

# Demons

In this document we're going to take a close look at what the Bible has to say about demons.

## ***Only One-Third Of Angels Fell***

The Bible tells us that demons are *not* a separate class of creatures. Demons are actually fallen angels, which means they're angels that rebelled against God. We can find this in the book of Revelation:

**Revelation 12:3-4:** “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

There's a lot going on in this passage, and what makes it even more challenging is its use of symbolic language. Thankfully the Bible explains the symbols that it uses. Later on in this same chapter we're told that the dragon is actually Satan:

**Revelation 12:9:** “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Notice that the verse mentions “his angels”. That makes it

clear the beings we refer to as demons are actually fallen angels, who have sinned and allied with Satan. They are now the devil's angels, not God's angels (as we can see in verse 9).

Revelation 12:4 tells us that when Satan rebelled he took one third of all angels with him. The phrase “stars of heaven” is a symbolic reference to angels. When the Bible speaks of stars in a symbolic way it's referring to angels (either good ones or evil ones). Since one-third of the angels rebelled with Satan, that means that God has twice as many angels as Satan does (two-thirds versus one-third).

Theologians teach that angels have a “fixed will”. This means the fallen angels (also known as demons) are evil and will always be evil, and the holy angels are good and will always be good. When Satan launched his rebellion against God each angel chose to either side with God or the devil. Once that choice was made it was permanent.

Fallen angels *cannot* be saved. Salvation only applies to mankind, which means people can be saved but demons cannot. The reason for this is because in order for anyone to be saved from their sins an innocent party must suffer on behalf of a guilty party. People can be saved because Jesus Christ became *a man* and died in our place, suffering for our sins. Since He didn't become an angel and die in *their* place, forgiveness isn't possible for fallen angels. Jesus died for mankind, not for the angels. We can be saved but they cannot.

## ***Satan Was Once The Highest Angel***

The reason demons exist is because of Satan's rebellion against God. The Bible tells us that he was once the highest classification of angel:

**Ezekiel 28:12-14:** “Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in

beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.”

Even though this passage seems to be talking about the King of Tyrus it's actually referring to Satan, not to a human king. No human king in Ezekiel's day had ever set foot in Eden! This is telling us what Satan was like *before* he fell and became the devil. As you can see, God created him as a perfect being. He was full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, and arrayed in precious stones.

Verse 14 tells us that he was “the anointed cherub that covereth”. Cherubs are one of the types of angels. All of the cherubs were stationed below the throne of God, except for the covering cherub. That angel was stationed *above* God's throne and acted as a covering. This means the covering cherub was the highest rank of cherub – which means Satan was created to be the highest ranking angel.

At first Satan was perfect, but then he became proud and that led to his downfall:

**Ezekiel 28:15-17:** “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of

fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”

His beauty led to pride and he decided to exalt himself still further:

**Isaiah 14:12-14:** “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

The devil (who was originally called Lucifer, which according to Strong's Concordance means “light-bearer”) decided that he wanted to be God. The gifts, beauty, position, and wisdom that God had given him weren't enough; he demanded more. His pride led to his rebellion, and one third of the angels joined him.

No one knows when this happened but it was apparently pretty soon after the angels were created. There doesn't seem to have been much time between the creation of man on the sixth day of creation and Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. By the time that event took place Satan had already fallen and become the deceiver.

## ***Satan's Doom Is Assured***

We've already discussed how Satan rebelled against God and created an army of demons, so now let's look at how God is

going to punish the devil. The book of Isaiah tells us what God is going to do to the devil:

**Isaiah 14:15:** “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

The devil tried to exalt himself above God, but he will be brought down to Hell. This will happen after the Millennial Kingdom is over. When the thousand-year reign of Christ has ended the Lord will release Satan from his prison. The devil will then launch one final war against God, but he will be defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire:

**Revelation 20:7-10:** “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

The ultimate fate of the devil is to be cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Once he is there he will no longer be able to spread evil, or deceive the nations, or accuse believers. His reign of terror will be over forever.

