

Angels and Demons

Demon Possession and the Occult Lesson 3

Introduction

In the first two lessons we have considered the origin of both angels and demons. While the study of angels does not typically occupy a large portion of our doctrinal instruction, why is Scripture's teaching concerning angels and demons still very important?

Demon Possession in the ministry of Jesus

Prior to the ministry of Jesus, there is only one possible case of demon possession recorded in Scripture: *"Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him"* (**1 Samuel 16:4**). What might this indicate about the phenomenon of demon possession?

Shortly after Jesus was tempted by the devil he encounters demon possession in his ministry.
Read **Mark 1:21-28**.

What possessed the man in the synagogue?

How did the demon(s) respond in the presence of Jesus?

How did those who witnessed this event respond?

James writes, *"You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder"* (**James 2:19**). What is the difference between believing/acknowledging there is a God and having saving faith?

See **Mark 1:34**. What seemed to be a regular part of Jesus ministry?

Read **Mark 5:1-20**.

What do we learn about demon possession from this account?

What do we learn about Jesus' authority from this account?

In what ways did the man's life change after this encounter?

Read **Mark 9:14-29**.

What do we learn about demon possession from this account?

Why could the disciple not cast out the demon?

The Devil Is at Work Today

Does demon possession still happen today?

What symptoms would you look for to determine whether or not someone is demon possessed?

Distinguish between demon *possession* and being *influenced* by the devil/demons.

Though demon *possession* may not be as common, the devil works overtime today to *influence* people. Consider the following passages and how the devil might influence people in the world today in similar ways:

Acts 5:3 – *Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit...*

2 Corinthians 2:10,11 – *I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.*

2 Corinthians 4:4 – *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

2 Corinthians 11:13,14 – *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*

Ephesians 2:2 – *...when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

Ephesians 6:11,12 – *Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

1 Timothy 4:1 – *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars...*

Satan may also work through the occult.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 – *Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, ¹¹ or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. ¹² Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you.*

King Saul consulted the witch at Endor (1 Samuel 28). What led him to do such a thing?

Such practices as mentioned above are prevalent in various other cultures. However, how have you seen elements of the occult in our society?

What draws people to such things?

Discuss.

- If someone thinks they are possessed by a demon, how would you respond to them?
- You learn that a friend or acquaintance has been seeking help from a psychic or other superstitions. How might you counsel that friend?
- Is it possible for a Christian to be possessed by a demon? (**1 Peter 5:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Matthew 16:17,18; 1 John 5:18-21**)