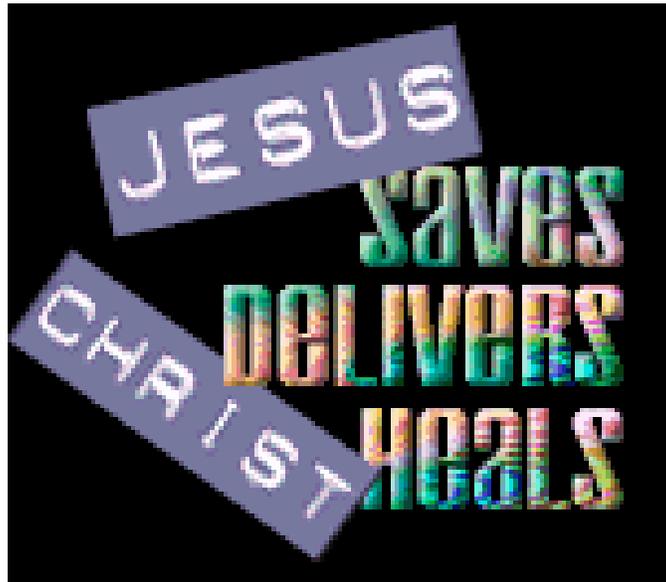


CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE A DEMON?

By Timothy Williams



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When training people in the ministry of deliverance, the first question that often comes up is "CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE A DEMON?" The following is a biblical examination of this question.

1. POSSESSION VRS. OPPRESSION

First, I want to clarify some terminology. It's important to understand the difference between being demon-**possessed** and being demonized.

In the New Testament, the Greek word '*daimonizomai*' is used to express the presence of demonic spirits within a person. It has often been translated as **demon-possession**. The problem with this translation is that possession implies ownership. Since a believer is a bought child of God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Satan cannot own a Christian.

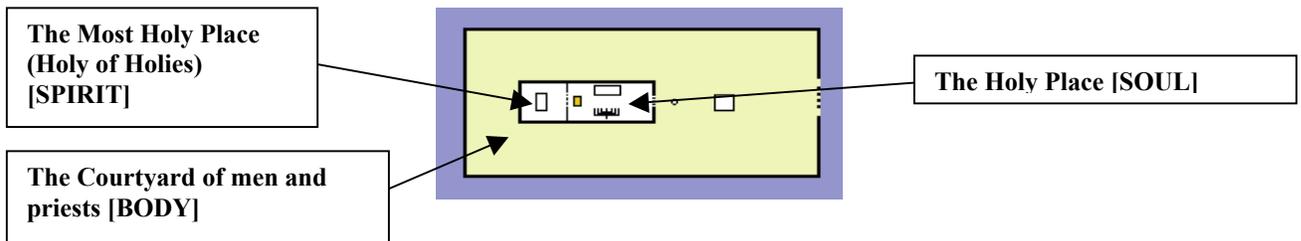
A better understanding or translation of the word is "to be demonized; to be under the power or influence of a demon." True possession is rare, and a Christian cannot be possessed. But a Christian can be influenced by a demon or demon oppressed.

2. TRI-PARTIDE NATURE OF MAN

The next important thing to understand is that a person is made of three separate parts that operate together. In **1 Thessalonians 5:23** we see we have a body, soul and spirit:

*May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we read that the "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit". Just as with God's physical temple, the body also has three parts with different functions. God's Temple had the Most Holy Place, The Holy Place and the Courtyard of men and priests.



This correlates with our own person, which has the spirit [holy of holies], the soul [the holy place] and the body [courtyard].

We all know that, while the body may experience healing under the power of Christ, our physical body will eventually die. The part of the person, which is the flesh, will not experience eternal life.

Our spiritual rebirth is just that, a "spiritual" rebirth. Jesus said in John 3; "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is the human spirit that receives new eternal life when we confessed our sins and are born again. It is the spirit that the Holy Spirit brings rebirth to. It is the spirit that the Holy Spirit indwells.

God told Adam, the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, that he would die. But he went on to live for many hundreds of years. What died in Adam when he fell into sin? Obviously it was that same part of his nature that Christ came to bring back to life - his spirit.

Our spirit (the Holy of Holies) cannot have a demon. That part is justified. But the body, which we know has not received eternal life, is still under the ravages and effects of this fallen world. It is the body and soul (mind and emotion) that the demon have access to.

