

The Bible Teaching About Demons

I. WHAT ARE DEMONS?

A. They Are Spirit Beings Who Are Totally Evil In Nature.

1. "In New covenant times, a demon was a spirit, having superhuman powers but not supernatural. In a vague way, personal beings akin to men and yet belonging to the unseen realm were designated 'demons'" (**What Jesus Taught**, p. 185, by C. H. Roberson).
2. Since the devil is the "prince of demons" ([Matt. 12:24](#)), it is clear that they are subordinate agents of Satan, associated with him in his evil work. Thus, they share in his thoroughly wicked nature and are deceptively opposed to the work of God and desirous of bringing about the destruction of men. Also, like the devil, their origin is not revealed.
3. Perhaps the most commonly-held error about demons is that they were simply a primitive means of describing symptoms of what are now known to be mental and emotional disorders, and thus not actual personalities.

B. Demons Are Real Spirit Personalities.

1. Demons are described as having existence and functions that are not related to human behavior or illnesses. For example, one of their functions is that of inspiring false worship.
2. Such passages as [Matt. 4:24](#) and [Matt. 8:16](#) show that there is a distinction between diseases resulting from demon possession and those resulting from natural causes. The same disease (e.g. epilepsy) may be the result of either.
3. Not all mental and emotional illnesses are attributed to demons. For example, dumbness and blindness can be the result of possession, [Matt. 12:22-29](#).
4. Demons are recorded as "speaking" ([Lk. 4:33-37](#); [8:30-36](#)); "recognizing Christ" ([Lk. 4:41](#)); and "trembling" ([James 2:19](#)), all of which are characteristics of personality.

II. THREE WAYS IN WHICH DEMONS FUNCTIONED.

A. Demons Acted As The Spiritual Agents Of Idolatry, [Ps. 106:36-37](#).

1. [1 Cor. 10:19-21](#)
 2. [Rev. 9:20](#)
- B. Demons Inspire False Doctrines and Seduce People Into Believing Them, [1 Tim. 4:1-3](#).
1. [James 3:15](#)
 2. [1 John 4:1](#)
- C. Demons Possessed Individuals During The Time Jesus Christ Was On The Earth and Shortly After.
1. Approximately 85 biblical references about demons are found of which the vast majority deal with possession.
 2. This is a New Testament phenomenon because there are no instances of demon possession in the Old Testament. With the exception of four instances recorded in [Acts 5:16](#); [Acts 8:7](#); [Acts 16:16](#); and [Acts 19:13-16](#), all of the references to demon possession are found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
 3. There is no reference where demon possession forced one to sin. No reference of one being chastised or told to repent. Thus demon possession must not be confused with simple "temptation."
 4. When a demon entered into the body of its victim, control was seized of his faculties thus inflicting him in a variety of ways, both mental and physical. (e.g. [Matt. 17:14-21](#); [Lk. 8:26-38](#)). Victims possessed showed a variety of diseases and disabilities such as blindness, dumbness, epilepsy, and lunacy ([Matt. 12:22](#)), but we are not told what distinguished blindness caused by demon possession versus blindness resulting from natural causes, but judging by the recorded reactions of on-lookers, there must have been a clearly recognizable difference.

III. THE PURPOSE OF POSSESSION

- A. The Superiority Of Christ's Power Was Confirmed By Casting Them Out.
1. In order to be truly the Redeemer, Jesus had to engage in strife with demon-possession and prove He had power to overcome the power of the evil one, [Matt. 12:28-29](#).
 2. Casting out demons was a "sign":
 - a. Of His authority and power over spiritual forces, [Lk. 4:36](#).
 - b. Of the in-coming kingdom of God, [Lk. 11:20](#)
- B. Attention is not focused on the demons themselves, but on Christ and His power to cast them out. What is important to know is that no matter what demons are, where they came from, or how great their power, Jesus is greater and more powerful! He brings complete deliverance from evil in all its forms.

IV. DOES DEMON POSSESSION STILL OCCUR?

A. No Examples Are Found In Any Of The Epistles.

1. With the exception of the four times mentioned in Acts, all the examples of possession are found during the time Christ lived on the earth.
2. Even in the list of spiritual gifts for believers ([1 Cor. 12:8-10](#)) "casting out demons" was not one that was given.
3. In [Zech. 13:2](#), the scripture seems to indicate that at the same time the miraculous gift of inspired prophecy was removed, unclean spirits would also be removed. Therefore when the New Testament was fully revealed and confirmed the need for these miraculous signs no longer were needed, [1 Cor. 13:9-10](#).

B. Instead Of "Possessing" One, The Devil "Tempt" Us Today.

1. [1 Pet. 5:8-9](#) - As a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour
2. [Eph. 6:10-18](#) - He can be resisted by putting on the whole armor of God.
3. [John 10:27-30](#) - He cannot take anyone who is not a willing follower.

(Note: Much of this information is from a tract by Tommy South titled, "A Study Of Biblical Teaching On Demons" published by Quality Publications, Abilene, TX.)