This brings up an important point. Some people believe that Satan is in charge of Hell and spends his time tormenting the people who are trapped there. However, the Bible tells us that's

*not* the case! Satan actually spends his time roaming around the Earth:

**Job 1:7:** “And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”

Notice that Satan did *not* say “Oh, I've been in Hell tormenting all the new arrivals.” You see, Hell isn't a playground for demons. The truth is actually the opposite! Hell was instead created *to torment them*:

**Matthew 25:41:** “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”

Hell was created as a place to torment the devil and his angels. The demons are very aware of their fate and are terrified of it. In fact, when Jesus walked the Earth the demons asked Him this question:

**Matthew 8:28-29:** “And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

The demons are *not* going to spend eternity tormenting all of the lost souls that they've deceived. No, their future is quite different. They're going to spend eternity *being tormented* in the

place of eternal fire that God has prepared for them. They're going to be its *occupants*, not its management! They will be tormented along with everyone else.

One day Satan's power will be utterly broken. The book of Isaiah speaks of this time:

**Isaiah 14:9-11:** “Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”

**Isaiah 49:16-19:** “They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.”

When Satan finally is cast down to everlasting torment he's not greeted as a dignitary. Instead people look at him in amazement that his power is finally broken and he's become as weak as the rest of the tormented dead. The devil isn't reigning over the dead! Instead he's described as a carcass trodden under

foot that's covered by worms. He's not reigning; instead he's suffering along with everyone else. The devil who made the world tremble and destroyed cities will one day become nothing more than another tormented soul.

## ***The War In Heaven Has Not Happened Yet***

The book of Revelation speaks of a time when there will be a great war in Heaven, and the devil and his angels will be cast out:

**Revelation 12:7-11:** “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

This passage tells us that Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels. When Satan lost, he and his angels were cast out of Heaven forever.

When some people read these verses they think this happened long before mankind was created, but that's *not* the case. This is a *future* event, not a past one! It actually hasn't taken



yet.

How do we know this? Well, first of all, this passage tells us that when this war happened the “accuser of our brethren is cast down”. Satan had been accusing Christians to God day and night, but once he's evicted from Heaven he loses the power to do that. However, if Satan was thrown out of Heaven before mankind was created then it would have been impossible for him to accuse anyone *because no one existed for him to accuse!* If you read the book of Job you'll see that Satan *does* still have access to Heaven, and he uses that access to accuse the brethren – just like Revelation 12:10 says:

**Job 1:6-11:** “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

Here you can see Satan going before God Himself and accusing Job. The devil accused believers back in Job's day and he's still doing it today. However, one day there will be a war in Heaven and his access will be revoked. At that point he'll be cast down to the Earth and will never be able to accuse the saints

again.

## ***The Devil Is Our Adversary***

There are some people today who don't believe in the devil. They think of him as some sort of ridiculous cartoon character. However, the Bible paints a very different picture. The Scriptures teach us that the devil is very real and very dangerous. We're told that the devil is our adversary and he will try to destroy us if he can:

**I Peter 5:8-9:** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

The devil isn't imaginary! He exists, he's real, he opposes us, and he searches the world for people that he can destroy. Peter commands us to be sober, to watch vigilantly, and to resist him by remaining steadfast in the faith. We really *do* have an enemy and we should take him seriously. We're told to *resist* him, not ignore him. If we resist the devil he will flee from us:

**James 4:7:** "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

We must fight him because he's exceedingly dangerous. Jesus warned us that when the gospel is preached, Satan and his minions are standing by so they can snatch the Word out of people's hearts:

**Mark 4:4:** "And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. . .

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

The devil actively opposes the spread of the gospel. He wanted to destroy Peter:

**Luke 22:31:** "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:"

He persuaded Ananias to lie:

**Acts 5:3:** "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

He's actively seeking to gain an advantage over us:

**2 Corinthians 2:11:** "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

He actively seeks to hinder us:

**1 Thessalonians 2:18:** "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

He provokes us to do evil:

**1 Chronicles 21:1:** “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.”

There are even some illnesses that are his handiwork:

**Luke 13:11-16:** “And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

There are also trials and tribulations in our life which are a result of his work:

**2 Corinthians 12:7:** “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

In fact, there are times when Satan not only strikes people with disease, but even kills them outright:

**Job 1:12-19:** “And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

Satan also struck Job with a terrible disease:

**Job 2:6-7:** “And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”

Not only does Satan tempt people to do evil, but he also has the power to strike people with diseases – and *he can even kill people*. The case of Job makes this very clear.