3. MISCONCEPTION #1: THE BIBLE SAYS A CHRISTIAN CANNOT HAVE A DEMON

Nowhere in the bible does it say that a **Christian cannot have a demon**. There is simply no scripture that says this. If God wanted his church to believe this would he not directly declare it in his word? The case for Christians being unable to have a demon is based often on Misconception #2.

4. MISCONCEPTION #2: DARKNESS AND LIGHT CANNOT CO-EXIST.

If darkness and light cannot co-exist, the question goes, then how can the Holy Spirit and a demonic spirit co-exist in the same temple? We understand from 1 Thessalonians that a person has three distinct parts and this helps us understand this question of co-existence. But I want to focus for now on the first statement; that **dark and light cannot co-exist**.

The assertion that **darkness and light cannot co-exist**, as biblical as it sounds is **not found in the bible**. Let me say that again – the common assertion that dark and light cannot co-exist is **nowhere in the bible**.

The closest thing is **1 John 1:5** where it says “**God is light**; in him there is no **darkness** at all.” But that is talking about God.

The passage continues:

*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the **darkness**, we lie and do not live by the truth. But **if** we walk in the **light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Again this does not say we **cannot** walk in darkness, just that we **should not**. The fact that John warns us not to walk in darkness indicates a possibility for a Christian to walk in darkness.

In fact, **Jesus tells us that dark and light can co-exist**, and emphasizes that we must **see to it** that we deal with the dark parts in our light.

In Luke 11:34 Jesus says:

The Lamp of the Body

*Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. **See to it**, then, that the **light** within you is not **darkness**. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and **no part of it dark**, it will be **completely lighted**, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."*

The phrase “See to it” indicates that there is an effort required on our part to rid ourselves of darkness. We need to see to it. The next phrase “if your whole body is full of light and **no part of it is dark**” clearly demonstrates that it is possible to have a part of our body that is dark. The phrase “completely lighted” shows it is also possible to be not completely lighted.

In conclusion, the key statement that dark and light cannot co-exist in the same body cannot be found anywhere in the bible. Passages relating to this say that they **should not** co-exist.

5. CASTING OUT DEMONS IS A REQUIREMENT OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

In Jesus’ final instructions to his church in Mark 16, we are shown what a believer should be doing as part of their daily walk.

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; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; **they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.**"

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and **preached everywhere**, and the Lord worked with them and **confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.**

Jesus final words! There is no getting around the clear declaration that the sign of being a believer is that in Jesus' name we will cast out demons.

So then, if we, as believers, are to cast out demons, it begs the question "Out of whom are we to drive out demons?" Believers or non-believers?

When we look at the context of deliverance in scripture the pattern is the same. It is done in the context of preaching the good news and healing of the sick. Preaching, healing and deliverance all went together. Physical healing miracles demonstrate God's power over the natural. Deliverance demonstrates God's power over the supernatural. Together they show the truth and power of the preaching that has occurred.

If Christians can't have demons then that implies we are to drive out demons from **non-believers**, which is **absurd** in the context of preaching and physical healings. How would we in the name and power of Jesus drive out a demon from someone who rejects the name and power of Jesus?

Surely then, the healing and deliverance are there to build the faith of the person who believes the good news rather than rejects it.

In fact this threefold mission of preaching, healing and deliverance was the central mission of Christ's Ministry on earth. As he stated in Luke 4:18:

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **proclaim the gospel** to the poor, He has sent me **to heal the ones who are broken in the heart**, to **preach to captives deliverance** and **recovery of sight for the blind**, and **release to the oppressed**, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

In **Luke 13:32**, Jesus said of his ministry:

He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out **demons** and **heal** people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'

When Jesus instructs the disciples in Luke 9 he gives them the same ministry:

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them **power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases**, and he sent them out to **preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.***

*So they set out and went from village to village, **preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.***

Until the time of his crucifixion his daily ministry was preaching, healing and deliverance. After his death and resurrection the ministry did not change.

Acts 19:11 talks of Paul:

He (Paul) took the disciples with him and had **discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus**. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia **heard the word of the Lord**. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were **taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them**.

The ministry of God working through Paul was **preaching**, followed by MIRACLES of both healing the sick and driving out evil spirits. The miracles were there to justify the word of the Lord – that Jesus is the Messiah.

