**What the Bible Says About Demons**

Introduction:

1. Ghouls. Goblins. Vampires. Magic. Voo doo. Spiritism. Divination. Witchcraft. Mediums. Fortune telling. Psychics. The force. The dark side. Harry Potter. The Ghost Hunter channel. The Exorcist. Evil.

2. Just as such things characterize our modern culture, they proliferated in the ancient cultures of Egypt, Ugarit, Mesopotamia and Babylonia.

a. Like the ancient system of Greek gods many in our modern culture regard these as

myth.

b. We may be entertained by Harry Potter’s magic but we know it is just pretend.

3. But there is enough mystery in the unknown to keep us intrigued. I have been asked to present a lesson about “demons.” We might question whether this is the most important or most critical topic that we could discuss but it is a biblical one.

4. What does the Bible say about demons? What does the Bible say about the “spiritual forces of darkness?” Are they real? Are they something that we need to be concerned about?

5. When you consider the “scholars” of the world you get a variety of responses.

a. In an article by Collen Ward and Michael Beaubrun entitled, “*Psychodynamics of Demon*

*Possession,”* the conclusion was reached that those “demon possessed” are individuals

trying to escape a conflicted situation and diminish their guilt by projecting blame on to

the intruding spirit. They seemed to take the position that so called “demon possession”

was more of a psychological issue than an actual overtaking of an individual by an evil

spirit. –Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, vol. 19, no. 2, June 1980.

b. Then in another article entitled, “*When Exorcists Need Help,”* John Blake of CNN (Aug.

4, 2017) says that Dr. Richard Gallager, Ivy League educated and board certified

psychiatrist, of Columbia University and New York Medical College says, Demon

possession is “rare but real.”

6. We are not concerned about what people say, but about what is revealed in the word of God.

Discussion:

I. Demons, demon possession and unclean spirits are frequently mentioned in the N.T., but the word “demons” is only mentioned 3 times in the O.T. (NASB): Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; Psa. 106:37. This infrequent mention in the O.T. as compared to the N.T. is striking. Most of the mention in the N.T. is in the gospel accounts. There are very infrequently mentioned in the rest of the N.T.: 1 Cor. 10:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:1; James 2:19; Rev. 9:20; 16:14; 18:2.

II. Three passages in the O.T.

A. Lev. 17:7. This passage establishes God’s law about sacrifices and stops the people

from sacrificing to the “goat demons with which they played the harlot.”

1. Evidently this was an idolatrous practice brought from Egypt.

2. The Egyptians worshiped goats as gods (Josephus c Ap. 2, 7) particularly Pan whom

they called Mendes, and reckoned among the eight leading gods of Egypt (Keil and

Delitzsch, Comm. on O.T., Lev. 17:7). Cf. Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:7; 22:3, 8, 19, 21,

27).

B. Deut. 32:17. This passage refers to their “sacrifices to demons who were not God.”

Again here “demons” are associated with idolatrous practices and unfaithfulness to

God.

C. Psa. 106:37 refers to their sacrificing their sons and daughters to these idolatrous

demons. A practice abhorrent to the God of the Bible (Deut. 12:29ff).

III. References in the N.T. epistles.

A. 1 Cor. 10:20-21. This text is similar to the O.T. references. It says the Gentiles

sacrifice to demons and not to God (cf. Deut. 32:12). Paul’s argument is that Christians

sharing in the blood and body of Christ cannot share in the worship of idolatrous

demons. If they do they provoke the Lord. Paul questions the reality of these

idols/demons in this text.

B. 1 Tim. 4:1 refers to doctrines of demons. It is set in a context predicting that some will

fall away from the faith paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.

False teaching is associated with demons.

C. James 2:19. Demons believe but do not have works (i.e., they do not obey the Lord).

D. Rev. 9:20 refers to those of mankind who worship demons, and idols of gold and silver,

brass, stone and wood.

Rev. 16:14. Out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet come

unclean spirits—spirits of demons, performing signs. These are spirits of

deception that promote war with the Almighty.

