

DEMON POSSESSION - Part 3

August 2, 2012

Demons are spirit beings. In Mark's gospel account, he refers to an "unclean spirit" (Mk. 9:25 ASV). While Matthew, in his parallel account, uses the term "daimonion" or demon. Matthew uses the terms "demons" and "spirits" synonymously (Mt. 8:16). Luke uses the term "evil spirits" to refer to demons (Lk. 8:2). Spirits do not possess flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39). They were able to possess either animal or man (Mk. 5:13) and any number could inhabit a single being (Mk. 5:9).

Demons were free will beings. They were intelligent and had the power of choice (Mk. 5:10). They were able to recognize Jesus (Mk. 1:24), bow before Him (Mk. 5:6), and refer to Him as the "Son of the most high God" (Mk. 5:7). They had an influence upon the gospel by corrupting it (1 Tim. 4:1-3). They knew certain aspects of their futures and their impending doom at the end of time (Mt. 8:29).

Demons possessed a certain moral nature. They were described as unclean (Mt. 10:1). Demons had varying degrees of wickedness (Mt. 12:45). It was their desire that man transgress the laws of God in any way possible and wished harm to mankind which included: dumbness (Mt. 9:32-33), blindness (Mt. 12:22), insanity (Lk. 8:26-36), personal injury (Lk. 8:18), suicidal tendencies (Mk. 9:22), and various physical defects and deformities (Lk. 13:11-17).

Demons held correct beliefs about Christ and spiritual matters. They were not atheists, because they believed in the God of heaven (Js. 2:19). They were not polytheists, because they believed in the ONE God of heaven (Js. 2:19). They were not theological liberals, because they confessed Christ's deity rather than denying it (Mk. 1:24; 3:11). They recognized the authority that He wielded over them and the rest of creation (Lk. 8:31). They had a complete belief in a devil's hell and eternal punishment (Mt. 8:29). Is it not curious that many in our day that profess to be religious in nature have less faith than that of the demons of the New Testament?

What was the purpose of demon possession during the first century? The casting out of demons proved the identity and divine mission of Christ (Mt. 12:22-28). It demonstrated the authority of the Saviour (Mk. 1:23-28). It proved His power over Satan and his workers (Mt. 12:28-29). Defeating demons, the allies of Satan, was in essence defeating Satan himself.

What happened to the demons of the first century? Jesus taught, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). The writer of Hebrews would later say, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Since Satan would be limited in such a way, so would those that aided him in his mission to destroy man and the church.

Zechariah predicted that the "unclean spirit" (demon) would "pass out of the land" during the time frame of the early church (Zech. 13:1-2). The casting out of demons was a

miraculous activity that required miraculous power. With the ending of the age of miracles (1 Cor. 13:8-11), demon possession also ended. If it had continued, there would have been no way of ridding those afflicted with them since the miraculous had ended.

Therefore, we can conclude that demons were departed spirits of evil men. They could be cast out by means of divine power only. They were allowed to possess human beings only for a temporary period of time so that the power of Jesus could be demonstrated. Demon possession no longer occurs today, because the miraculous age and the power that came with it ended.