6. HEALING AND DELIVERANCE GO TOGETHER

In all the scriptures about Jesus and the disciples healing and deliverance go together. It never says that healing is for the believer and deliverance for the non-believer (which would be the inference if Christians could not have demons). In fact, **deliverance** from an evil spirit is often called a "**healing**" in the bible.

In Luke 13:10, the Synagogue ruler reprimands Jesus for **healing** on the Sabbath. What he had actually done though was **deliverance**.

A Crippled Woman **Healed** on the Sabbath

On a Sabbath Jesus was **teaching** in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a **spirit** for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your **infirmity**." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had **healed** on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a **daughter of Abraham**, whom **Satan** has kept **bound** for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

First we are in a synagogue. This is done in the context of teaching. Second, this woman is a daughter of Abraham, in covenant relationship with God by faith. Despite being a child of God, she had a demonic spirit that caused an infirmity. This clearly shows the link between infirmity and the demonic. When the **spirit** was cast out, she was **healed**.

If you believe that a Christian can be **healed** by Jesus, then you **must also believe** that a Christian can be **delivered from a demon**, as 1. demons can cause infirmity and 2. deliverance is often called healing in the bible.

In **Matthew 4:24** it says

*News about him (Jesus) spread all over Syria, and people brought to him **all who were ill** with various diseases, those **suffering severe pain**, the **demon-possessed**, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he **healed** them.*

The demonized are right there in the **middle** of the list of those coming for physical healing. The bible says they were "**healed**".

In **Acts 5:12** it says:

*The Apostles **Heal** Many*

*The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade... More and more men and women **believed** in the Lord and were added to their number. **As a result**, people **brought the sick** into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, **bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.***

This scripture clearly shows that, as a result of people's belief in Jesus, the sick and demonized were **healed**.

7. **DELIVERANCE SHOULD ONLY BE DONE ON BELIEVERS**

In fact, not only can a believer have a demon, but also Jesus instructs that deliverance should only be offered to a covenant believer.

In **Matthew 15:21** we read the following account:

*A **Canaanite** woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from **demon-possession**." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.**" The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take **the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.**" "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their **masters'** table." Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you **have great faith!** Your request is granted." And her daughter was **healed** from that very hour.*

Again note that deliverance is called a healing.

The bible says this Canaanite woman comes to Jesus to **drive out demons** from her daughter. At this time, God's covenant was with Israel alone. Christ's mission of salvation had not been fulfilled and there was no covenant with the gentiles yet. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel"

Only the Israelites were the children of God by covenant of faith (believers). The Gentiles were not (non-believers). This Canaanite woman was in the category of being a non-believer, outside of a covenant relationship asking Jesus for deliverance. What does Jesus say?

"It is **not right** to take the **children's bread** and toss it to their **dogs**."

What does Jesus call deliverance? He calls it **children's bread**. Whose children? God's children!

If Jesus calls **deliverance** "bread for God's children", and we know that bread is an important part of daily life, should we not be giving this bread to God's children? Are we not starving the children if we do not provide deliverance?

Jesus says it is **not right** "to toss it to their dogs" (unbelievers, those outside a covenant relationship with God).

But the story doesn't end there. When she demonstrated her **faith**, when she showed that she believed Jesus was the "master", she demonstrated that she was a believer – not an un-believer. It was her FAITH as a

believer that convinced Jesus to grant her request for deliverance. **Because she was a believer**, deliverance was in order.

This is a powerful piece of scripture that shows that deliverance is bread for God's children and also that it should not be given to non-believers.

8. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE OF BELIEVERS HAVING DEMONS.

1) SAUL

When Israel wanted a king, God had Samuel, his prophet, anointed Saul as God's anointed ruler over all of Israel.

We read in 1 Samuel 16 that despite being the anointed ruler of God's people, through an act of disobedience, Saul opened himself up to demonic attack. An evil spirit tormented him.

Saul called David in to play his harp, and we see that, under the power of the Spirit of God the evil spirit would leave. But it kept coming back!

Later, in 1 Samuel 18 we read:

*The next day an **evil spirit from God** came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.*

Two objections might be raised in this example. First that this was prior to the Holy Spirit being given permanently. Well, we have seen examples of people receiving deliverance after the after the Holy Spirit was permanently given, and we will see more examples following.

