

How do demons get in?

Written by Bill Perkins

After watching a demonized boy roll around on the ground while foaming at the mouth, Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

“‘From his childhood,’ his father said” (Mark 9:21). The Greek word used by the father for “childhood” indicated the boy had been inhabited by a demon since he was a little boy—not a toddler or infant. So how would a young boy become demonized? How did the demon get in?

The Town of Pan

While I don’t know for sure, nor does anyone else, a brief examination of the town where he grew up provides one plausible explanation. The town of Caesarea Philippi (or, Paneas, after the Greek God of fear, Pan—a half man half goat who played a flute. The English word “panic” was derived from his name as was Peter Pan). The town sits 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee at 1,500 feet above sea level on a terrace at the foot of Mount Hermon. Springs of water provide the main source of water for the Jordan River.

The town was best known as the site of several impressive pagan temples—The Grotto or Cave of Pan, The Court of Pan and the Nymphs, The Temple of Zeus, The Tomb Temple of the Sacred Goats, The Temple of Pan and the Dancing Goats. It was in this area that the first king of Israel (Jeroboam) led the northern kingdom of Israel into idolatry.

This was also the same place where the Greeks and Romans received revelations from the god Pan who was mentioned in classical writings as a "seer" or fortune teller and a giver of revelations. ([For more information about Cesarea Philippi.](#))

Behind Every Idol, a Demon

So the demonized boy grew up in a pagan city whose citizens, and visitors, worshiped idols. Here’s what the Apostle Paul said about idols: “Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God . . .” (1 Corinthians 10:9-10). So while an idol is nothing, behind every idol is a demon. And those who serve idols serve, not the idol, but the demon that empowers the idol.

A Door to the Soul

It makes sense to me that the boy’s father visited pagan temples and took his young son with him. At some point the boy opened his mind to an idol and in doing so he opened a door for the idol to enter his soul. Over time the demon took over his mind and controlled his behavior.

A Foothold

Whenever someone aligns himself with idolatry, or any form of evil, he or she aligns with Satan and his fallen angels. In doing so, they open the door to their soul for an evil spirit to enter. Paul speaks to this when he told the Ephesians, "'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."

A key to understanding how demons not only enter a person, but take over, is found in this short verse. Next week I'll talk about that.