

# **“IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many are concerned today about “demon possession.”. We read a lot about such in the New Testament where Jesus and some He authorized to do so, did indeed cast out devils (KJV) or demons. Since the death of Jesus and His apostles and those upon whom the apostles laid their hands to bestow special powers, there are claims by some to have the power to cast out demons—even today. Christ did indeed cast out demons while on earth, and authorized the apostles to do the same (Matt. 10:1-8). He also gave the seventy disciples power to do so on the limited commission (Luke 10:1, 17), and perhaps one other instance of some casting them out (Mark 9:38-39). Along with the apostolic power to cast out demons, was the power to raise the dead (Matt. 10:1-8). In giving the great commission after His resurrection, Jesus was with the twelve in confirming the word with such signs as casting out devils (Mark 16:17, 20).

The word “demon” is from the Greek word *diamon*, or some form of it, and is often translated “devil” in the KJV, but properly “demon” in most translations. “Devil” (Gr. *Diabolos*, meaning “accuser or slanderer, properly refers to the one arch-enemy of God, Satan.

Casting out demons was one of the powers the Lord allowed certain ones to exercise “in His name”, and none others could do so. Since the first century, there have been many pretenders, claiming to have this power, but they have no real power to do so because they have not been given it by Christ personally, or by the apostles through the laying on of their hands to bestow such powers (Acts 8:14-21), and they are not survivors who actually had the power given unto them. Jesus said that even in the judgment day, there will be those who claim to have cast out “devils” in Jesus’ name, but the Lord will reject their claims.

Now let’s make a study of demons and their possession, as revealed in the New Testament.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **I. 1<sup>st</sup>, let’s consider the NATURE OF DEMONS.**

A. We first observe that demons are “spirit” beings.

1. They are called “devils” in the KJV, or “demons” (from the Greek word *diamons*) in most translations.
2. They are referred to as “unclean” spirits, for there is nothing clean about them.  
Mark 5:8
3. They are described as “disembodied” spirits. Luke 24:39
4. They searched for bodies in which to dwell, and even desired to inhabit swine.  
Mark 5:1-14

B. We next observe that they were “evil” in character.

1. They tried to avoid the presence of Jesus. Mark 1:24; Luke 8:28
  - a. Matthew refers to 2 demons in this instance. Matt. 8:29
  - b. Mark and Luke write concerning only one.
2. Some dwelt among the tombs (associating with the environment of death). Mark 5:13
3. They did not dwell in houses. Luke 8:27
4. They were fierce in nature. Mark 8:28
5. They were identified as being “evil”. Luke 7:21; 8:2; Acts 18:12-13
6. They were called “unclean” many times in the New Testament.
7. In spite of these qualities, they often appeared to be rational and knowledgeable.
  - a. They recognized the identity and deity of Jesus. Mark 5:6-12
  - b. They realized their own condition.
  - c. They believed in God. James 2:19
  - d. They recognized that their time on earth was limited. Matt. 8:29

f. They were restless. Luke 11:24-26

## **II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, let's consider the ORIGIN OF DEMONS.**

- A. Some believe they were never real, but the figment of man's imagination, but if this be true, the New Testament record would be hard to accept and understand.
- B. There are 3 major views as to their origin, though the New Testament does not plainly tell us about their origin.
1. One theory is that they were the spirits of angels who married human women, and when they died, they returned as demons or evil spirits.
    - a. This seems far fetched, as angels obviously had no power to reproduce among themselves, and certainly not with human beings. Matt. 22:30
    - b. The offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men were human beings, not half angels.
  2. Another view as to origin of demons, is that they were "angels" that had sinned in some way. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6
    - a. If this be true, they had to remain in Tartarus until the judgment day.
    - b. Also, if this is true, they would have been released for a short period to come to earth as demons.
  3. Another view is that they were the spirits of wicked men who were also in Hades, but were allowed to leave for a short period of time.
    - a. This view appears to be more believable, as the demons relate to Hades.
      - 1) Satan is the "king" of the Abyss. Rev. 9:11
      - 2) Demons did not want to **go** or **return** to the "deep" (Luke 8:31, KJV) or to "the abyss" (ASV), with "abyss" meaning "deep" or "bottom", signifying the "bottomless pit."
      - 3) VINE says this refers to the "lower regions as the abode of demons".
    - b. Abraham is over Paradise, and Satan may well be over the place of torment across the "great gulf" (Luke 16).
  4. Whether any of these theories be correct or not, the fact that demons existed is not negated by our lack of knowledge on this point. Cf Deut. 29:29