Second, the evil spirit came and went which means that he was not demonized. Well again, I think that is a question of semantics. This evil spirit had access to Saul to such an extent that he could come forcefully and cause Saul to try to kill David. As I said at the start, we are not talking about believers being **possessed** by a demons but being **oppressed**. Influenced to such an extent that self-control is lost.

2) JUDAS

Jesus' disciple Judas had Satan enter him. In **Luke 22:3** we read " *Then **Satan entered** Judas, called **Iscariot, one of the Twelve.***" Being a disciple of Jesus did not prevent him from being demonized.

3) ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

In Acts 5 we read of two "post Holy Spirit Baptism" believers whose hearts where filled with Satan.

*Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that **Satan has so filled your heart** that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"*

Peter puts the blame squarely on the root cause of Satan filling the hearts of these two believers.

9. A WARNING TO CHRISTIANS FROM PAUL

Paul instructs the Ephesus Christians in living as Children of the Light. In Ephesians 4 we read:

Living as Children of Light

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "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. GREEK (nor give place to the devil).

Here Paul clearly teaches that a believer **can** give place to the devil.

In fact the Greek word "topos" for place means a physical space, a part of the body or a room in a house. Clearly we are warned not to give a place or a room in your house to Satan.

When Jesus talks about deliverance he also talks about the body as a house.

But if I drive out **demons** by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards **his own house**, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils. **He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.**

Here we see that in reference to deliverance, Jesus warns that anyone who is not gathering is scattering. Clearly from this (and Mark 16 which says that the believer will cast out demons) deliverance is required to be as much a part of Christian life as preaching the gospel.

10. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Can a Christian have a demon? We have seen that the concept that "dark and light cannot co-exist" (as biblical as it sounds) is in fact **not in the bible**. The bible says that we light and dark **should not** co-exist. Also, there is **no passage** in the bible that declares a "Christian cannot have a demon". This belief is a recent teaching based on a mistaken inference from a few texts. To believe this teaching requires you to ignore both the central ministry and teaching of Jesus and the early church.

Jesus declared several times that his ministry was to preach the good news, heal the sick and broken hearted and cast out demons. He taught his disciples to do the same. As disciples of Jesus should we not be doing the same? In Mark 16 we see the clear instruction that we should be doing this three-fold ministry!

We have also seen from scripture that deliverance is often referred to as healing and was often done alongside healing. To suggest that Jesus and his disciples divided those coming for prayer into two groups - believers [for healing] and non-believers [for deliverance]- is ludicrous. Obviously, every believer received both healing and deliverance after hearing the gospel preached. The bible clearly states that healing and deliverance were done to verify the truth of the gospel and therefore should still be done to verify the gospel.

Deliverance **is** healing, so if you believe that a Christian can be sick and requires healing prayer, then we must also include deliverance as a healing prayer.

Finally we have seen biblical examples of believers with evil spirits and Paul's warnings to believers not to give a physical place to the devil.

We know that when a believer comes to Christ, they don't automatically change into perfect sinless people in their outward behavior. They are sinless and perfect, a new creation, but it takes time for that reality to move from the spirit into the flesh, to change the thought and behavioral patterns in daily life.

The bible says that salvation must be worked out with fear and trembling. This is the process of sanctification, and this is where the ministries of inner healing and deliverance can be very helpful.

When John the Baptist asked if Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus pointed to healing and deliverance as proof that he was the Messiah in Luke 7:21:

At that very time Jesus **cured** many who had **diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits**, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have **seen and heard**: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

This was the ministry of Jesus – preaching, healing, deliverance all lumped together. Do you not think it still is? Jesus does not change. And if we are dead to self and Christ lives within us, shouldn't we allow Christ to work through us. Obviously yes. We should be doing the ministry that Jesus did.

Rather than be afraid of the demonic, we need to de-mystify it. Healing and deliverance prayer should be as common as many other gifts God gives us to build up his church. After all one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit **is discerning of spirits** (1 Cor12:7)!

It is a shame that many churches do not do what Jesus did. They separate out the preaching. Sometimes they might carry on and do some healing, but deliverance is often omitted. Many suffering people, who know they have demonically rooted problems, continue in confusion, torment and anguish, because they are told the lie that a Christian cannot have a demon. Let's change that with Jesus' help!

Prepared by Timothy Williams May 5th, 2004