

Casting Out Evil Spirits

A Brief Look at What the New Testament has
to say about *Demon Possession* and Christians

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A RESTORED NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY

Deliverance Ministry (casting out demons) is an expected expression of a restored supernatural New Testament ministry. In those fellowships of believers where we see the authority of Jesus Christ taught and the fullness of the Spirit welcomed, we should see this ministry. In the past thirty years, the number of people in the United States ministering deliverance from evil spirits has grown from a few dozen to tens of thousands of believers. The Holy Spirit is cleansing the Bride of Christ from evil and making Her ready for the coming of the Bridegroom!

In churches where there is no deliverance ministry today, there are serious problems going unattended in the lives of believers. This creates secret sins and hypocrisy in the life of the Church. Eventually because there seems to be no solution to their problems, many discouraged believers backslide under demonic pressures. However, there is a solution! We must apply the Scriptural remedy to this problem!

BELIEVERS CAST OUT DEMONS

Jesus commissioned His disciples by giving them authority (Greek: *exousia*) and power (Greek: *dunamis*) over evil spirits. Driving out or casting out demons was to accompany their preaching along with regular healing of the sick and other miracles.

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases..." Luke 9:1

If we believe that healing is for today and for the Church, then we must also believe that casting out demons is for today and for the Church.

Lest we think that this authority was only granted to the Twelve apostles, a chapter later, the Lord Jesus tells us of the authority He has given to believers over the power of demons.

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Luke 10:17-19 (see Mark 3:15, 6:13, Matthew 10:8)

CASTING OUT DEMONS IS A SIGN OF FAITH

Casting out demons is described as a sign that will follow believers. In other words, it is a sign of faith. Where there is true faith in Christ operating, then we would expect to see this sign. Jesus tells us this in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus commissioned them to preach the Gospel and one of the signs of true faith would be casting out demons.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;..." Mark 16:14-17

It is noteworthy that another of these signs is speaking in tongues. If we believe that speaking in tongues is normal in ministry today, then we must assume that casting out demons is also normal for today. In addition, if we accept that all believers can receive tongues, we also must accept that all believers can cast out demons. We must also acknowledge that there must be a faith problem in churches where none of these signs exist.

DELIVERANCE IS ONE ASPECT OF SALVATION

Deliverance ministry is one aspect of the total salvation that Jesus purchased at the Cross. This salvation includes all God's provision for human need. The Greek word *saved* is a form of the Greek word *sozo*. This Greek word is also translated in the Gospels in other ways such as *healed*, *made whole*, *delivered* or *set free*. When Jesus cast out a demon, he occasionally said. *Your faith has set you free (sozo)*. In other words, salvation is more than just being saved from hell. Salvation is healing and deliverance from evil spirits as well.

DELIVERANCE IS SALVATION FROM EVIL SPIRITS

Deliverance is God's salvation from evil spirits purchased by Jesus on the Cross. It is received by faith just like salvation from sin, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit or healing is. This explains why Christians are sometimes afflicted by demons. Jesus has purchased by His blood our deliverance from evil spirits at the Cross. This is complete and forever finished on our behalf. However, that does not mean that we are experiencing what Christ did at the Cross for us in all its aspects. We can fail to appropriate these provisions of salvation out of ignorance of our need for deliverance or failure to meet the conditions for receiving. Deliverance is not automatically received when we receive Christ. Deliverance is not normally received on the basis of a single one-time prayer either. By persistent and confident warfare prayer, we apply the defeat of the enemy through faith in the Cross of Christ and the Holy Spirit will produce a deliverance.

DELIVERANCE NORMALLY FOR CHRISTIANS

Deliverance ministry is normally for those who have responded in faith to the Gospel of the Kingdom and have made Jesus Christ the Lord of their lives. This means that many who need deliverance are not being overwhelmed by demon power. Their deliverance needs may only exist in one or two areas. Of course, this goes against many peoples impressions of deliverance ministry. Hollywood's distorted presentations of deliverance in movies and some ministries' taped public deliverances have given the false impression that anyone with a deliverance need is being overwhelmed by demons. The truth is that while a few people need extensive deliverance, most people only need a little.

There are occasions where deliverance is accomplished in the life of someone so seriously afflicted by demons that they are unable to respond to the Gospel. However, this is the rare exception rather than the rule. The Scripture warns us that these spirits will reenter the *empty house* if it is not filled with Christ. Deliverance belongs to those who in faith are coming to the Lord. Deliverance is the *children's bread*. Believers alone have the right of deliverance from demons. The devil has a legal claim on unbelievers.

CONFUSION: POSSESSED, OBSESSED, OPPRESSED

Much confusion has arisen in the English speaking Church over the unfortunate use of the English words *possessed*, *obsessed* and *oppressed* to translate the Greek verb *diamonizominoi*. The Greek noun *diamon* is

normally and properly transliterated *demon* in all modern versions of the Bible. Therefore, the Greek verb above is simply the verb version of the noun *demon*. This Greek verb should be rendered as *demonized* or *to be affected by a demon*. (See Note #1 below.) The ideas of *possession*, or *obsession* or *oppression* are not supported by this Greek verb. The actual Greek verb does not even imply a certain level of control or reveal whether the demon is inside the person or outside. There are several other phrases that are used much less often to describe the condition of a person with a demon. One phrase means *to have an unclean spirit*". (See Note #2 below.) Another phrase means to be *with* or *in an unclean spirit*. (See Note #3 below.) Sometimes translators have improperly inserted the word *possessed* in these passages as well even though they do not contain the Greek verb that actually means *demonized*.

It is misleading to say that a Christian can be never *possessed* by evil spirits. Certainly, the Christian is never completely controlled or owned by evil spirits which is implied by *possessed*. Christ, by virtue of the redemption of the cross, owns the true Christian. However, a demon may affect or *demonize* one or many areas of the life of a Christian. This will result in repeated defeat and failure of the Christian in these particular areas. This *demonized* Christian normally is not fully aware of just what the real source of his or her problems are. Since Christ owns the Christian, a demon is *an illegal tenant* and is *legally evicted* by the exercise of authoritative faith of believers in the name of Jesus. Jesus has completely defeated the devil, fallen angels and demons. They have no authority to remain in a believer's life. This all-encompassing defeat of the devil must be received by faith in Christ just as salvation was received. Jesus Christ is your Deliverer as well as Savior, Healer and Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

Notes-References about demons or evil spirits:

1. To be *demonized* ("*diamonizominoi*" mistranslated as "*possessed*"):
(Matthew 4:24, 8:16, 28, 33, 9:32, Mark 5:15,16, 18, 9:17, Luke 8:36)
2. To *have an unclean spirit*: Matthew 11:18, Mark 7:25, Luke 8:27
3. To be *with* or *in an unclean spirit*: Mark 1:23, 5:2

Roger Sapp has written more on this subject in his book *Performing Miracles and Healing* available for order on www.allnationsmin.org There are many other free files available there as well.