The devil and his minions can even perform miracles:

**2 Thessalonians 2:9:** “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”

**Revelation 16:14:** “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

The apostle Paul explains that our chief problem in life isn't other people or wicked men, but the evil spirits of darkness. He warns us that we're not wrestling against flesh and blood (that is, against human enemies). Instead we're fighting demonic powers and darkness:

**Ephesians 6:11-13:** “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto

you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Next we'll take a look at how to fight the devil.

## ***Fighting The Devil***

The book of James tells us that if we resist the devil he will flee from us:

**James 4:7:** “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

How do we resist the devil? By submitting ourselves to God. That's right: the key way to overcome the devil is to *obey God's commands!* It's not by using holy water or the sign of the cross (as if the devil was some kind of vampire), but simple obedience to God. When we surrender to God and choose to do His will we're taking a stand for what's right and are fighting against evil. We're making a choice to side with God instead of the devil. This means submitting to God and obeying His commands is an attack upon that which is evil!

The book of Ephesians has a lot more to say about this. Paul tells us to take on the whole armor of God so we can resist the devil and fend off his attacks (because he *is* going to attack us). This is a long passage so I'm going to take a look at each piece.

First we're told to put on the armor of God:

**Ephesians 6:11:** “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

As we saw earlier, we *do* have an adversary. The devil is going to attack us, and when he does we'll need to put up a fight.

Putting in the armor of God will help us stand against him. Paul goes on to explain that the real problem in our life is our struggle against the forces of darkness:

**Ephesians 6:12:** “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

When the Bible says “spiritual wickedness in high places” it's actually talking about spiritual wickedness in *heavenly* places. Think back to the book of Job. Do you remember how Satan went before God and accused Job? That's the sort of “spiritual wickedness” the verse is talking about. Our real enemy is the devil and his demons, and our real problem are his attacks against us. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood but against the rules of the darkness of this world. Our true enemy – whether we realize it or not – is demonic.

In order to fight we must take the whole armor of God so that we may stand against them:

**Ephesians 6:13:** “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

It *is* possible to stand against them. We can overcome their attacks and find victory. In order to get that victory we need the truth:

**Ephesians 6:14:** “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”

The truth is a critical defense against evil. The Bible tells



us that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan often uses lies in his attacks – for example, look at the lies he told to Eve to tempt her to eat the forbidden fruit! When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness he used half-truths and deception. We *must* possess the truth and understand it so we can spot his lies and reveal them for what they truly are. Knowing the truth is a solid defense against evil.

However, just knowing the truth isn't enough. It's possible to know the truth and still do evil. That's why we also need the second thing the verse talks about – righteousness. We must not simply know the truth; we also have to live in the truth! It's not enough to just understand the truth; we must walk in it as well. If we seek righteousness, do what's right, and submit ourselves to God then we have a powerful defense against evil. That's how Jesus defeated Satan: He revealed Satan's lies for what they were, He refused to fall into temptation, and He chose the path of righteousness. Walking in righteousness is a powerful defense against evil.

We also need the gospel:

**Ephesians 6:15:** “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”

It may seem strange that the gospel is part of the armor of God, but remember that we're called to do more than simply withstand attacks. We must be on the offensive! We're not called to stand still and let evil attack us. Instead we need to be on the move, preaching the gospel and spreading the message of Jesus Christ far and wide. The gospel should literally be moving us to action – in fact, it should be *the reason why we're moving!* If we've left it behind then we've lost something critical. Jesus has commanded us to spread the gospel to every person and that's exactly what we should be doing.

Another critical part of our armor is faith:

**Ephesians 6:16:** “Above all, taking the shield of

faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

When we're attacked by evil we may be tempted to either doubt God or become fearful. Fear is one of the greatest tools of demons – they strive to terrify people and make them so full of fear that they're unable to do anything productive. However, fear doesn't come from God! The Lord has *not* given us a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). When we're afraid or are in doubt we must take up the shield of faith in use it.

Faith is the antidote to fear. When we're in fear we *must* choose to trust in the promises of God. When things look dire we *must* take God at His Word and believe what He's said. Faith has the power to overcome fear and doubt! Faith is our shield, and it's able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. We won't get very far without faith.