## **III. 3<sup>rd</sup>, let's consider the PURPOSE OF DEMONS.**

- A. The appearance of demons appears to be a New Testament phenomenon that occurred around the time of the mission of Jesus and the age of miracles.
1. They came at a time Jesus and His apostles were on earth in the "fulness of time", when God's plan of redemption was about to be in force.
  2. Jesus came to save, which involved His destruction of death, which involved power over Satan's demons. Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8
  3. Jesus' power over demons was magnified, and gave glory, power and fame **to** Jesus. Luke 4:35-37
  4. Demons appeared at a time of the establishment of God's kingdom. Matt. 12:22-29; cf Dan. 2:44

5. Demons being “cast out” showed that Jesus was God’s Son and the Savior of the world. John 5:36; Mark 16:16-17
6. It appears that Satan’s servants (demons) may have been involved in the perversion of truth in the early days of the church, so as to help bring about an apostasy of the church. 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Tim. 4:1

B. One instance in the Old Testament which might appear to have involved demons, is the case of king Saul, in 2 Sam. 16:14-23, but it appears to be a case of God sending something upon Saul rather than that of demon possession.

#### **IV. 4<sup>th</sup>, let’s consider the CESSATION OF DEMONS.**

A. It appears that demon possession coincides with the first century miraculous period.

1. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8
  - a. To do this, he had to enter the “strong man’s house” to get to the devil.
  - b. The devil’s house would be the abyss, or bottomless pit, over which Satan is king, for the demons to be cast out and to show His superiority over Satan. Mark 3:27
2. When demons were being cast out, Jesus declared that this showed the falling of Satan (as lightning falls from heaven). Luke 10:17-20
  - a. The seventy were amazed that demons were being cast out in Jesus’ “name.”
  - b. Jesus casually said, “I beheld” (KJV) “I saw” (NKJ) “I was watching” (NASB), as if they were not telling Him something He didn’t know, but He was watching it all take place.
3. Demon possession was a miraculous occurrence, and it took something miraculous to put a stop to it.
4. We only read about demon possession during Jesus’ earthly ministry, and for awhile in the work of the apostles, and are mentioned in a few passages with reference to worshipping or fellowshiping such.
5. They are mentioned however, as yet being active around the time of the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Rev. 16:12-14

B. Demons appeared to **know** that their “time” on earth was limited.

1. One demon asked if Jesus would not command the demons to go into the “deep” (abyss). Luke 8:31
2. One asked if Jesus was going to “torment” them “before the time”, or perhaps send them back to their deep before their time on earth was up. Matt. 8:29

C. Inspiration tells us that ALL the spiritual gifts were to “cease.” 1 Cor. 13:8

1. True, not ALL are named in this passage, but the part is obviously used for the whole (as in Acts 20:7, when the disciples came together to “break bread”, but they surely drank the cup as well).
2. All of the “in part’ gifts were to confirm the word preached, and this included “casting out demons.” 1 Cor. 13:8-10; Mark 16:17, 20; Heb. 2:3-4

3. Casting out demons is associated with **other** spiritual gifts, and if one was to cease, all would cease, for they would all stand and fall together.

D. Finally one Old Testament passage helps us to pinpoint the time of demon possession in a Messianic passage by Zechariah. (Zech. 12:10-13:3)

1. Zechariah alludes to the day “grace” would be extended (12:10), which was brought into the world by Christ. John 1:14
2. Zechariah also refers to the time that some would “look upon him whom they pierced” (12:10), which was fulfilled when Jesus died. John 19:31-37
3. Zechariah also referred to that being the time a “fountain” would be opened for sin and cleansing (13:1), which was opened by Christ. John 4:10-14
4. Zechariah also foretold an allegiance to idols ending (13:2) along with the “end of the unclean” spirit and the success of “false prophets and prophecy”, which would be accomplished by the completed revelation of scripture to put down all error.
5. Thus, if **one** of these prophecies had to do with the coming of Christ, they all do, and demon possession is one of them.

#### **CONCLUSION**

I. In summation, we see that demons (who ever they were or from wherever they came) were limited in power and their time on earth.

A. They were surely here for Christ to demonstrate His power over them and Satan.

B. They expected to return to the abyss when their time was up.

II. We need not fear their presence today in the non-miraculous age, but be careful not to be influenced in any way with false teaching, which they obviously had something to do with such in the first century.

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