

WASP: Can a Christian Have a Demon?

Can light dwell with darkness?

First, let's expose the most common argument against believers having demons: light cannot dwell with darkness. This is an assumption with no real Biblical basis. The verse most often used to support this argument is 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" However, to support the argument, the verse must be taken out of context. Proper context and interpretation acknowledges Paul is speaking about believers marrying unbelievers. In the context of marriage, the scripture is asking what communion or partnership light can have with darkness. In other words, is a non-believer going to have the same spiritual understanding and goals as a believer? No. How can they partner if they don't have anything in common spiritually? Are demons and God going to work together in a person's life? No. Can the two coexist? Yes!

Another way to consider the question is by asking if a Christian be in bondage to pornography or lust? Or can they have an addiction? Can they suffer from depression and anxiety? Is a Christian capable of committing sin at all? If the answer to any of these is "yes", then how can darkness (sin), which God absolutely repels, dwell in a believer who is in-filled with the Holy Ghost? Or how can the Holy Ghost remain in someone who is not only capable of sin, but commits it from time to time?

Consider further how we are told that the Spirit of God covers the earth¹. If Holy Spirit covers the earth, how can darkness (demons and sin) freely roam as well? And still, if evil and sin cannot approach the presence of God, how can Satan accuse the brethren, tempt Jesus in the desert or visit heaven to talk with God concerning Job²?

We are composed of three parts: a body, a soul (mind, will, and emotions) and a spirit³. The spirit of a man belongs to God, and their spirit is united with Holy Spirit. However, our bodies and souls can still be afflicted by evil spirits. Just like you can turn a light on in one room and the next room in the house can be dark, the same is true in the spirit realm.

The soul versus the spirit: The spirit of a man is where Holy Spirit dwells. But the soul or mind of a man is where sin and wounds remain long after he or she accepts Christ. We are told to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (soul) through the Word of God⁴. Our spirits are instantly made new the moment we are saved⁵, but our souls can take time to renew and 'clean up'.

¹ Jeremiah 23:24

² Revelation 12:10; Matthew 4:1-11; Job 1:6-12

³ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

⁴ Romans 12:2

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:17

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Where demons do their work? A demon cannot touch the spirit of a man after he has accepted Jesus. However, demons do operate in the soul and body. How do you see demons affecting people in the Bible? They oppress the mind, such as with the lunatic boy⁶ or the man with the legion of demons⁷. They cause physical attacks to the body, as with the woman with the issue of standing⁸ or the man who couldn't speak because of a demon⁹. Demons try to overwhelm and wear-out believer's spirits in an effort to tempt to sin, but their primary way of operating is through souls and by troubling the physical bodies.

Demonic bondage demystified

What do demons do to people? Many believe only extreme cases of mental problems are caused by demons or one must be heavily involved in the occult or Satanism to have demons, but this is untrue. Scripture refers to perfectly sane people as being crippled by demons. Jesus cast spirits of deafness, muteness, blindness, and infirmities out of sane individuals¹⁰. It is perfectly normal to have absolutely no demons affecting your mind in any way, and still have a demon causing physical ailments.

What does it mean to be possessed with a demon? Another misconception is that a person who is demon possessed is owned and fully operated by a demon. This is also untrue. As previously discussed, a person can be perfectly sane and have a demon. In the New Testament, the Greek word often translated as *possessed* means to be under the power of a demon or to have a demon. This is like being under the power or influence of alcohol; the more you drink, the more you come under its power. The same is true with demonic bondage; the more bondage you are in, the more you will come under demonic influence or power.

The Bible is clear, there are different kinds of demons that cause different problems to the person in whom they dwell. Some demons cause someone to be blind, mute, or deaf. While others cause madness (mental illness), fear and depression, epilepsy, and so forth. Therefore, if someone is under the power or influence of a spirit of infirmity, they will have some sort of physical ailment¹¹.

⁶ Matthew 17:14-18

⁷ Mark 5:1-17

⁸ Luke 8:43-48

⁹ Luke 11:14

¹⁰ Luke 13:11; Mark 9:25; Matthew 12:22

¹¹ Matthew 8:16, 32, 9:33, 12:22, 17:15-21; Mark 1:34, 3:21, 5:15, 7:26, 9:25; Luke 4:35, 8:29, 11:14, 13:11

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Can a Christian be demon possessed?

