

# Come Out

## A True Story About Demonic Possession and Exorcism

In times past, I would have the privilege of conducting Bible studies in various homes. During one such Bible study, I had the unique opportunity to drive a demon out of a young woman using the powerful name of the Lord Jesus.

Several family members were present at this particular study, including the son and daughter of the woman who was hosting the study. Nothing unusual happened during the study until I approached the end. I looked over at the son and saw that his face had contorted into a hateful, angry look. He was staring first at me, then at his mother and breathing very heavily. Suddenly, he stood up and went after his mother. Grabbing her, he began choking her around the throat, pinning her up against the wall. I and the other two brothers with me grabbed his arms and tried to pull them off her throat. He was very strong, and I had to brace my leg against the wall to get his arm off his mother's throat. We wrestled him to the ground and he slammed his elbow into my side. Since it appeared he had a demon, we began to command the demon out in the name of Jesus. Eventually this young man settled down and we were able to let him get up.

As we prepared to leave, the daughter came up to me and asked me to pray for her because her stomach hurt. I laid my hand on her head and started to pray when she fell to the ground. Her eyelids were fluttering and I knew she had a demon, so I began to command the demon to "Come out, in Jesus' name." She sat up and began to cough profusely as I continued to give the command to come out of her. Then suddenly she fell back on the floor. Her form was so still that she appeared to be dead! This account is similar to a Biblical "exorcism" in Mark 9:26 when Jesus cast a demon out of a young boy:

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."

After a short time, she opened her eyes and got up. I told her that if she didn't get saved, the demon would return and bring with it seven others more wicked than itself and they would all inhabit her, just as the Bible teaches in Mt. 12:43-45:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.

She readily asked Almighty God for mercy and salvation without hesitation. She informed us that when I gave the command in Jesus' name for the demon to come out of her, that it grabbed hold of her lung, not wanting to leave her body. This is what had caused her coughing. The demon continued slowly to come up, as successive commands in Jesus' name were given. The demon made its way to her throat and eventually came out of her mouth, according to her testimony.

What a convincing demonstration all of this was of the power of Jesus' name over invisible spirit beings called in the Scriptures, "demons." This occurrence could have made a believer out of some atheists and agnostics!

We are in an intense, spiritual war with the forces of darkness. Demons are just as real in our day as in Jesus' day and still desire to inhabit people. But Christians have powerful spiritual weapons with which to fight back. One of the most powerful is that precious, holy name which is above all others: Jesus! All believers have this weapon available to them:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons ... (Mark 16:17).

Please note: unlike in the movies, demons are driven out without the use of a wooden cross and "holy" water!

### Characteristics of Demonic Possession

When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank

into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid (Mark 5:2-15).

Notice some of the characteristics of this demon possessed man: he had supernatural strength and was violent, lived among the tombs in the graveyard, crying out and mutilating himself with stones. According to Lk. 8:27, he was also naked. When Jesus drove the demons out, the man got dressed and was in his right mind, listening to Jesus. Take note that these thousands of demons begged Jesus, the one with all authority in heaven and on earth.

Besides people, demons can also inhabit animals, according to the account of the demon possessed man of Gerasenes.

There are other Biblical accounts of demonic possession that are more subtle. Judas actually had Satan in him (Jn. 13:27), but he appeared rational. The fortune telling woman with a demon (Acts 16:16-18) must have seemed rational also—she wasn't foaming at the mouth or acting insane. Otherwise, people would not have gone to her to hear their "fortunes."

Sometimes demons cause physical afflictions: one person could not talk (Mt. 9:32), one was blind and mute (Mt. 12:22), one had seizures (Mt. 17:15-18), one woman was crippled by a spirit for 18 years, bent over and unable to straighten up (Lk. 13:11). Some people with a demon go to a religious place of worship such as a synagogue (or a church), Lk. 4:33. Demons can also perform miracles (Rev. 16:14).

Some demons come out only by "prayer and fasting":

But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mk. 9:27-29, KJV).

In this case, the boy appeared to have epilepsy or something similar.

### **The Unsaved Can Drive Demons Out**

There is an account in the Bible of seven sons driving out demons, but one demon was not so easily driven out.

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor (Acts 19:13-17).

Jesus taught:

Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matt. 7:22,23)

The apostles reported others, not of their group, who were also invoking the powerful name of Jesus, but Jesus does not

rebuke them:

"Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us" (Mk. 9:38-40).

### **Can A Christian Have A Demon?**

One young man sent us a question as to whether or not a Christian could be demon possessed, and how to tell if someone is. To this we responded: a Christian cannot be demon possessed according to Mt. 12:43-45. On the other hand, a Christian could become demon possessed after initial salvation if he turns away from God like Judas did. Judas was certainly saved before he betrayed Jesus and became possessed by Satan. (Please see our article about Judas.) Let's take another look at Jesus' teaching:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation (Mt. 12:43-45).

The *house* (person) was unoccupied—no Holy Spirit residing there—so the evil spirit was able to get back in and take others with it and the condition of the man was far worse than at first.

If someone thinks he is demon possessed, he should cry out to God for salvation, asking Jesus to come in and be Lord and Master, and turning from all known sin. He should also verbally renounce all involvement with any kind of occultic activities in the past. Close the spiritual door on all that sin, whether it was committed innocently or intentionally, asking Jesus for deliverance. This person should not be afraid to use the name of Jesus out loud to resist the devil. Praise to God is also a wonderful spiritual weapon.

Remember, the thousands of demons in the madman of the Gerasenes were not able to keep the man from running and falling down on his knees at Jesus' feet, and finding salvation. (There were about 2,000 pigs into which the demons went, so we know he had at least 2,000 demons!) This refutes those who think an unsaved person can't come to Jesus for salvation until the demons are cast out.

Christians have a greater cause to rejoice than just having the spiritual power to drive out 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. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:17-20).

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