

Can Demons Occupy a Christian Part I

Written by Bill Perkins

I actually got fired once for disagreeing with a pastor about whether or not demons could occupy Christians. Before that encounter I had no idea the subject triggered such feelings. When I studied demonology at Dallas Theological Seminary, my professor, Dr. Charles Ryrie, said Christians are divided on the subject. He said he didn't think it mattered whether a demon was attached to someone's face or lived inside their stomach. For most of my life I figured he was right. While I was still licking my wounds I called a friend who served as a denominational leader. Not the denomination that fired me. When I told him what happened he assured me it was a subject to be avoided. So I open this blog with the realization that there are two points of view: 1) demons can't indwell Christians; 2) demons can indwell Christians. I suspect you occasionally wonder if demons are oppressing you, or your family? You may wonder if you're possessed. Or if someone you love is possessed. If so, you may also wonder how to get free and help someone you love get free. In this series of blogs I'll give you a biblical understanding of demons and how to deal with them. I'm not offering an encyclopedic study of the subject. I'm not going to expand on how the Bible teaches that one third of the angels fell with Satan. Or how these demons are servants of Satan. Or how they're not ghosts or spirits of the dead. Or how they deceive us and feed our worst thoughts and actions. Or how Jesus cast them out of people. Or how he told his disciples to do the same. Instead I'm addressing the subject of whether or not demons can occupy a believer.

Reasons Believers Can't Be Possessed First: The Greek word translated "possessed" doesn't mean "possessed." While believers are comfortable talking about the origin and function of demons things get tense when someone suggests a believer can be demon "possessed." However, the question of "possession" is dismissed when we realize people who have demons are "demonized" (*daimonizomai*) *not* "possessed." While the term *daimonizomai* is generally translated as demon-possessed, it does not convey the English concept of possession (ownership) as much as control (Matt 4:24 ; Matthew 8:16 Matthew 8:28 Matthew 8:33 ; 12:22 ; 15:22 ; Mark 1:32 ; Mark 5:15 Mark 5:16 Mark 5:18 ; Luke 8:36 ; John 10:21). As with the elderly woman who was bound by Satan for eighteen years before Jesus freed her (Luke 13:16)"Shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham, kept bound by Satan for eighteen long years, be freed from her bondage on the Sabbath?" As He said these things, His adversaries blushed with shame while the crowd rejoiced over all the wonderful things He was doing. He went on to say, "What is the kingdom of God like? To what shall I compare it?" itself removes the possibility that a believer could be demon "possessed" or owned by a demon. ***So while the question of possession is answered, a second question persists: Can a demon inhabit a Christian?***

Second: Those who are eternally united with Christ cannot be inhabited by an evil spirit. A demon could not possess those who are children of God (John 1:12)"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even those who believe in His name:" (Romans 8:15), and identified with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:4). **Third:** Paul tells us believers are the temple of God and a demon can't co-occupy the temple of God with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Fourth: Jesus made it clear the only way to enter a strong man's house is to first bind the strong man (Matthew 12:29). The strong man in a believer's house would be the Holy Spirit. A demon could not enter a believer because to do so it would have to overpower the Holy Spirit and that's impossible.

Fifth: Those who believe a Christian can be inhabited by a demon base their view on experience, not biblical revelation.

A Comforting View — If It's Right

This point of view comforts Christians. It's good to know that while the enemy may attack us, he can't enter us. Unless, this view is wrong and evil spirits can occupy a believer. For years I found these reasons convincing. Next week we'll examine the other point of view.

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