

Can the enemy afflict or oppress or possess Christians? Are demons real today?

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Aw, c'mon. Are demons really real? I don't think so.

Some people don't think demons are real at all. But that just flies in the face of the specific command of our Lord in the Great Commission in Mark 16:15-18 that we are to go into all the world and cast demons out of people. It also flies in the face of the normal daily experience of Christians all over the world that are wrestling with spiritual powers and principalities and wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). The New Testament sure spends a lot of time training us up and explaining that our battle is NOT against flesh and blood for it to all be worthless because demons don't really exist. I can assure you that they do and that they're real and that the vast majority of people (even Christians) have stuff messing with them (or rooted in deeply) that needs to be demolished with prejudice.

If I haven't convinced you yet, then put your money where your mouth is and go play with a Ouija board. If demons aren't real then who is it that's talking to all the witches and warlocks loose in our public schools? Who is telling the psychics on TV details about dead people? Yeah, some of that stuff is fake, but some of it is real, too. There IS a war between good and evil and I can't hardly see how you can believe in Jesus and angels and not think demons and satan are real. And if they're real, they're doing stuff to slow us down, they're not just hanging around Ouija boards in toy stores. Go to any third world country and ask them if they've seen demons and KNOW that they are real! For years I didn't believe they were real and, despite being a Christian, when the Lord gave me the gift of discernment of spirits, I realized how much they had been oppressing me for years – including lust and gluttony and sloth and love of money and fear and others. I wasn't free until I learned how to get them off and keep them off.

Ok, so let's make a list of stuff and see if you think it comes from your own flawed nature or from the enemy. I don't believe demons can possess Christians, but they can sure oppress them. They surely do hang around and mess with us and try to gain an entry. Else why would the Lord urge us to keep watch over our houses so that the enemy can't return stronger? Some Christians open all the doors, throw their arms around them and give them the best seat in the house!

Mark 12:43-45 - When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Get that? You can get free from them and then they can come back if you're not watching. Even if the house is swept clean and in order. Have you ever met a non-Christian whose "house" was swept clean and in order? That requires the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is warning Christians here that they can come back – and they will probably come back worse! So it's possible that a person could find Christ, get saved, get cleaned out, get lazy and they would come back worse? Yes. There's no other way to explain the behavior of some Christians! Forget your theoretical models and look around! We're riddled with badness!

Not sure yet? Ok, so Fear is a spirit and it's not from God.

Romans 8:15 - For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

2 Timothy 1:7 - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

So if you have one of these, the Word of God says it's a spirit and it's not from God. And since you only have ONE spirit yourself and it's not a spirit of fear, if you DO have a spirit of fear it's from an external source (that's not God.)

So if we have people in the church that have any of these, it's a spirit and it's not from God.

Anxiety or panic attacks, phobias of all kinds, nightmares, night terrors, visions of demons or monsters, depression, suicidal thoughts, manic depression and others.

Clearly the result of all of these is that they can kill, steal and destroy your life and quality of life (John 10:10) – and in a

Christian, destroy their witness and effectiveness for the Gospel. Since that is the same goal as the demons, shouldn't it be obvious that fear is a spirit? Who benefits most if a Christian is living in fear? Gotta be the bad guys. Didn't come from God – He wants the exact opposite. He wants peace and rest and joy and power and a sound mind. So it had to come from somewhere, cause the Word of God says it's a SPIRIT – not a chemical imbalance or a bad habit or a random thought. Is the Bible the infallible, inerrant Word of God or isn't it? Is it reliable and true or isn't it?

- IF the Bible is true and we say we're Christians, THEN we should not seek to explain things away by other means.
- IF the Bible says fear is a spirit, THEN it must be so.
- IF Christians exhibit spirits of fear oppressing them, THEN demons really CAN mess with Christians.
- IF Christians exhibit spirits of fear oppressing them, THEN it's because we allowed them back in.
- IF we allowed them in, THEN it's probably because we got lazy and didn't guard the doors (or thought we were invulnerable or believed that demons weren't real anyway).
- IF we have authority to kick them out, THEN we need to get to doing it as fast as possible!
- IF we need to break the yokes of oppression, THEN we need to start in the churches.

In the early days of scientific exploration, the dominant method was philosophical. Guys with big brains would sit around a table arguing about how many teeth a horse had. All kinds of theories would be advanced about what must surely be the way a horse's teeth would look and work. Eventually some genius just got up from the table and went and found a horse and looked in its mouth! And observational science was born.

In the church, we've kind of been doing the same thing. We build our philosophical structures based on our interpretations of scriptures or the doctrines of our denominations that were handed down to us or our own preconceptions and fleshly opinions. Then we make affirmative statements with absolutely finality. But maybe we should just get up from the table and go look around. What is working and what's not? What is the REAL state of the church "union"? Are we winning this war or aren't we?

