

Do Demons Afflict People Today?

Written by Bill Perkins

Tell someone you believe demons afflict people today and you'll likely get an eye roll. Except for a few Catholic priests and extreme elements of the Charismatic movement, most people take the idea as seriously as Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. The majority of sound thinking people view demons as the fodder for horror movies and Halloween costumes.

An Exorcism in India

Over the years I've seen a couple unsuccessful exorcisms. The most recent occurred in India. I was speaking at a church in the southern part of the country when a mother brought her daughter to the pastor. She said the girl had a demon and pleaded with the pastor to cast it out.

I watched wide-eyed as he laid hands on the ten-year old and in the name of Jesus commanded the demon to come out. Nothing happened. Undeterred he raised his voice and in a louder and more authoritative voice gave the same command. Again, nothing happened. Working up a sweat he yelled at the demon for five or ten minutes.

"This is a tough one," he said. And then he asked me to give it a try.

I swallowed hard. "Me? You want me to cast out a demon?"

"Yes, pastor. Perhaps your faith is stronger."

And so I put my hands on the girl and followed the pastor's lead: "In the name of Jesus, come out." I repeated this several more times with no more success than my Indian friend. I left the church that night wondering what effect such religious fervor had on that tormented girl. I thought she likely needed a good psychiatrist not a couple of pastors yelling at a demon her mother thought possessed her. I didn't plan on doing that again.

Not Once Did Jesus Yell

And yet a casual reading of the Gospels shows Jesus delivering men and women from afflicting spirits, or demons. These angels, who fell from heaven (Revelation 12:4) when Satan rebelled, do the work of their master. In the Gospels they control, torment, abuse, inflict with insanity and illness those they torment. Yet, not once did Jesus YELL at a demon. At least none of his commands were written in all caps. Instead, he commanded the spirits to come out and they obeyed.

In Matthew 10:1 we read, "Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness." Later, when the seventy-two (disciples) returned from ministering we read, ". . . they joyfully reported to him, 'Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!'"

In Mark 9:38-40 we read, "'Teacher," said John, 'we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.' ³⁹"Do not stop him,' Jesus said. 'For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰for whoever is not against us is for us.'"

Bonaire Changed Everything

In the past I would have read those verses and assumed they had no relevance today. That changed in a big way in December of 2012 when I had an experience with a demonized woman on the Caribbean island of Bonaire. That experience ended very differently than the one in India. Since then I have seen many people liberated from spiritual affliction.

While few have been as dramatic as the one in Bonaire (some have been more dramatic), the outcome convinced me much of the bondage people suffer from today has a demonic source. I've seen men and women liberated from anger, addiction, depression, despair, fear, self-hatred, immorality and other enslaving attitudes and actions when evil spirits are evicted. I'm convinced the kind of freedom Jesus offers is more complete than I had previously known.

For years I believed my responsibility as a Bible teacher was to help people manage their sin so they could keep it under control. Yet, Jesus said, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

More Than a Command

Yet, to successfully destroy a stronghold and evict an evil spirit involves more than telling a demon, in the name of Jesus, to leave. The thoughts and behaviors that give a spirit the right to be there must be identified and removed. Only then will an evil spirit leave. This process requires prayer and insight and doesn't usually occur in a few minutes. But the results are often dramatic and life-changing.

Next week I'll be updating and expanding a series of blogs I wrote a number of years ago regarding the destruction of strongholds and the acquisition of spiritual freedom. I've learned much since I originally wrote these blogs and am eager to share what I've learned with you. I hope you'll follow this series closely and share them with your friends.

Please Pray

I'm going to use these updated blogs as the basis for a book and would appreciate any feedback you can send along. If you, or someone you know is stuck, I'm sure you'll find this series helpful. Pray God gives me wisdom as I work on this important ministry tool.