

# Demon Possession

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## I. What are Demons?

Demons are rebellious angels that fell in eternity past, before the human fall in the Garden (Job 38:4-7; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:4). Their leader is Satan (Rev. 9:11; 12:7-9). Unlike angels, they are not ministering spirits, but an army set on thwarting God's plan. Since the Fall, they are intent on sidetracking God's plan of redemption.

"Demons do exist. They are personal intelligent beings who are evil malicious spirits. There are so many of them that it makes the evil work of Satan going on almost everywhere on the earth."<sup>1</sup>

They are powerful spirit-beings, but they are not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent, attributes only attributed to God. Rather they are deceivers, just like their leader Satan (2 Cor. 11:13, 14; Rev. 12:9). They also seek to oppress and persecute those already marked by God as His own (1 Pet. 5:8, 9). They seek to lead people astray, away from God and toward sin. However, their power and influence are limited by the permissive will of God.

"Demons are involved in every part of Satan's program — opposing God, preventing people understanding the Gospel, opposing God's people, attacking the church, tempting people to sin and thwarting the spread of the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

"In the Old Testament we are told of those who "sacrificed to demons that were no gods" (Deut. 32:17) and others who "sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons" (Ps. 106:37).

Demons are mentioned in nineteen out of the twenty-seven New Testament books, and Jesus frequently claimed to "cast out demons" (Matt. 12:27). The Bible never questions their existence."<sup>3</sup>

## II. What is Demon Possession?

"In cases of demon possession, the personality of the person concerned is eclipsed by the demon, so that demonic personality is what is revealed."<sup>4</sup>

"The idea of possession may give the impression of ownership, whereas the demons are squatters."<sup>5</sup>

Several examples of demon possession:

- Mark 5:1-20 -- Jesus drove a legion of demons out of a man and into a herd of pigs. The demons caused great harm, physically and spiritually, to the one they possessed. Yet, Jesus "gave them permission" to enter the pigs. Jesus was ultimately in control.
- Luke 11:24, 25 – demon returns with seven other demons to re-inhabitant the person.
- 2 Cor. 4:4 – they blind the minds of unbelievers so they do not respond to the gospel.
- 2 Cor. 11:14, 15 – They disguise themselves as "servants of righteousness."
- 1 Tim 4:1 – they promote false doctrine
- Rev. 16:14 – they perform signs to deceive humans

Demon possession is prevalent throughout Scripture.

### III. Can Christians Be Demon Possessed?

The short answer is “no.” They cannot be possessed (internal). However, they can be oppressed and deceived (externally).

“Can believers be demon inhabited? This is a question which many ask. Theologically considered, it is hard to believe that it is possible that a believer can both be a dwelling place for a demon and the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19 and 2 Cor. 6:16). However, there is every reason to believe that a believer may be demonized in the sense of oppressed by demonic malevolence (1 Pet. 5:8–9). Likewise, the devil may actively seek to harass a godly servant as Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Cor. 12:7). In brief: inhabited, no; oppressed, yes.”<sup>6</sup>

#### A. Why Christians cannot be possessed.

1. God is greater than the devil and his demons

“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them [the spirit of the antichrist], for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

2. Believers are sealed with the Spirit

<sup>3</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:13, 14).

3. Permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit

<sup>14</sup> By the Holy Spirit who **dwells within us**, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (2 Tim. 1:14)

4. Believers do not live under the authority of Satan and his demons

<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13, 14)

5. Jesus promises protection

<sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28, 29)

6. No biblical example of believers being possessed

“There is no example in Scripture of a believer in Jesus Christ being demon-possessed. All cases of demonic possession were with those who were unbelievers.”<sup>7</sup>

## B. What effect can demons have on Christians?

Demons can entice and deceive believers into sinful behavior or false beliefs. Like Satan, they are a master of deception and falsehood. However, there does not appear to be biblical evidence that this demonic activity is supernatural, but rather a person simply being open to the enticement to sin or belief in false doctrines.

Being open to the enticement is why dabbling in the occult can be so dangerous. This may be why there is more evidence of demonic activity in cultures that are more prone to animistic practices.

“While the Bible does not explicitly state whether a Christian can be possessed by a demon, related biblical truths make it abundantly clear that Christians cannot be demon possessed. There is a distinct difference between being possessed by a demon and being oppressed or influenced by a demon. Demon possession involves a demon having direct/complete control over the thoughts and/or actions of a person (Matthew 17:14-18; Luke 4:33-35; 8:27-33). Demon oppression or influence involves a demon or demons attacking a person spiritually and/or encouraging him/her into sinful behavior. **Notice that in all the New Testament passages dealing with spiritual warfare, there are no instructions to cast a demon out of a believer (Ephesians 6:10-18). Believers are told to resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9), not to cast him out.**”<sup>8</sup>

## C. What are we as believers to do?

The more we focus on God and His Word, the less openings we give to the devil and his demons. Know truth; Avoid sin; Stand firm in your faith. Although the following verses refer specifically to resisting the devil, it is safe to say the same principles apply to his followers.

James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”

1 Peter 5:8-9 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood through the world.”

## Concluding Remarks:

Demons never operate outside of God’s sovereign control; He never relinquishes control. He protects His children from possession and gives them tools to resist demonic influence.

The above 1 Peter passage ends as follows:

1 Peter 5:10-11 “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen”

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_50.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_50.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/demons-servants-satan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/demons-servants-satan>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/demons-servants-satan>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-demons/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-demons/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_61.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_61.cfm)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-demon-possessed.html>