If the word '*possessed*' refers to ownership, then absolutely not! Can a Christian *have* a demon? Yes, but they cannot be owned by one. As stated, the Greek word *diamonizomai* (*δαιμονίζομαι*), which is commonly translated as possession, does not carry the same meaning in modern English and is not fully accurate in describing someone who has a demon. A Christian can have a demon, just as they can have a sickness or disease, as many sicknesses and diseases are caused by a demon.

Derek Prince, Greek language scholar and author of *They Shall Expel Demons*, explains that the Greek does not suggest a demon can *own* a person, but rather a person can be under the *influence* of a demon. Saying a Christian can be possessed, and mean ownership by the demonic, is equivalent to saying a person's body is owned by an infection on that person's finger. The infection may influence the body, but it does not own the body. While a Christian can have a demon, and be in bondage (influenced), it does not mean the person is owned by the demonic.

If given *rights* (permission), demons can invade the soul and body of a believer. But they cannot invade a believer's born-again spirit (the real you). This is because the spirit belongs to the Lord¹². But the demonic can attack, oppress, and demonize a believer's body and soul (thoughts and emotions). Demons can cause fear, depression, lust, uncontrollable anger, and other iniquities in the soul, as well as sickness and diseases in the body.

There are certain sins and actions a person, including believers, can do that defile (make unclean) the person. Simply put, whether a believer or not, if you've given the enemy rights to your soul or body, then you are open to spiritual infection that can result in demonic bondage.

How do demons gain access to the believer?

Ecclesiastes 10:8, "He that digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever *breaks* through a wall will be bitten by a serpent" (emphasis added). There is a hedge of protection around God's people, but if there's a hole in that hedge, it can open the door to the enemy and we can get bitten. In the same vein, Paul warns believers in Ephesians 4:27 not to give place to the devil. And he warns, "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices"¹³.

There are two ways in which a believer can be demonized. Either the demon(s) was present before the person came to Christ (past lifestyle, generational curses, previous bondages, vows made with the enemy, etc.), or it entered after they became a Christian. If the demon came into the person's life before

¹² Isaiah 43:1; John 10:29; 1 Corinthians 6:20

¹³ 2 Corinthians 2:11

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they accepted Christ, then the demon is likely trespassing because he has no legal right to be there. The demon needs to be cast out, as Jesus did in Matthew 8:16-17.

But demons can gain access to a believer, even after they have come to faith, through open doors of sin, which defile us (make us unclean). For example, having unholy sex can create unholy soul ties, which serve as demonic bridges, passing bondages from one person to another. Another example is being bitter or unforgiving; both are closely related and defile a person¹⁴. In these cases, a believer has given the demonic *rights* or *permission* to access their life and wreak havoc. The open doors need to be shut through repentance and the demons cast out.

However, just because the enemy no longer has legal rights, does not mean he always leaves immediately. Even though Jesus paid the price for our iniquities¹⁵, demons will try to hang around until they are kicked out. If demons left automatically when their rights were removed, then there would be no need to cast them out. Though, they do sometimes leave without being told, it is not usually the case. Matthew 8:16-17 demonstrates how Jesus fulfilled His Messianic prophecy of taking on our iniquities/infirmities. It was through the actual casting out of demons.

What does it mean to be defiled? Several verses in Scripture speak about defilement¹⁶. It means to become unclean, polluted, or dirty. But to become unclean means the object had to once start clean, otherwise it couldn't be made dirty. To be defiled means to take something that was clean and make it dirty. For this reason, Christians need to heed Jesus' warning not to do those things which can defile a man¹⁷. Sin can take a clean Christian and make him unclean and therefore vulnerable to spiritual infections (demonic influence).

A lot of people like to believe Christians cannot be touched by the enemy. This is true, IF we keep ourselves undefiled and are obedient to God's ways. But if through sin and disobedience we step outside of God's blessing and protection and into defilement, we are practically begging for a spiritual infection. We are inviting demonic influence and bondage to our lives.

The dangers of casting a demon out of a non-believer

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty,

¹⁴ Hebrews 12:15

¹⁵ Isaiah 53:5

¹⁶ Leviticus 18:24-25, 28, 19:31, 21:11; Numbers 35:34; Ezekiel 14:11; Daniel 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:17, 6:17, 8:7; Hebrews 12:15, 13:4; Titus 1:15

¹⁷ Matthew 15:20

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swept, and put in order. Then he goes and *takes with him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there*; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So

shall it also be with this wicked generation.

