side’? The short answer is, no we do not. The closest we get in scripture is “dark sayings”, chiydah. These are sayings with no easy answer; riddles, hard questions, something obscure. They are ‘dark’ because we have no quick-fix to them. They do not refer to something nasty and sinful deep within.

Scripture is very plain about our characters. It says we are conceived, and born, in sin. Sin is usually thought of as ‘black’ and ‘darkness’, probably as a counter to the light of God. Thus, we can have ‘black’ hearts and minds that lead us to do evil. But, does this mean we have a personality divided into two parts, dark and light? Do we move from our ‘good’ side to commit sin with our ‘dark’ side?

When we are unsaved, our hearts and minds are under the influence of Satan, who is our ‘father’. We cannot do good in God’s eyes, even when we do good in the eyes of mankind. As unsaved people we are destined to hell and so cannot do anything good. This is the equivalent of having a permanent ‘dark side’... only there is no other counter-balancing ‘good side’. There is just a heart dark as night.

Only the good prompted by God is called ‘good’ by Him. An unsaved man cannot do good as defined by God, so everything he does is bad, sinful, ‘black’. There is no ‘good side’ to swing away from.

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When a man is saved, his spirit is made alive and so is brand new. His body continues to degenerate as do the bodies of the unsaved. His mind and heart can be tempted and influenced by the "old man". But, his spirit/soul is brand new and belongs to God! He is no longer under the binding control of Satan, and he is defined as a 'new creature' acceptable to God.

Does the saved man have a 'dark side'? No, he does not. He is a creature of the light and so his thoughts, actions and speech are God-ward. Because he is still on this earth and still has the 'old man' within, he is sometimes led off by his own volition, to think or do sin. But, this is not his 'dark side'; it is just a temporary external influence on his otherwise pure spirit, like an arrow fired at him by an enemy.

Because he has no 'dark side' he can repent and start again with God. He does not have a 'dark side' that somehow recedes into the background until another day... each and every temptation is brand new, not a festering spot inside his soul.

So, when a Christian does something he should not, perhaps even a gross sin, it is not because his 'dark side' has won the day, pushing aside the light of God. It is because he has been tempted and temporarily thinks, says, or does, something that is not compatible with his divinely-given status as a 'new creature'. It is not a part of him, but something put upon him by Satan via the 'old man', who is now an interloper, not a resident!

Many Christians become depressed because they think they have a 'dark side' that can cause them to sin at will. Not so. We sin when we give-in to temptation, and temptation is a proposal, not a law, given to us by Satan. He aims to lead us to sin, but we will only sin if we listen to temptation and decide to act upon it. In no way can we bleat "Satan made me do it"! Satan cannot force any new creature in Christ to sin. He can only make suggestions. It is up to us to reject it or accept it. But, even when we accept it and sin, it is not because we have a mysterious 'dark side'.

To imply a 'dark side' is to equalize every person, when God says we are not equal... there are the saved and the unsaved. A 'dark side' would refute the concept of salvation and the righteous absolute nature of God, Who will not leave us in our sinful state to vacillate from good to bad literally when the mood takes us. We are either new creatures, or we are what philosophers say we are – dual personalities unable to control our sin.

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