THE WORK OF DEMONS

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THE WORK OF DEMONS

1. They promote idolatry (Acts 16:16; I Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20).

2. Since Satan is not omnipresent they are necessary to him to extend his power (Eph. 6:11, 12).

3. They can cause mental disorders (Lk. 9:39; Mk. 5:15).

4. They can inflict physical infirmities (Mt. 9:32, 33). This can sometimes be accomplished in saints, with God's permission and for His purposes. This was the case with Job whom God allowed to be stricken with boils by Satan (Job 2 :6, 7). Jesus said that the woman who had been "bowed together" for eighteen years had a "spirit of infirmity" for which Satan was responsible (Lk. 13:11-16--It is not stated whether the woman was a believer). Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was apparently a physical malady which he interpreted as due to an "angel of Satan in order that he (or "it") might buffet me" (II Cor. 12:7). Perhaps he meant merely that the affliction itself was a messenger (rather than an angel), but in any case Satan himself or one of his angels (demons) was responsible. Yet in spite of this Satanic agency Paul knew that the affliction was by Divine permission and ultimately for his own good just as with Job.

5. They are so met i me s responsible for the dissemination of false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1; I Ki. 22:22; Rev. 16:13; I In. 4:1-3).

6. They may be used of God to carry out His purposes (I Ki. 22:22; II Cor. 12:7; I Sam. 16:14).

7. They sometimes seduce humans into immoral activities (I Tim. 4 :1-3).

8. They have power to work "miracles" ("signs") to deceive men (Rev. 16:14; 13:12-15).

9. They sometimes attempt to instigate jealousy, faction, and pride among believers (Jas. 3:13-16).

10. They may impart superhuman strength (Mk. 5 :4).

11. They sometimes act as "fortune tellers" and prophets. The damsel who was possessed by a "spirit of Python" furnishes a New Testament example

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF DEMONS

of this. Python was another name for Apollo whose major temple was at Delphi. The famous oracles by the priestess of Apollo at Delphi were probably the work of another such demon. 59 Many of the "familiar spirits" of the Old Testament may have been such demons.

12. They exercise their power and influence in human governments (Eph. 6:12; Dan. 10:13).

13. They may enter and control human beings (Mt. 12 :45).60

B. Demon Possession

1. The Definition of Demon Possession

*a) Demon possession is a condition in which one or more demons inhabit the body of a human being with the purpose of controlling it.* (John MacArthur,Jesus' Power over the Supernatural)

*b) The indwelling and controlling or at least temporary domination of an individual's personality and body.* (Gibson, Lancaster Bible College)

*c) The inhabiting of a human by one or more demons who exercise various degrees of control with resultant physical, psychological, and spiritual manifestations* (*C. Fred Dickason*, Angels: Elect & Evil, Chapter 20, Moody Press, 1995 Edition, p.198).

d) Charles Ryrie defines demon possession as *A demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession.﻿* (Charles C. Ryrie, Study-Graph: Bible Doctrine II)

2. The Biblical Terminology of Demon Possession

a) “Demon Possessed or Demoniacs” (NASB)

(1) This word comes from the Greek word *daimonízomai*, which means to be inhabited, possessed, and controlled by a demon.

(2) It is found 13 times in the N.T. (Mat 4:24; 8:16, 28, 33; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22; Mar 1:32; 5:15, 16, 18; Luk 8:36; Joh 10:21)

(3) It is always in the passive voice and is usually a present participle. So it would be translated, “being possessed and controlled by a demon.”

(4) Mar 5:18 and Luk 8:36 are aorist passive participles referring that the demon no longer inhabits and possesses the individual.

(5) Every instance of this word refers to being inhabited by a demon.

b) “Has a Demon or Unclean Spirit”

(1) The phrase “has a demon” (*daimónion échei*) implies that there is a demon dwelling within an individual (Mat 11:18; Luk 4:33; 7:33; Joh 7:20; 8:48, 49, 52; 10:20).

(2) In Mar 3:30, the phrase is used with an “unclean spirit” but carries the same idea of possession or habitation.

c) “Troubled With Unclean Spirits”

(1) Two Scriptures are given with the expression of being “troubled” (*enochléō*) or “afflicted (*ochléō*) with unclean spirits.

(2) The word *ochléō* means to disturb or torment and very well could explain what happens to a person when possessed (cp. Mar 5:5).

(3) In Luk 6:18 and Act 5:16, individuals were being healed (*therapeúō - heal or cure; Eng. therapeutic*) from demonic troubling, quite possibly by casting out the demons that inhabited them. The same word (*therapeúō - heal or cure; Eng. therapeutic*) is used when Jesus cast out demons of those possessed by demons. (Mt 12:22; 17:18; Luk 7:21; 8:2)

3. The Characteristics of Demon Possession

a) In the Middle Ages, a period of superstition and ignorance, a list of symptoms were established to confirm demonic possession.