Matthew 12:43-45 (emphasis added)

In this passage, Jesus explains that after a demon leaves a person it will try to return. And when it does, it is accompanied with even more increasingly evil demons. This reveals a real danger and explains why casting a demon out of an unbeliever is not wise. It is better to first lead the person to faith in Jesus. In addition to securing eternal salvation and relationship with the Lord, it provides protection for the new believer from the demonic attempting to return with more evil oppression.

One must also consider that attempting to cast out a demon when it has *legal rights* in someone's life can be very dangerous. Demons can manifest and get physically violent, causing bodily harm to both the victim and those nearby. It is best to cut off the *legal rights* that are allowing the demonic to have access and authority in a person's life. This is accomplished by leading the person through true repentance and genuine faith in Christ. Once someone is transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light, the demonic presence is trespassing on a child of God¹⁸. Now you and the new believer have authority to cast the demonic out.

Some demons CANNOT get shed (or cast out) without prayer and fasting

Mark 9:17-29 tells a story of the disciples trying to cast a demon out of a child. Because they were unsuccessful, the boy was brought to Jesus. Jesus cast the demon out and returned the child to his father. When questioned by the disciples as to why they were unsuccessful, "He said to them 'This kind can come out by *nothing* but prayer and fasting.'" (emphasis added)¹⁹. If Jesus said prayer and fasting is required, we must believe it isn't coming out with a quick nudge, much less when a person simply accepts Jesus! Jesus was saying it requires a lot of faith to cast demons out. You get such faith through prayer and fasting.

Deliverance is part of the atonement and New Covenant

Let's take a close look at Isaiah 53:5, where Isaiah prophesied of Jesus and what He would accomplish through the cross. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was *bruised for our iniquities*; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed" (emphasis added). Do you

¹⁸ Colossians 1:13; Galatians 3:26

¹⁹ Mark 9:29

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think this prophecy of Christ's accomplishments is for unbelievers? Did He shed His blood for the sins of unbelievers (providing they stay in their unbelief of course)? Did His stripes pay for their healing? What about the chastisement for our peace; was that for unbelievers? No. The work of the cross at Calvary brings peace and healing to those who place their faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord.

It's possible a non-believer has experienced healing out of God's amazing grace and mercy. But God's children are healed out of covenant. Believers can therefore, hold on to their healing, whereas unbelievers, healed out of God's mercy, can lose their healing. The same is true with deliverance. As previously discussed, Jesus made it clear, when a demon comes out of an unbeliever it will attempt return with more evil spirits even worse than itself²⁰.

Matthew 8:16-17 clearly shows Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53, "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoke by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'". The bruises Jesus bore were for believers' iniquities, allowing for deliverance and freedom from them.

If deliverance was part of the atonement and new covenant, then it's meant for believers! But note, even though an iniquity is forgiven, it does not mean the demon automatically leaves. Notice, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that He paid for our deliverance, but He still had to 'cast out' the demon. It didn't leave automatically. The fulfillment of that prophecy was demonstrated by the actual casting out of the demonic.

Believers are commissioned to teach and do the same things Jesus did on earth²¹. Deliverance is not for unbelievers, but for believers. It is not meant to provide relief to the world's problems, but to bring freedom to the believer who may be struggling with bondages and demonic oppression. In doing so, it will advance the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, as it is in Heaven. It will push back darkness and evil, and as a result, bring change to our world.

Flaws in opposing theologies

There are some who recognize the reality of the demonic realm and see the need for the casting out of demons, but they don't believe Christians can have demons. They believe only unbelievers need demons cast out. This sounds tickling to the ears but doesn't hold up in reality. Some very simple logic will dissolve this false belief.

²⁰ Matthew 12:43-45

²¹ Matthew 28:18-20

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Demons like to return to the wicked generation (sinners/unbelievers) with 7 more even worse demons²², therefore it is very risky, dangerous and unproductive to cast a demon out of an unbeliever. The only way to be safe, is to first lead the person to accept Jesus, then there is a layer of protection there to help keep the demon(s) from returning. Otherwise you're just sticking your hand in a hornet's nest and stirring up trouble. If a demon is interfering with the person coming to Jesus, then it's time to bind the demon²³, minister to the person's need for salvation, then cast the demons out.