There are a few other things that we need:

**Ephesians 6:17:** “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”

Salvation is *vital* when fighting the devil. If you're not saved then you have no hope at all. No one can successfully fight the devil without the Holy Spirit! If you're trying to wage spiritual warfare on your own, apart from God, then you're guaranteed to lose. Your only hope is to become a Christian. All Christians in this age are sealed with the Holy Spirit – and it's impossible to be possessed by both the Holy Spirit and an unholy spirit at the same time. Not only are Christians immune to demon possession but since we have the Spirit of God within us we have the power we need to resist the devil and defeat him. Salvation is *essential!* It's the only way to achieve victory.

We also need the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Note that while shields are defensive, swords are offensive weapons. The Bible tells us that this sword is a very powerful and

potent weapon:

**Hebrews 4:12:** “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

When the Bible is preached and we tell others what it has to say, it has a powerful impact. The Holy Spirit uses it to change hearts and minds, and sinners into saints. The Word of God convicts and chastises. It's *powerful* and it must never be abandoned or exchanged for something else. We must stand by the Bible and use it at every opportunity. There's a great power in the Word – a power that's often neglected. The devil wants us to move away from the Bible, and there's great pressure on the church to neglect the Scriptures and talk about something else. However, we must never give in to that temptation! The devil isn't threatened by the things of this world; instead he's threatened by God's words. Since the Bible is a threat to him, that's what we should be using.

Finally, we must also remember to pray – not just for ourselves but for all the saints:

**Hebrews 4:18:** “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

There's great power in prayer! We should cast all our cares upon God for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). We should ask God for the things we need so that we might receive them (Matthew 7:8). We should pray for one another so that we might be healed (James 5:16).

Prayer isn't futile; instead it's vital. When a Christian prays

he's making a request to an all-powerful God who not only loves him, but who sent His Son to die on his behalf. James 5:16 tells us that the prayer of a righteous man avails much.

When we're wearing the armor of God we have what it takes to stand in the evil day and to resist the devil. Although he will certainly attack us, the Lord has given us what we need to withstand him. It's possible for Christians to overcome him (Romans 12:21, 1 John 2:13) – but those who aren't in Christ are utterly helpless against him.

## ***Demon Possession***

It's impossible for Christians to be possessed by a demon. That's because, in this age, all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit:

**Ephesians 1:13-14:** “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

**Ephesians 4:30:** “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

In fact, the apostle Paul said that if you don't have the Holy Spirit then you're not a Christian at all:

**Romans 8:9:** “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Having the Holy Spirit within us does *not* make us immune to the devil's attacks, but it *does* make us immune to demonic possession. Satan may still attack us and tempt us. He may make us sick (as he did to the apostle Paul) or even kill us (as he did to Job's children) but he *cannot* possess us. It's impossible for the devil to force us to do his bidding. He can tempt us to sin but he can't *force* us to sin. That's a very big deal! Thanks to the Holy Spirit we can resist the devil and overcome him. We don't have to give in to temptation and we don't have to do evil. We have the power to win.

However, those who aren't Christians are in a very different situation. Since they're not filled with the Holy Spirit there's nothing in their lives which has the power to keep demonic forces at bay. Those who aren't saved *can* be possessed by demons, and that's a very serious matter.

Demon possession is rare in this country. I want to be clear that possession isn't the same thing as being tempted to sin. In cases of possession, demons take up residence inside a person and force them to do their bidding. They act like powerful and evil parasites, and the effects are catastrophic.

We can find a number of cases of this in the New Testament. For example:

**Mark 5:2-5:** "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones."

This passage gives a graphic description of demon possession. First, we see that this man had incredible supernatural strength. People tried to bind him with chains but the man tore them apart. There was no way to bind or imprison this person!

Supernatural strength isn't unusual in cases of demon possession. For example:

**Acts 19:14-16:** “And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

This demon-possessed man was able to overcome *seven other people* and abuse them to such an extent that they fled from him naked and wounded! Seven people should have been able to restrain one man, but not when that man was possessed. Likewise, chains should have been sufficient to restrain the man in the gospel of Mark but they were useless because he had demonic strength.

That man was wild and out-of-control. He dwelt among the tombs and spent night and day howling. He was out of his mind and out of control. He couldn't dwell among civilized people; instead he was wilder than any animal and extremely dangerous. Not only was he dangerous to others, but he was also dangerous to himself. The Bible says that he cut himself with stones. He was possessed with an evil spirit of destruction.