Rev. 18:2-4 involves a pronouncement of the fall of Babylon. She has become a

dwelling place of demons and a prison for the unclean. The demand was that the

people of God come out and be separate. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:14ff.

IV. In both the O.T. and the N.T. there is an “adversary” who is opposed to the divine will.

A. In the O.T.

1. Gen. 3:1-19 the serpent deceived Eve. Cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:2.

2. 1 Chron. 21:1 identifies a time when Satan stood against Israel and David.

3. Zech. 3:1 describes how Satan accused Joshua the High Priest.

4. Job. Satan assaulted Job with calamity, misfortune and sickness.

B. In the N.T. Eph. 6:10ff says that we must be strong in the Lord. That we are to put on

the full armor of God, so that we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the

devil. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

powers, against he world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of

wickedness in the heavenly places.”

C. Scripture acknowledges “spiritual forces of wickedness” that should not be discounted.

Only by the strength the Lord provides us can we overcome them.

V. The demons described in the gospel accounts are spiritual beings associated with the kingdom of Satan and hostile to both God and man.

A. When Jesus came on the scene he began casting out demons, healing those with

diseases and pains and healing people (Matt. 4:24).

1. These demons caused blindness, muteness (Matt. 12:22-28), great strength (Mk.

5:1ff) and some caused the people to act in ways that were “out of their minds.”

2. Some testified that He was Jesus Son of the Most High (Mk. 5:1-18; Lk. 4:31ff). At

Gadara the demons questioned Him, “Have You come here to torment us before the

time?” (Matt. 8:29).

3. He cast out an unclean spirit from the daughter of the Syrophoenician woman (Mk.

7:24ff).

4. Matt. 17:14ff describes how a man came to Jesus on behalf of his son. He said, “He

is a lunatic and is very ill. He falls into the fire and into the water and your disciples

could not cure him.” But Jesus rebuked the demon and he came out of him.

5. He cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9; Lk. 8:2).

B. He gave His apostles power to cast out demons (Mk. 6:7-13; 16:17-18; Lk. 9:1) and

when they marveled that the demons were subject to them He said, “I was watching

Satan fall from heaven like lightening. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on

serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that

your names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:17-20).

C. When He was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul he explained

that this was not the case but that the Kingdom of God had come upon them (Matt.

12:22ff; Lk. 11:14ff). He asked, “If Satan casts out Satan, how will his kingdom stand?”

D. Jesus acknowledged the reality of such forces. He recognized them as hostile to both

God and man. Casting them out was a manifestation of the power of the kingdom of

God.

IV. “Do demons possess people today?”

A. We have no real revelation from God to that effect.

1. Some people say, “YES.”

2. Others say, “NO.”

B. There are always things that we cannot explain.

C. It may be that possession was prominent in the N.T. so that the power of the Kingdom

of God could be manifest. Possession may have ended after the confirmation of the

Kingdom.

D. In the O.T. and the N.T. there is a distinction between pagan religions (associated with

demons) and information communicated from God.

1. Deut. 18:9ff.

2. 1 Cor. 10:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:1.

3. The people of God are called to separate themselves from such pagan religions (2

Cor. 6:14ff).

E. Paul’s warning is quite clear that our dependence must be in the Lord’s strength. That

we must put on the full armor of God. He fully acknowledges the schemes of the devil

and says that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against

the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of

wickedness” (Eph. 6:10ff). Therefore we must take up . . .

1. The shield of faith.

2. The helmet of salvation.

3. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

4. We must pray and be on the alert.

5. And recognize the word of God needs to be spoken boldly. It is through our

confidence in God and what He has revealed that we can overcome such forces.

6. God is more powerful than such forces. Our confidence is in Him.

Conclusion:

1. Do not underestimate the power of the devil.

2. But do recognize that as the people of God we have God’s power to overcome all evil.

3. He gave us His son to deliver us.

4. Indeed the Kingdom of God is more powerful than the kingdom of Satan.

5. Let us come out of the kingdom of darkness and enter the kingdom of light.