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**Written by:** Imonitie Chris Imoisili [imoisilic@hotmail.com]

## **DEMON POSSESSION**

*Apostle Paul has alerted us that we (believers) are not fighting against flesh and blood (i.e., fellow human beings) but “principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this world” and “ spiritual wickedness in high places” [Eph. 6: 12]. These are hierarchies of demonic forces who work closely with Satan every moment of our existence on earth to deny us the salvation that Christ has won for us on the Cross of Calvary. Those of you who have read Dr. Rebecca Brown’s books, **He came to set the Captives free and Prepare for War**, will agree that demon possession is closer to us than we think. As we approach the end-times, Satan and his demonic forces are working overtime to send more souls to hell and highly placed believers are unknowingly playing the role of cheerleaders! In today’s discussion, let’s try to scratch the surface of the subject by providing from the Bible some background information on demons: their origin, nature and ability. Then, using biblical examples of people who were demon-possessed, we shall look around our world today to see why we need to be on spiritual alert. May the blood of Jesus cover us as we study this dangerous subject, Amen.*

### **1. Demons and their origin**

A long time ago, there was war in heaven [**Rev. 12: 7-9**]. The Devil, called Satan (also Lucifer [**Is. 14:12**] or the “anointed cherub” [**Ezek. 28: 14**]) rebelled against God with the support of some angels. God’s forces, led by Archangel Michael, defeated Satan and his rebellious forces and flushed them out of heaven down to earth [**Lk 10:18**]. You recall also how Satan *deceived* Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, leading to the fall of man [**Gen. 3:6-24**]. Over time, *fallen angels married the daughters of fallen man* and they produced *wicked children* that were half-human and half-supernatural [**Gen. 6: 1-5**]. That is how demonic spirits came to possess and control human beings.

Demons are called “evil spirits” [**1 Sam. 16:14-20; Matt. 12:45**] or “unclean spirits” [**Matt. 10: 1**]. *They are supernatural beings who cause harm to people* [**Mk 5: 1-5**] or *cause people to do bad things* [**1 Tim. 4:1**]. *Being followers of Satan, they are at enmity with God.*

### **2. The Nature and Ability of Demons**

- They are evil [**Lk 10: 17-18**], numerous [**Mk 5: 8-9**], unclean [**Matt. 10: 1**] and under Satan [**Matt. 12: 24-30**].
- They are powerful [**Lk 4:5; Lk 8:29; Jude 9**] but some are more powerful than others [**Mk 9: 17-18; Mk 5: 8-13**].
- They receive sacrifice [**1 Cor. 10:20; Deut. 32:17**] and that may explain why they work closely with herbalists, magicians and idol-worshippers [**Ex. 7:10-12**].

- Surprisingly, they have access to heavenly places [**Job 1:6-7; 1 Kgs 22: 20-22; Zech. 3:1-2**]. They believe in God and tremble before Him [**James 2:19**].
- They recognize the deity of Jesus Christ [**Mk 1:23-24**].
- They are destined for ultimate destruction [**Matt. 25:41**] and they dread the approach of their final judgment [**Matt. 9:29-33**].
- They instigate deceit [**1 Tim. 4:1**], possess human beings [**1 Sam. 16:14-15; Matt. 8: 28-29**], and overcome them [**Acts 19: 13-16**].

### 3. **Demon-Possessed**

In **Matt. 12: 43-45**, Jesus tells the story of an unclean spirit that had been cast out of a man. While trying to return, he found his former house (i.e., the man's body) put in order. He went and came with seven evil spirits more wicked than him and repossessed his house. That man's state became worse than before. That is a demon-possessed person. The Bible has many **examples**:

- (a) the man in the synagogue in Capernaum [**Mk 1: 23-26**]
- (b) the blind and dumb man [**Matt. 12: 22-23**]
- (c) the two men of the Gergesenes [**Matt. 8: 28-34**]
- (d) the dumb man [**Matt. 9:32-33**]
- (e) the Canaanite woman's daughter [**Matt. 15:22-28**]
- (f) the epileptic child [**Matt. 17: 14-21**]
- (g) Mary Magdalene who had seven demons [**Mk 16:9**]

Demon possession was **manifested** in the following ways:

- (a) insanity [**Matt. 17: 14-18; Mk 5: 1-5**]
- (b) terrible diseases [**Mk 1: 34**]
- (c) sexual perversion, e.g., homosexuality [**Gen. 19:4-8; Rom. 1: 26-27; Rev. 17:1-6**]
- (d) fear [**1 Jn 4:18; 2Tim. 1:7**]
- (e) apostasy [**Matt. 12: 43-45; 1 Kgs 11:4**]
- (f) disobedient spirit [**1 Jn 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:1-9**]
- (g) deception, disguise [**1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11: 14-15**]
- (h) stubbornness [**Ex. 11:10**]
- (i) poverty [**Prov. 24:33-34**], squandering of wealth and opportunities [**Lk 15:11-17**] and bareness may also be manifestations of demonic control.

### 4. **Help! : Demons are on the loose**

As we approach the end-times, it appears that, in spite of Christ's warning that false Christs and false prophets shall arise and show great signs and wonders that could even deceive the elect [**Matt. 24:24**], believers appear to be unknowingly (?) opening demonic doorways to let in demonic forces.

Our present globalized world system appears to be maintained and controlled by demonic forces. Yet, many Christians are behaving ignorant or in denial. Let's take some examples:

(a) **State-sponsored demonic practices and values**

- Excessive freedom leading to anarchy, sanctioning of abortion (under the elegant name of 'pro-choice'), and legalization of same-sex marriages (under the guise of equal rights for every sexual orientation)
- False doctrines, e.g., the teaching of the theory of Evolution [that man evolved from animals!] while banning the teaching of Creation
- Unprecedented levels of corruption and lowering of moral standards in high places
- Ethnic cleansing as in Hitler's Germany and recent events in Rwanda (Africa), Kosovo (Europe) and Fiji (Asia).
- Religious intolerance through prohibition of worship in public places or adoption of a state religion.

(b) **Sophisticated Idolatry**

- Satan worship and open conventions of witches and wizards
- Magic and occult practices
- Horoscope, palm and card reading
- Pornography and violence in movies/internet
- Lust, greed, and materialism
- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Playing lotteries and luck-based games
- Getting hooked on certain unclean habits, e.g., masturbation, fornication, prostitution, stealing, incest, domestic violence, laziness, etc.

(c) **False Religion**

- New Age religions and Eastern (meditation-based) practices, e.g., Yoga
- Evangelism as a business
- Undue emphasis on rituals
- Trivializing worship
- Teaching people to speak in tongues instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest the gift as He deems appropriate [Acts 2:2-4; Acts 10:44-46]
- Making spiritual appointments unspiritually
- Equating intellectual ability/training/knowledge with wisdom

## 5. How to overcome/prevent demon possession

If the hedge is broken, so says the Preacher, the serpent will bite [Eccl. 10:8]. Therefore, if our bodies remain the temples of God, Satan and his demonic forces cannot possess us. How can we do this? Here are my suggestions:

- (a) Christ has power over demons [Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:16] and He has granted the power to *believers* [Mk 16: 17]. Therefore, we should renew our minds [Rom. 12:2] and put on the whole armour of God [Eph.6: 10-17] because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [2 Cor. 10: 3-5].
- (b) Demonic forces, like viruses, thrive in an enabling environment, especially places of worship [Mk 1: 21-25]. They can reside in church leaders (who are not in spirit), your family members, your most trusted friends and confidants, colleagues, etc. Therefore, *pray for the spirit of discernment so that you be not deceived* [Acts 13: 6-12; Acts 16: 16-18]. By their fruits, we shall know them [Matt. 7:20-23].
- (c) Although Christ has given believers the power to cast out demons, *we may not always succeed* as the Apostles painfully found out [Mk 9: 17-18, 28-29]. Therefore, let the Holy Spirit lead you on what to do when you encounter demons.
- (d) Medical doctors do get infected if they get careless when they are treating infections. Similarly, demons that are cast out are looking for another home pending their judgment day [Matt. 8:31-32]. Therefore, when you find yourself where demons are being cast out and you are not in spirit, run for your life because they could climb on you!
- (e) Watch and pray that you don't fall into temptation because Satan and his demonic forces pose as angels of light [2 Cor. 11:14-15].

Satan has succeeded in fooling most of us to believe that all is well. Be warned so that you don't perish out of ignorance [Hos. 4:6]. Those who know their God remain ever strong and do exploits [Dan. 11:32]. Glory!