

Lesson Seven

Demon Possession

Angels and Demons, pp. 85-96

Goals

1. To understand that demon possession is a real phenomenon that can still happen today.
2. To appreciate more fully the freedom from Satan we have through Christ.

Introduction

- Did you ever fight in a war? Do you know someone who did?

Matthew 4:24 People brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

- Is demon possession possible? Some claim that the New Testament cases of demon possession were actually physical or psychological illnesses. How do we know this isn't the case?

What are the signs of demon possession?

Mark 5:2-4 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

Luke 9:39 "A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him."

Luke 4:33,34 *In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

- What symptoms of demon possession are found in these cases?

- Which of the following signs are characteristic of demon possession?
 - levitation
 - possessed gravity (impossible to move)
 - sudden change in personality, voice, or appearance
 - ability to speak in other languages
 - superhuman strength
 - supernatural knowledge
 - extremely foul language and lifestyle
 - violent behavior
 - aversion to Christian symbols
 - overwhelming stench
 - freezing or extremely hot temperatures
 - objects flying around the room
 - wallpaper peeling off the wall
 - slamming of doors
 - scratching noises
 - excessive hair growth on face and ears

- True or false: It is possible for someone to be possessed by more than one demon.

- Evaluate: The devil can possess places as well as people.

Mark 5:12,13 *The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.*

- Since demons are spirits, they do not have a body or occupy space. Yet what do they still desire to do?
- What irony is there in the fact that demons often destroy the places and people they possess?
- Evaluate: It is possible for a Christian to be possessed by an evil spirit.

Does demon possession still happen today?

- Multiple choice: Demon possession
 - (a) is a phenomenon that was confined to Jesus' day but no longer happens today.
 - (b) remains a common occurrence in some parts of the world.
 - (c) is a rare but real phenomenon that still happens today.
- True or false: The movie *The Exorcist* was based on the life of a 14-year-old boy named Douglas Deen. He became possessed after excessive use of the Ouija board.

Summary

As the prince of this world, the devil influences us all by tempting us and accusing us of sin. However, the devil or one of his demons may actually possess a person or place. While demon possession is an awful situation, as Christians we can find comfort and strength in Christ, who delivered us from the devil through his death.

During the week

1. Read Job 1, 2, and 42. Note how the Lord even used the devil's destructive ways to bless Job.
2. To review this lesson, read chapter 7 of *Angels and Demons*.