There is an obvious need for casting out demons²⁴, so who are we to cast them out, if it's so risky and unsafe to cast them out of unbelievers? Not to mention, unproductive and detrimental if they don't come to Jesus shortly after they are delivered! And if people shed their demons when they became a Christian, then why worry about casting them out at all, if they will leave automatically? If people shed their demons when they accepted Christ, then why not just bring them to Christ? This would defeat the whole purpose of the deliverance ministry. Which would be saying that the early church (which was very active in the casting out of devils) was wasting its time and would make no sense that Jesus said that those who believe would 'cast out demons'²⁵!

Deliverance and healing were paid for in the same verses²⁶, but a lot of Christians are walking around sick and many others are being tormented. Why? Because these two things are received by faith. The price was paid for people to be set free. But if we don't believe and stand on this truth, we will miss out in the fruits of what Jesus did. The same thing is true with healing!

Biblical example of Jesus casting a demon out of a believer

Before we begin, let's take a quick look at who Jesus considers a child of Abraham.

Jesus said to them, *"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.*

Abraham did not do this."

John 8:39-40 (emphasis added)

²² Matthew 12:43-45

²³ Matthew 16:19

²⁴ Mark 16:17; Matthew 8:16-17

²⁵ Matthew 7:22, 12:27; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 19:13

²⁶ Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17

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In other words, if you aren't doing the works of Abraham, then you are not really his child. Jesus distinctly stated that the religious leaders were not children of Abraham because they did not share in the faith and works of God that Jesus was sent to do.

In contrast, look at what Jesus called the man who became a believer in Luke 19:9, "And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house because he also is a son of Abraham.'" To have Jesus call somebody a child of Abraham was quite an honor. It meant that the person was a child of Abraham by faith, they were a believer. Or examine Paul's words in Romans,

For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents_or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body, but a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from God, not from people."

Romans 2:28-29 (NLT, emphasis added)

Jesus said the children of Abraham do what Abraham did²⁷. So, what did Abraham do? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."²⁸ To believe God means to believe in Jesus, as the two cannot be separated! To reject the Son, is to reject the Father²⁹. Jesus made it clear, the true children of Abraham are full blown believers!

Luke writes, "And, behold, there was a woman who had a *spirit of infirmity* eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up...So ought not this women, begin a *daughter of Abraham*, whom *Satan has bound*-think of it-for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

Luke 13:11 and 16 (emphasis added).

A few things we would like to point out. First, the woman was in 'church' hearing Jesus' teachings moments before He freed her from Satan's bondage³⁰. When He called her a daughter of Abraham, He made it clear that she was a very special person. He rebuked the Pharisees for calling themselves children of Abraham, but He honored this woman for it. In His opinion, she was a true daughter of Abraham, one who shared in Abraham's faith. She was a believer.

In summary:

- Jesus taught: to be a child of Abraham, you must do as Abraham did³¹.

²⁷ John 8:39

²⁸ Galatians 3:6

²⁹ 1 John 2:22-23

³⁰ Luke 13:10

³¹ John 8:39

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- What did Abraham do? He believed on God³².
- You cannot believe on the Father and reject the Son; it is impossible³³.
- Jesus said this woman was truly a child of Abraham (a believer)³⁴.

Jesus outlined the requirements to be a child of Abraham. If He didn't use those requirements towards her, He would be contradicting Himself. In His opinion, which not opinion, but FACT and TRUTH, He declared this woman to be a child of Abraham. To refute that she was a believer, would be trying to argue with Jesus. He made it very clear, those who don't believe, are not children of Abraham.

Biblical example of a believer being set free from a curse

There was a woman who had an issue of blood as a result of a curse. The King James translation refers to it as a plague. Though she believed in Jesus, she was released from it when she acted upon her faith and touched the hem of His garment.

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "*Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.*"

Mark 5:25-34 (emphasis added)

It is obvious the woman didn't just believe Jesus for her healing/deliverance, but also for her salvation, as Jesus referred to her as a member of His family. Jesus referred to her as a daughter. To Jesus, they were related. Jesus also made it clear that those who do the will of the Father were members of His family³⁵.

