

## **Question: "Is There Demon Possession Today?"**

In New Testaments times, various people were afflicted with demon possession. Jesus healed many of these people during His personal ministry. Matthew records several of these events in his gospel (Mt 4:24; 8:16, 28-32; 9:32-33; 12:22; 15:21-28).

Demon possession presented itself in many ways. The people Jesus healed of this malady were afflicted with severe diseases of the body and mind including epilepsy, paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, and insanity. His power over the demons was prophesied in the Old Testament. Matthew records, "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits *with a word*, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'" (Mt 8:16-17; Isa 53:4).

Who, but God could have such power over the realm of spirits? In fact, casting out demons was proof of His claim to be the Son of God (Mt 27:43). Furthermore, Jesus said He cast out demons by the "Spirit" or "finger of God," proving "the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:22-32; Lk 11:14-23). When the people of Jesus' day witnessed His power "they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, 'What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out'" (Lk 4:36). Jesus had the authority while on the earth to do what He willed with evil spirits. Today He is, unquestionably, "Lord of all" (Ac 10:36).

The Lord Jesus also gave His apostles the power to cast out demons (Mt 10:8; Mk 16:15-18). For example, "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Ac 19:11-12). At that time, seven Jewish men tried to cast out demons by the authority of Jesus but were not able; in fact, they were overcome by the demons. The reason being, they had no authority from God to do such a work (Ac 19:13-20).

In view of our discussion thus far, do demons possess people today making it both desirable and necessary to remove them?

### **1<sup>st</sup> - It is futile to try and cast out demons without God's authority (Ac 19).**

[Since the crucifixion of Jesus, the only individuals authorized and capable of performing miracles have been the apostles and those to whom they directly imparted some spiritual gift by the laying of hands on that person (Ac 8:14-19; 19:5-6).]

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - His purpose for granting such power was to prove the gospel true (He 2:1-4).**

[Spiritual gifts ceased when the will of Christ had been completely revealed (1Co 13:8-10).]

Therefore, we conclude that God has given no one authority to cast out demons since the days of the apostles. Demon possession lasted for a short time (during the days of Christ and the apostles) and was for a specific purpose (to prove that the gospel of Christ was from God).

Today, people need to be concerned about the "the fiery darts of the wicked one" (Ep 6:16). He tempts us to sin through our evil desires, and sin carries far worse consequences than a demon-possession (1Jn 2:15-17; Ro 6:23). "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith..." (1Pe 5:8-9).

To be a Christian, you must arm yourself for a spiritual battle. We have an advantage today that people who were demon-possessed did not have, i.e., we can protect ourselves from the Devil (and I don't mean through exorcism). Paul said, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ep 6:10-17). "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (i.e., physical things like guns and crosses, bj), but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Co10:6).

Today, the human struggle is against sin, not the fear of a demon control. Several years ago, a well-known preacher blamed his sexual immorality on an evil spirit. He was not demon-possessed, but overcome by the temptation to sin. Human beings practice wickedness in every form; and when they do, they are not "demon-possessed" but sinners by personal choice. Sin is transgression of God's law and the product of rebellion against Him (1Jn 3:4; Ro 1:26-32; Ga 5:19-21). Myriads are occupied by sin today, but none are possessed of demons as seen in the New Testament.

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