Notice that when people spoke to the possessed man they were actually talking with the demon. In Acts 19:15 we see that it was the *evil spirit* who answered him.

In some cases demon possession results in a *loss* of senses:

**Matthew 9:32-33:** “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”

Since this man was possessed he couldn't talk. That doesn't always happen but it did in this case.

Adults aren't the only people who can be possessed. Children can be possessed as well:

**Mark 9:17-21:** “And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.”

This person had been possessed *since he was a child*. Children are *not* immune to this! You can see that this child exhibited many of the same symptoms of possession we saw earlier. This person was also violent, out-of-control, and self-destructive.

It turns out that even animals can become possessed:

**Matthew 8:31-32:** “So the devils besought him,

saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.”

Demons prefer to possess people but when that's not an option they're willing to possess animals as well.

There are many instances of demonic possession in the New Testament, but only a few in the Old Testament. It seems that demonic activity was at its height when Jesus walked the Earth. During that time Satan seems to have concentrated all of his efforts on the places where Jesus was preaching. The reason why he'd do this is obvious: he wanted to hinder Jesus from carrying out His ministry. It's not surprising that Jesus was constantly encountering people who were possessed.

Jesus addressed this situation when He said that He was binding the strong man so He could loot his house:

**Matthew 12:29:** “Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”

First Jesus went through the countryside, casting out demons and driving the darkness away. Then He sent out His disciples, who preached the gospel. Since Jesus had first bound the strong man His followers were able to spoil the devil's house. Since Satan had already been pushed back the disciples were able to be more effective and encounter less resistance. It's true they were still persecuted and had many problems, but things weren't as bad as they otherwise would have been.

Demon possession hasn't gone away. It still exists. The difference is that today it's rare, just like it was in the Old Testament. Satan is no longer concentrating all of his efforts on



Israel, the way he did in the time of Christ. Now he has an entire planet to attack.

Demon possession is more common in countries which either have a heavy occult presence or worship demons. They're rare in areas that have a strong Christian presence. Think of it this way. Christians are the light of the world, and demons can't stand the light – they prefer the darkness. In places that are saturated with the light there's little room for darkness to exert its influence and power. However, places that are filled in darkness are very inviting to demons. Those are the sort of places where you would expect to find possession – and that's why possession is rare in all but the very darkest of places.

Now, it is possible to *invite* demons into your life. There are real Satanists who worship demons and invite them into their lives. These people actually *try* to become possessed. I'm not going to go into the details of this because there are some things that shouldn't be discussed. You're *much* better off not knowing how to worship or summon demons! The Bible says that we should be wise concerning righteousness and ignorant concerning the deep things of evil (Romans 16:19). It's a very bad idea to know the deep things of Satan.

Unless you spend a great deal of time in parts of the world that are filled with devil-worship you probably won't come across anyone who's possessed. Remember, mental illness and demon possession are two very different things. It's possible to be mentally ill without being possessed. When it comes to possession it's best to let a trained professional study the case and make a determination. (How that determination is made is a question that's outside the scope of this document.)

## ***Exorcism***

It is a bad idea for you to try to perform an exorcism. If this is the first time you've ever studied this subject then I can say with confidence that you have no idea what you're doing. The reason I bring this subject up is *not* so that you can go out there

and start trying it on your own! Instead it's so that you'll understand the Biblical principles which are involved. I want you to know enough about this subject so that the next time you see an exorcism performed on television you'll realize how ridiculous it is. I want you to know the truth so that you won't be deceived.

Exorcisms are a serious business. It takes a highly trained professional to diagnose true possession and tell it apart from mental illness. On top of that, casting the demon out isn't something to be taken lightly. All demons aren't the same and all cases of possession aren't the same either. Some demons can be cast out immediately while others require fasting and prayer (Matthew 17:21). If you're not experienced in this sort of thing and if you don't have a solid grasp of the finer details then you should avoid this as much as you possibly can. Do *not* perform exorcisms by yourself! Instead get someone involved who's been trained and knows what they're doing.

Once again, exorcisms are *not* a joke. In true cases of possession you're dealing with a person who has supernatural strength, demonic fury, and who is out-of-control. When the seven sons of Sceva attempted an exorcism in Acts 19:14 they were very nearly beaten to death by a single possessed man. Trying and failing this can injure or even kill you. It can be done – and Christians do have the power to do it – but it's *not* a game and it should *not* be treated lightly.