*(1) The ability to curse/blaspheme in languages unknown to the person.*

*(2) The ability to find secret things, read the mind, and divine future happenings.*

*(3) The ability to make physical efforts abnormal for that person.*

*(4) The act of spitting or vomiting every object the demons would have made the person swallow.*

*(5) Fear and/or hatred of holy objects.*

*(6) The inability to say the word "Christ*.” (Wikipedia, Demonic Possession)

(7) Other characteristics noted by people at that time:

(a) …*that oppressed persons had an ugly and terrible aspect, wrathful eyes, bluish lips, foam coming off their mouth; their body was almost permanently shaking, when they spoke their tongue came abnormally out, their speech consisted mainly in curses and blasphemies, and they were able to imitate animal sounds as well as to speak with human-like voices with a strange sound and a different pitch of theirs. However, these symptoms as described are not always in accordance with scripture* (ibid).

b) Listed below are the various expressions of demon possession in Scripture. We should not jump to the conclusion that isolated symptoms equate to demon possession. Characteristics of Demon Possession in Scripture are:

(1) Convulsions (Mar 1:26; 5:4; 9:20-26; Luk 4:35; 9:42)

(2) Falling (Mat 17:15)

(3) Stretched and disjointed body movements (Mar 9:18)

(4) Deformity (Luk 13:11)

(5) Foaming at the mouth (Mar 9:18, 20; Luk 9:39)

(6) Shrieking and screaming (Mar 1:26; 5:5; 9:26; Act 8:7)

(7) Demons speaking (Mar 1:34; 3:11; 8:31; Luk 4:41; 8:28; Act 16:17; 19:15)

(8) Deaf (Mar 9:25-26; Luk 11:14)

(9) Mute (Mar 9:25, 32-33; Luk 11:14)

(10) Blindness (Mat 12:22)

(11) Super-human strength (Mar 5:4; Luk 8:29; Act 19:16)

(12) Self-destruction (Mar 5:4, 5; Luk 9:39)

(13) Violence (Mat 8:28; Mar 5:4; Act 19:16)

(14) Isolation (Luk 8:29)

(15) Lunacy (Mat 17:15; Mar 5:15; Luk 8:35; Joh 10:20)

(16) Nakedness (Mar 5:15; Luk 8:27; Act 19:16)

(17) Divination (Act 16:16)

(18) Leave and return (Mat 12:45)

(19) Reluctance to leave (Mat 17:16)

(20) Multiple demons (Mat 12:45; Mar 5:15; Luke 8:30)

4. The Extent of Demon Possession

a) Can a Christian be demon-possessed?

(1) Perhaps one of the most hotly debated topics centers around the question, “Can a Christian be demon-possessed?”

(2) Merrill F. Unger unequivocally wrote in 1952 in his classic book, “Biblical Demonology,”

*The very nature of the believer’s salvation, as embracing the regenerating, sealing, indwelling, and filling ministry of the Holy Spirit, placing him “in Christ,” eternally and unforfeitably, is sufficient explanation why he is not liable to demon inhabitation.* (pg. 100).

(3) Yet in 1977, three years before his death, Dr. Unger wrote,

*Who dares assert that a demon spirit will not invade the life of a believer in which the Holy Spirit has been grieved by serious and persistent sin and quenched by flagrant disobedience? . . . A demon . . . enters as a squatter and an intruder, and is subject to momentary eviction. . . . Only as the believer fails to walk by faith does he fall into sin, which if it is not confessed and curbed, may ultimately result in the forfeiture of the Spirit’s power to shield him from demonic invasion.* (Merrill Unger, What Demons Can Do to Saints [Chicago: Moody, 1977], pp. 51–52).

(4) There was obviously a change in Dr. Unger’s position. Why? It apparently was the fallacious appeal to subjectivism (experience) and authority (influence) by Dr. V. Raymond Edman, chancellor of Wheaton College, which Unger alluded to,

*For many years the late chancellor of Wheaton College, Dr. V. Raymond Edman, taught that a Christian under certain circumstances could be invaded by demon powers. His first-hand experience with crude demonism, as a result of missionary labors in Ecuador in his earlier years, gave Dr. Edman an understanding of the subject of demonism not possessed by purely theoretical Bible interpreters.*

*In 1955, three years after the appearance of Biblical Demonology, Dr. Edman wrote me a letter in which he stated his convictions on the subject. At the time, I espoused the purely theoretical position which did not square with the authenticated facts of experience. (ibid. pg. 61).*

(5) In addition, Dr. Unger was influenced by various teachers, who taught that believers could be demon-possessed, like Hobart Freeman, Kurt Koch, C.S. Lovett, J.A. McMillen, T.J. McCrossan, J. L. Nevius, J. Penn-Lewis, A.B. Simpson, and Charles Ussher.

(6) There are prolific writers today who espouse the demons possessing believers such as, C. Fred Dickason, Chairman of Theology at Moody Bible Institute, who in his book, Angels Elect and Evil, writes,

*A genuine Christian may become possessed at least to some degree, even to the point where they speak with strange voices or in foreign languages.* (pg. 191).

THREE CASES WHERE APOSTLES CAST OUT DEMONS ACTS 8:6-8; 16:16-18; 19:11,12

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