
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What does the Bible say about demon possession?**

- Demons are lesser beings than the Devil himself. (Mt 25:41)
- Demons are, like the Devil himself, fallen angels who are capable of conversing, asking questions, and giving accurate information. (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)
- They could and often did confess Jesus as the Son of God. (Mk 1:23-24)
- They believe in God and tremble at the thought of Him. (Ja 2:19)

Demon possession was not a sin. People who were demon possessed were innocent victims. They were never told to repent. Rather, the NT speaks of demon possession as if it were a disease from which a person is healed. (Mt 4:24)

DEMON POSSESSION DESTROYED **"FREE WILL"**

Let us notice some more facts about demon possession.

First, **demon possession destroyed man's ability to freely choose for himself what he would do.** God created man with a "free will." This means that man was not predestined to do either good or evil, but he has the free choice to choose either to do good or evil. However, when a demon possessed someone's body, that person became helpless to choose for himself how he would behave. The demon, because he was a supernatural being, was able to overrule whatever the human wanted to do.

Mark 5:1-5

- 1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.
- 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,

4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

This poor man was not living in tombs, crying out, and cutting himself with stones because that's the way he freely chose to live his life. He was living that way because there were thousands of demons within him forcing him to do things he would not otherwise have done. He was an innocent victim. For this reason, when Jesus cast the demons out of the man, he did not rebuke the man for having done wrong, because the man didn't do wrong. Everything done had been done by demons, not the man. Once the demons had been cast out, the man was in his right mind now to decide for himself how he would live and he then became responsible for his actions. From this day forward, if he did wrong, he could not blame it on demons, because they were not in control of him any longer.

DEMON POSSESSION CONFINED TO FIRST CENTURY

The second thing I want to point out is that **demon possession is primarily confined to the days of Jesus and His apostles**. In other words, there is no clear-cut record of anyone being demon possessed during all the days of the OT. Only in 1 Sam 16:33 is there anything remotely resembling demon possession, and even in this particular case, scholars are disagreed if this was actually demon possession at all.

In contrast to the absence of demons in the OT, the gospel accounts are loaded full with stories of how Jesus healed people from demon possession. After Jesus resurrected and ascended back into heaven, there are only four clear references to demon possession even occurring (Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:13-16).

In other words, demons were allowed to possess the bodies of men and women only during the life times of Jesus and His apostles. By the close of the NT scriptures, we do not read of anyone being possessed by demons.

Demon possession, then, was confined to the first century. There is no evidence whatsoever that demon possession ever occurred after the days of the apostles themselves. No one can prove or demonstrate that demon possession occurs today.

WHY DID GOD ALLOW DEMON POSSESSION?

This brings us to a very important question: Why did God allow demons to possess people?

The scriptures indicate that there was a purpose, not only for demon possession, but also for other afflictions and ailments during the first century. These things were allowed in order that Jesus might demonstrate that He had more power than Satan.

John 9:1-3

- 1 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.
- 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
- 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Jesus demonstrated by healing this man, who was born blind, that he was more powerful than any disease. He proved the same thing when He cast out demons.

Mark 1:27

- 27 Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

Mark 3:14-15

- 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,
- 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:

Luke 10:17

- 17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

All of these passage illustrate the same point. Demons were allowed to possess people during the days of Jesus and His apostles in order that men might clearly see that Jesus has more

power and authority than the Devil does. Once this point was sufficiently demonstrated, there was no longer a need to prove the point again.

John 20:30-31

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.