

Demon Possession

Demon possession is a real phenomenon recorded in the Bible, dealt with in the ministry of Jesus and later in the ministry of His disciples, and continues as a serious matter today that can be addressed/overcome by Christians who rely on the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit.

Definition and Origin

It is important to first understand *demons*. Demons are those spirit beings of the universe who were created by God but oppose God and His purposes. Though God created various types of spirit beings for His own purposes, including humans, some angelic spirits (angels) at the direction of Satan are cited as those spirits that have fallen away from God (**Revelation 12:3-17**) and appear to be at the heart of spiritual rebellion against God across history, a rebellion in which they are involved but cannot win. Demons, cited at least 100 times in the New Testament, are also called *unclean* or *evil* spirits (**Matthew 10:1; Luke 7:21**). For more on spirits created by God, we invite you to read our article on this topic at [The-Spirit-World.pdf \(sourceoftruelife.com\)](#)

Demons are strong and intelligent beings but are limited only to the power God grants them. At times, some enter into or *possess* human beings, causing various disfunctions in their lives. It should be noted that persons who embrace false religions or who dabble in the occult (seances, Ouija boards, horoscopes, witchcraft, tarot cards, or other fortune telling activities to discern the future) are especially susceptible to demon possession. These are persons who willfully turn away from the Spirit of God and open their lives to the dark and fallen side of the spirit world. To be possessed by an evil spirit is the opposite of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The term *demon possession* never appears in Scripture. Rather, persons are declared to have an *unclean* or *evil* spirit, resulting in various physical, mental, or emotional maladies, or all of them. Some demon possessions and their resulting maladies are directly related to extreme immorality (**Deuteronomy 18:9-14** and **Revelation 2:20-24**).

Biblical Examples

The Old Testament has a striking account of multiple occasions when an evil spirit tormented King Saul (**1 Samuel 16:14-15; 18:10-11; 19:9-10**). God's Spirit had withdrawn from a disobedient and rebellious Saul, so the Lord allowed an evil spirit to overtake him and torment him. This account seems to show a demon-*oppressed* Saul rather than demon-*possessed* Saul.

There are many New Testament examples of Jesus encountering demon possession and dealing with it. **Matthew 9:32-33** is the instance of a demon possessed man who could not talk. **Matthew 12:22-23** relates Jesus' encounter with a demon possessed man who could not see or talk. **Matthew 17:14-18** tells of a man whose son was demon possessed and the demon manifested itself in the form of seizures and other suffering. **Mark 5:1-20** is a long passage about the extreme demon possession of a man in the Gerasenes region near the Sea of Galilee. This man was possessed by many demons who identified themselves, when asked of the man, as Legion. The man was so afflicted and dangerous that he lived alone in tombs. He was so strong that no one could bind him, not even with chains. He cried out and cut himself often. **Luke 4:33-36** tells of a possessed man who taunted Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum.

In the book of Acts, the disciples of Jesus encountered demon possessed persons. One such instance in Philippi got Paul and Silas dragged before local authorities and jailed for casting out a demon from a fortune-telling woman (**Acts 16:16-18**). **It is important to state at this point that there are no recorded instances in the New Testament of believing Christians being possessed by a demon. Peter was heavily influenced (oppressed) by Satan (Matthew 16:23), but not necessarily possessed. Christians who are filled with the Spirit of God have no room for demons in their lives.**

Symptoms

As you read in these accounts, symptoms of demon possession vary and may include mental disorders or diseases as well as physical impairment not associated with an actual physiological problem. The symptoms may play out in extreme behavior and actions of self-destruction. Such persons may exhibit a change in personality, depression, aggression, supernatural strength, antisocial behavior, and possibly the ability to know the future.

There is also a spiritual dimension to demonic activity that may result in an unwillingness to forgive (**2 Corinthians 2:10-11**) or believing in and spreading false doctrine about the gospel message (**2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 John 4:1-3**).

It is important to note, however, that not all mental disorders, diseases or spiritual challenges are caused by demonic activities (see [2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5](#) and [1 Cor. 6:19](#)). The Spirit of God will not share the same residence with a demon.

Does Demon Possession Still Exist?

We believe it does. What the world experiences today is the same as what the world experienced in Bible times. The Spirit World still exists. Demons opposed to God still exist. And they take their toll on those who remain fallen in sin.

Unbelieving persons open themselves to demonic possession when they worship the devil or heathen idols, dabble in the occult or in demonic activity. Others become susceptible when they engage in habitual sin of immorality, drug/alcohol abuse, rebellion, bitterness, or altering of consciousness via practices like transcendental meditation.

Humans are spiritual beings created to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. When persons reject God's Spirit and the salvation God offers, they open the 'door' to the infilling of evil or demonic spirits. What the world perceives today as other physical or mental disorders in persons could very well be demonic possession that is dismissed by our 'sophisticated' culture.

Christians have nothing to fear when they walk in the Holy Spirit ([Galatians 5:16-17](#)) and clothe themselves in the whole armor of God ([Ephesians 6:10-18](#)). Christians are sealed in the power of the Holy Spirit ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#)) and will be through eternity.

Ministry to the Possessed

Demonic possession is serious business. It must be dealt with using the same type of spiritual authority that Jesus used in dealing with it. DO NOT attempt to minister to persons you suspect may be demon possessed unless you are *spiritually equipped* and *called* by God to do so. You will only place yourself in harm's way if you do.

There are believers who are equipped and called to minister in this area. If you or someone you know has symptoms, suffers from varying levels of torment, and can find no relief in the medical system, seek spiritual guidance and support from pastors or others who acknowledge the reality of demon possession and are called by God to minister with spiritual authority to such individuals.

[Closing Thoughts](#)

Demon possession was real in Biblical times and has been ever since. Many persons today who are believed to be mentally ill or suffering many of the symptoms described in the Biblical examples cited in this article, may very well be demon possessed; they are frequently misdiagnosed. Seek spiritual help when you experience or suspect demonic activity in your life or the life of someone you love. Take it **seriously**.

This is an introduction on the subject of **Demon Possession**. Here are other resources you may wish to explore:

[The-Spirit-World.pdf \(sourceoftruelife.com\)](#)

[What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about demon possession? \(compellingtruth.org\)](#)

[Demon Possession - The Gospel Coalition](#)

[Demon Possession Definition | Bible Dictionary \(biblestudy.org\)](#)

[The End of Demon Possession - Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ \(pblcoc.org\)](#)