In summary:

³² Galatians 3:6

³³ 1 John 2:22-23

³⁴ Luke 13:16

³⁵ Mark 3:33-35

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- The woman suffered from a curse (plague) that affected her physically. (Mark 5:29)
- She believed if she touched Jesus, she could be released from her curse. Therefore, she was a believer before she was delivered. (Mark 5:27, 28)
- She was released from her curse because of her faith. (Mark 5:34)
- Jesus referred to her as a daughter, therefore making it clear that they were related. This also proves that she didn't just believe Jesus could heal/deliver her, but she was also believing upon Him, and it made her a member of Jesus' royal family in the spirit. (Mark 5:34)
- Jesus was clear. True members of His family were those who do the will of God. (Mark 3:33-35)

The woman did NOT believe Jesus was a magical man with healing powers. Otherwise, Jesus wouldn't have called her a DAUGHTER. She believed He was the Son of God, which is what is required to be a member of God's family!

Questions for the skeptics:

If this was a deliverance, why did they use the word "healed"? A lot of healings are deliverances. Verses such as Matthew 12:22 and Acts 10:38 tell Jesus 'healed' those who were bound by evil spirits. Healing and deliverance are closely related. Healing is often the word used to describe the setting free of a demon spirit causing a physical infirmity.

How are you so sure the word plague means a curse? There are three meanings to the Greek word used in the text. The first two use the word scourge, which means punishment (obviously more than physical problem). The third directly states misfortune or calamity, especially as a punishment.

How do you know she really believed in Jesus as the Son of God, and not just believed upon Him for her healing/deliverance? Again, Jesus called her a daughter. Jesus saw her as a spiritual daughter. Jesus made it clear, those who do God's will are members of His true family.

This is a good example of a someone, who recognized and believed in Jesus, but wasn't released from demonic bondage until they engaged their faith in Christ. By touching the hem of His garment, the woman expressed her faith. Only then did this believer receive deliverance.

Biblical example where believers can be under an evil spell

Bewitching is no light-hearted matter. It's witchcraft to say the very least. Acts 8:9, "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and *bewitched* the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one" (KJV, emphasis added).

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Galatians 3:1, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?" The NLT asks, "What *magician has cast an evil spell* on you?" Continuing into verses 2, it is clear Paul is addressing Spirit-filled believers, "This only I want to learn from you: Did you *receive the Spirit* by works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (emphasis added). This begs the question: how can somebody place a spell on a Christian?

If a Christian opens the door to such a thing, it can happen. Scripture warns that in the end times, some will pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons³⁶, and therefore depart from the faith. What do you think happens when we pay attention to seducing spirits? Why do you think we are warned not to do such a thing? Don't give the devil the time of day! For this reason, Paul refers to them as "foolish Galatians." They were giving heed to false teachings and it opened the door for them to be influenced by the demonic.

Other Christians who had demons in the Bible

In Mark 5:1-20, a story is told of a man with a legion of demons who runs to Jesus and worships Him. It's interesting to note, Jesus didn't go 'looking' for people to cast demons out of, He waited until they came to Him. But more interesting, Demons do not run to Jesus to worship Him. This man recognized Jesus was the son of God, and therefore able to set him free, so he ran. This demonstrates his personal faith in Jesus. The very act of coming to Jesus expresses that the person 'believed in Him'. Also interesting, often when Jesus cast out demons, He did it for people in the synagogues. Synagogues were the 'churches' of that time. Mark writes, "And he was preaching in their synagogue throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons."³⁷ Furthermore, many (if not all) of referred to Him as Lord. This gives us a good indication they were believers.

Satan HATES deliverance ministry

If deliverance isn't for the unbeliever, then who is it for? Believers! Followers of Christ. Christians can come under demonic bondage and be tormented by demons. The reason the devil doesn't want people to believe Christians can be in bondage is because he wants his work to go unexposed. Deliverance ministry is one of the most hated ministries by the devil, because it directly steps on his toes and rips his holds in the lives of God's children around the world.

³⁶ 1 Timothy 4:1

³⁷ Mark 1:39

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The greatest challenge is how does one minister to a Christian in heavy demonic bondage when they do not believe in demonic oppression of believers. Those who bitterly oppose the idea that Christians can have demons are left clueless when faced a believer in desperate need of deliverance and in undeniable bondage. Often, demonic bondage and torment is written off as spiritual warfare or mental illness. **Jesus didn't allow demons to continue tormenting people who came to Him!** The Bible tells us that He healed (made whole, which includes casting out demons) ALL who were oppressed of the devil. This means even oppression should be dealt with, not written off and considered normal.