If we did, we would see that the people of God are shackled and yoked and spiritually oppressed by the forces of darkness. How else can you explain these?

I John 4:3

Rebellion
Witchcraft
Unbelief
Self-exaltation
Occult practices
Magic

Romans 8:11

Stupor
Sleepiness
Stupidity
Laziness
Lethargy
Apnea
Sluggishness
Confusion

Romans 8:15

Bondage
Gluttony
Obesity
Addiction
Anorexia
Bulimia
Phobias
Despair
Fatigue

Mark 9:17-29

Mental illness
Insanity
Seizures/Epilepsy
Multiple personalities
Hyperactivity
Self-mutilation

Just to list a few!!

So, you say these are just acts of nature or behaviors or habits or just generalized sin? Then you must believe that angels aren't real and that God can't heal people and nobody can hear the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. There is no other alternative. If one side can bless you, the other side can curse you. If one side can whisper to you, they both can. If you can be filled with the Holy Spirit, you can be just as filled with evil.

**YOU CANNOT BELIEVE THERE IS A WAR BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL
AND THEN DENY ONE SIDE HAS ANY INFLUENCE!!**

- IF there is a war between Good and Evil, THEN both sides have weapons.
- IF the war between Good and Evil is over, THEN you sure better hope and believe that GOOD won.
- IF Good won, THEN why the heck is it so dark out there!?!?
- IF Good won, THEN why can't we keep kids in church? Why are we addicted to the world?
- IF Good won, THEN what's keeping us from preaching the Gospel to all nations already?
- IF Good won, THEN why do we start a whole new denomination EVERY TWO DAYS?
- IF Good won, THEN why are Christians sick mentally and physically and emotionally?
- IF Good won, THEN why aren't the blessings of Deut. 28 in full effect? (In fact, we're seeing the opposite!)
- IF the outcome is certain, but the battle is in our hands, THEN we better start shooting at something!!

It just flies in the face of the blatantly obvious observations around us. We are getting creamed by the darkness! Inside and outside the churches, the badness is closing in. How did spiritual evil get such a strong foothold on this country

and on our own lives? Probably because we started preaching that demons weren't real and couldn't oppress Christians. That the war was over and we'd already won. Now who has benefitted most from that bit of theology? Has it resulted in Christians who are free and living victoriously? Has it resulted in transformations of towns and countries for God? No. It has resulted in weak, oblivious, sickly, addicted, angry, divorced, oppressed Christians who are dropping out of church in droves because there is nothing there to really help them!

Now, given the state of things around you, how can it possibly be true that the battle is over? Did Jesus win the victory? YES!!! The outcome is certain. But have we claimed it, embraced it fully and are walking in His power? NO!!!! If we were, the Christians would be FREE! And they're not. They're just not. For Pete's sake, we have people that are more addicted to football or NASCAR than to Jesus! We have witches in our youth groups and nobody even notices. We have satanists sitting on the boards of our churches. We have pedophiles as priests and youth pastors. We have people cursing the pastor and the church in false tongues and nobody knows.

What happened to the gift of discernment of spirits? (I Corin. 12:10) How come nobody asks for that one anymore?! If there is a war and somebody is shooting at you, wouldn't you want to see them so you can fight back? Particularly if you know your weapons are great and you could crush them like a bug and free lots of other people. There is no Goliath of hell that can stand against a fearless David full of Jesus and armed with wisdom and discernment of spirits.

People say we should just focus on love and not bring glory to satan by all this talk of demons. What?! Whose idea would that be?! This is a WAR! The Pentagon is going to have a strategy room where they get together but they NEVER talk about the enemy for fear of accidentally glorifying them and making it look like they're on the wrong team?! NO! They're going to learn where they are and how they act and how to best defeat them. They're going to assess their own strengths, amass forces in the places under attack, improve weapons systems that can counter the weapons of the enemy. They're going to know how they think, what they eat, how they smell, when they sleep, where they hide – everything! They are never going to spend ONE SECOND debating about whether by gathering intelligence on how to crush the enemy they might be accidentally worshipping them! That's just dopey. In fact, it's a lie from the pit designed to keep us from talking about demons at all. Who benefits most from us avoiding the whole subject? Not Jesus. He didn't avoid it. He wasn't scared of them. He trained up His disciples on how to handle them and then sent them out to crush them. In fact, He COMMANDED us to go crush them in the Great Commission. It's not the Pick and Choose Commission. It's not the If-It-Fits-With-My-Theology Commission. It's the GREAT Commission. Be like Jesus. Go and crush the badness! We're getting creamed out there because of so many people that insist the enemy isn't even real or that it's wrong of us to go after them!