To understand how exorcisms work let's take a look at how Jesus cast out demons. During His ministry He used several different methods. The common method that people used in His day was to ask the demon its name and then use that name to cast it out. For example:

**Mark 5:6-9:** “But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou

unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.”

The reason Jesus asked the demon its name was so He could use its name to cast it out by saying something along the lines of “Legion, come out of the man”. In order to do that, though, you had to find out the demon's name. That meant it was impossible for anyone to cast a demon out of a man who couldn't talk – and that's why people were shocked when Jesus did exactly that:

**Matthew 9:32-33:** “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”

Jesus amazed Israel when He cast a demon out of a man who couldn't talk. What He had just done was impossible without the power of God. According to their traditions, the only person who had that kind of power was the Messiah. By doing this Jesus was demonstrating that He really was the Messiah, the Son of God. This miracle was every bit as astonishing to ancient Israel as raising Lazarus from the dead. It was proof that Jesus was exactly who He said He was – the long-awaited Messiah.

As you can see, the way Jesus cast out demons was simply by ordering them out. Jesus would say “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit”, and the demon would come out. It wasn't any more complicated than that. Unlike what you see on television, there was no fancy ritual which had to be performed. You didn't need a crucifix or holy water or a special incantation. Jesus simply told them to come out and they did. There were no special magic words involved!

The reason this worked is because of the power of Christ. Since *He* told them to come out, the demons had to obey. They

had no choice.

Jesus gave His followers the power to cast out demons:

**Matthew 10:7-8:** “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

The disciples cast out demons the same way Jesus did. They commanded the demon to come out, and it did:

**Acts 16:16-18:** “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”

The reason Paul was able to cast out demons was because he did it in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now, let me be clear about something. The reason it worked was *not* because he uttered the words “Jesus Christ” in his exorcism! As we saw with the seven sons of Sceva, the phrase “Jesus Christ” is *not* a magical incantation. The reason it worked was because Paul did it as a Christian, *on behalf* of Jesus Christ. It's like when the American ambassador to France does something in the name of (or on behalf of) the United States. Since he's the American ambassador he has the power to do things in the name of our country. Since we're Christians, we have the power to do things in the name of (or on behalf of) Jesus Christ. *That's* what “in the name of Jesus” means: we're taking that action on Christ's

behalf. It's as if Christ was doing it Himself – and since demons can't resist Christ they couldn't resist Paul either.

The reason the seven sons of Sceva failed was because they weren't Christians. Since they weren't Christians they couldn't do things on behalf of Christ. They just invoked the name of Jesus like some magical good-luck charm – and that mistake nearly killed them.

Does that mean all we have to do is walk up to someone who's possessed and order the demon to depart? Sometimes that works, but sometimes it's more complicated than that. Jesus told us that certain demons can only be removed by fasting and prayer:

**Mark 9:28-29:** “And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”

There are times when it's possible to battle a demonic presence by casting it out in the name of Christ, and that alone is enough to defeat it. There are other times when it can't be done without fasting and prayer. It simply depends on the type of possession.

Of course, before any of this will work you must make sure that you really *are* dealing with demons and not with something else entirely. You'll never be able to cast a demon out of a man who's just confused or mentally ill, and that's where wisdom and training is required.

One critical thing to remember when dealing with exorcisms is that casting a demon out of someone can have very serious consequences if that person doesn't become a Christian immediately afterward. In fact, it can actually make their lives much worse! Jesus explained why:

**Matthew 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.”

Some demons are more wicked than others. All of them are bad, but some are much worse! When a demon is cast out of a person, that person's body is emptied of the evil spirit which used to dwell within them. If that person then becomes a Christian, their body is filled with the Holy Spirit and that defends them from demons. However, if that person does *not* become a Christian then their body remains empty – and an empty house is defenseless against evil spirits. In that case the spirit which was cast out may go and find other spirits that are even worse, and then *all* of them might take up residence inside that person. In that situation the person was much worse off than they were originally. The problem isn't that the exorcism failed; it's that the person didn't take advantage of being cured to fill himself with the Spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit then you can defeat the devil, but if you lack the Holy Spirit then you're defenseless against him.