

The New Testament and Demons

Who are demons?

- a) Some believe they are the spirits of evil men from Noah's day because they sought out dry places (Matthew 12:43).
- b) Some believe they were just imagined by those who were witnessing a sick or demented person suffering.
- c) Some believe they are similar to Satan and were used by him to afflict people in the first century. There is no mention of them in the OT and there is no mention of them after Acts 19.

1. Matthew 8:16; Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:41 – Healing of many. Demons mentioned.

2. Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39 – Two demon-possessed men healed.

3. Many things mentioned:

- a) Two men – Matthew 8:28 only.
- b) Didn't wear clothes and lived in tombs.
- c) Exceedingly fierce, had super-human strength, no one could control him.
- d) Constantly making noise and injuring himself.
- e) The demon(s) was an intelligent being and had a name.
- f) They recognized Jesus as the Son of God.
- g) They were aware of some "time" that had not yet come.
- h) Begged permission from Jesus to be sent into swine.
- i) Afraid of the "abyss" (Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1-2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3). Luke 8:31 only.
- j) They caused a violent reaction in the pigs.

4. Matthew 9:32-34; Luke 11:14-26 – Demon caused the subject to be "mute."

5. Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:15; Luke 9:1 – Jesus gave power to the 12 to cast out "unclean spirits."

6. Matthew 12:22-30, 43-45; Mark 3:20-28 – Several things learned:

- a) Caused subject to be blind and mute.
- b) Could speak and see when healed.
- c) Demons were obviously a tool used by Satan (v. 25-30).
- d) When the spirit departs it seeks out "dry places" (v. 43).
- e) Could apparently re-inhabit the subject with other demons (v. 44-45).

7. Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-42 – Several things learned:

- a) The boy was suffering the symptoms of epilepsy.
- b) It would "seize him," "tear him open," cause him to grind his teeth and be dehydrated (Mk. 9:18).
- c) The disciples could not cure him (Matt. 17:16).
- d) He could only be cast out by prayer and fasting.

8. Mark 1:23-27; Luke 4:33-36 – Several things learned:

- a) Knew Jesus was from Nazareth.
- b) Afraid Jesus would destroy them.
- c) Recognized Jesus as God's "Holy One" (*hagios* – set apart, consecrated).

9. Mark 3:11-12 – Jesus in the process of healing many. Demons recognize Him as the Son of God and were subject to His commands.

10. Mark 7:24-30 – Daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman healed.

11. Luke 6:17-19 – Jesus healing multitudes.
12. Luke 8:1-3 – Specifically mentions women who had been demon possessed and Mary Magdalene had been possessed by seven demons.
13. Luke 10:17-20 – The 70 return to Jesus and report of their work which included casting out demons.
14. Acts 5:16 – Apostles cast out demons.
15. Acts 8:7 – Philip casting out demons.

16. Acts 16:16-19 – Paul casts a spirit out of a girl who was being used by people to make money. *Divination* is from *python* meaning, “Python, the Greek name given to the mythological serpent who lived at Pytho beneath Mount Parnassus and guarded the Delphic Oracle. It became the surname of Apollo, the god of divination in Greek mythology and hence applied to all oracular and divinatory spirits.”

17. Acts 19:11-20 is the last recorded instance of demon possession in the New Testament.

Do demons possess people today?

Seeing that they are not mentioned after Acts 16 by any NT writer it appears that they were present for a short time during the first century and for a certain purpose for Christ and the Apostles.

Zechariah 13:1-2 mentions that there would come a day when the “prophets and unclean spirits” would depart from the land. This is the context of discussing the fountain of David for sin and uncleanness. This is clearly a reference to Christ and His redemptive work in the first century. Apparently, part of that work would involve unclean spirits (demons). Jesus performed miracles as proof of His divine nature and in an effort to produce faith in those that witnessed it. When the time of these miraculous abilities came to an end (1 Cor. 13:8-13), so did the problem of demon possession.