I know, I've heard it, you're going to say that the Great Commission in Matthew doesn't say anything about casting out demons and that some scholars don't think Mark 16:9-20 was part of the original manuscripts. Well, tough beans! It made it into the King James and you assert that this is the Authorized, inspired, infallible Word of God so you're stuck with it. You can't say the Bible is infallible and then dismiss the parts you are uncomfortable with as not being pure. Either God wanted it in there or He didn't. If it should be taken out, then what else would you like to edit out? Maybe the whole book of Revelation where we CLEARLY see demons coming out of the Abyss and torturing anybody that has taken the mark of the beast (Rev. 9). Surely some of them prayed the salvation prayer at summer camp in 8th grade, but have now chickened out and taken the mark. Are they Christians or aren't they? Are they oppressed by demons or aren't they? Are demons real or aren't they? Is the Bible the Word of God or isn't it?

If I didn't convince you, you better stop reading now. It's just going to make your head hurt more.

OK!! Fine! You win. I get it. Demons are real. So what do we do about it?!

If you don't have Jesus in your heart, then you are defenseless against the badness. You better lay everything down and beg for Him to take over right now. And you better mean ALL, not SOME of your life. He's a King, pray with respect. He's not fire insurance, He's Lord. Jesus is the Savior and He died so that His blood could protect you from sin and from the enemy. Tell Jesus you're a sinner, say you're sorry and ask Him to free you of everything messing with you and take over ALL of your life right now. Go ahead, ask Him. He'll do it. He wants you. He's been calling you. How long are you going to put Him off? How long do you want to wait to be free? Believe He is big enough to break all the chains that bind you. In the Name of Jesus and by His redeeming Blood. Amen.

Whether you needed that or not, start praying for the gift of discernment of spirits – and don't stop. Maybe He'll give you a lot or maybe a little, but ALL Christians need as much as they can get. The gifts aren't on/off switches, they are dials. As soon as you get SOME Holy Spirit in you, all your dials move off of zero. How much they move depends on your desire and the Lord's willingness. But the Holy Spirit in you can recognize all the other spirits around. It's just a matter of you listening really well. He'll teach you how to use it and what to do with it if you'll listen. Some people

sense the spirits in a vague way and some people see snarling black things sitting on people and can smell them and feel them in the spirit. Some people see them with their eyes open in the “natural” and can't shut it off. That one can put you living under a bridge smoking crack to make it stop if God doesn't help. Just ask for whatever He wants to give you and don't hold back or be afraid. He knows what He's doing.

In the meantime, you have to now how to deal with the stuff in your own head. We all hear things, we just mostly think it's us, but then we look back later and think, “What was I thinking? That was a HORRIBLE idea!” Or sometimes we look back and realize that it was so beautiful and perfect and divinely inspired that it HAD to be God.

There are only three choices when you hear something in your head. It's either YOU, the white hats or the black hats. Now, you and the bad guys can sound a lot alike – cause neither of you are holy. And when they whisper in your ear they always put an “I” in front of stuff to make you think it's your idea. (“I'm gonna get even with that guy!” “I'm the best singer here.” “I could be like God!”) But what they are suggesting to you will always be anti-Christ in some way when projected out.

That is, we're to take captive every thought (2 Corin. 10:5), so when something pops into your head, just ask yourself, “Who is glorified most if I follow through with that?” If it's going to glorify you OR the enemy, then demolish it (crush with prejudice) in the name of Jesus and refuse it. “If you resist, he will flee.” (James 4:7) He who? The enemy? Yep. My own thoughts and wants and selfish desires? Yep. Works the same way (Rom. 8:13). In fact, if you resist the Holy Spirit, he will flee, too. If you harden your heart toward God, you won't be able to hear Him either (Job 9:4, Ps. 95:8, Prov. 28:14, Heb. 3:8, Heb. 4:7).

You need to have an armor-plated, indestructible, unbreakable, impenetrably hard heart – but just to the right stuff. It needs to be tender toward God and His still, small voice and rock hard to everything else – including your own wants and thoughts and pride and self. Only in this way can He direct ALL your paths. (1 Corin. 14:20) Toward malice be as innocents, but toward God be mature and experienced. And regardless of the black hats, there's stuff in YOU that qualifies as “malice.”

Why is it important that we be cleansed of all the bad stuff?

1 Corinthians 10:20-21

But I [say], that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

You can't play for both teams. You can't play footsies with the badness and walk with God in righteousness and purity. Pick a side and stick to it. Ask the Lord to help you take control of your own thoughts and turn your mind into the mind of Christ. Ask Him to let you see through His eyes, so that you see the temptations of the world the way He does. If you burst into tears for the salvation of those poor girls on the “Fantasy Ranch” billboard and repent for your own part in the pain they suffer, it will be real hard to get overheated and lustful.

There are a whole bunch of books and programs out there that can help you get all cleaned out. Sometimes they're called Deliverance ministries or Theophostics or some other name. The Blood of Jesus is sufficient, so just stand on your authority and do what the disciples did, demand that it go RIGHT NOW in the name of Jesus. And expect results. The mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ has power.

More on this in other chapters.

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