



**Title:** What Does the Bible Say About Demonic Activity?

**Text:** Ephesians 6:11-12

*“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

**Introduction:** There are forces of evil at work in this world! The Devil and his demons are doing whatever they can to keep people from Jesus, and to stop the advancement of His Kingdom. As believers we need to be aware of this activity, and take it seriously. We also need to remember that Jesus rules and reigns! This will enable us to engage the forces of evil with faith, hope, and courage! Ultimately we will see victory because of Jesus!

## **I. Recognizing Demonic Activity**

### *A. Demonic Activity in the Bible*

- The Bible very clearly teaches that there are unseen forces of evil at work in this world!

## 1. In the Old Testament

**Deuteronomy 32:16-17** *“They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.”*

**1 Samuel 23:14-16** *“But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. 15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. 16 Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.”*

- The phrase *“from the Lord”* does not mean that God has demons working for Him. This is more likely a situation similar to the story of Job and God is allowing this evil spirit to trouble Saul.

**1 Samuel 23:23** *“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”*

## 2. In the New Testament

- The presence of demonic forces was acknowledged by Jesus during His public ministry.

**Matthew 4:24** *“And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.”*

**I Corinthians 10:20** *“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”*

**James 2:19** *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”*

## *B. Manifestations of Demonic Activity*

### **1. Physical Sickness and Distress**

**Matthew 12:22-28** *“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”*

**Matthew 17:14-18** *“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.”*

**Acts 5:16** *“There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.”*

- It is important to be clear that not all physical sickness or distress is the direct result of demonic activity.
- Physical sickness is a result of the sinfulness and brokenness of this world.

**Matthew 4:24** *“And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.”*

## 2. Paganism and Idolatry

**Deuteronomy 32:16-17** *“They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.”*

## 3. Blatantly False Doctrinal Statements

**1 John 4:2-3** *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*

## 4. A Lifestyle of Sin and Selfishness

**1 John 3:7-11** *“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”*

- It is important to understand that not everything we cannot explain or do not like can be attributed to demonic activity or influence. We should be careful and deliberate in our use of this language.

## 5. Spiritual Attacks

**Luke 22:31-32** *“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”*

**1 Peter 5:8-9** *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”*

**Ephesians 4:22-27** *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.”*

- As believers we must be aware of the spiritual attacks that we will face!

### *B. Demonic Possession*

- The phrase “possessed with devils” and other similar phrases are used in the New Testament to describe varying degrees of demonic activity.
- The Bible very clearly teaches that it is possible for a person to experience a strong demonic influence so that they are not in control of their mind or their actions.

**Mark 5:1-16** *“And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. 6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.”*

- Is this kind of demonic influence still happening today and can it happen to a Christian?
- This kind of strong demonic influence is only possible in the life of an unbeliever.
- Believers are protected from this type of strong demonic influence.

## II. Responding to Demonic Activity

- Christians should take seriously the reality of unseen evil at work in the world, and commit ourselves to engaging in spiritual warfare.

### A. *The Gospel*

- The most effective way to combat the forces of evil in this world is to be a faithful witness for Christ!

**Matthew 28:18-20** *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

**I Thessalonians 1:8-10** *“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”*

**I Corinthians 6:9-11** *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*

- It is the Gospel that has the power to change lives and give victory over the evil in this world!

## B. Discernment

**1 John 4:1** *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*

- Discernment comes from the Holy Spirit, and by trusting in the revealed truth of God.

**1 John 4:2-3** *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*

## C. Prayer

**Ephesians 6:18** *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*

- In the context of spiritual warfare, we are commanded to pray!

## D. Engagement

- Christians should be actively engaging in spiritual warfare!

**Luke 9:1** *“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.”*

**Luke 10:1** *“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”*

**Luke 10:17-21** *“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”*

**Acts 16:16-18** *“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: **17** The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. **18** And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”*

- What does this type of engagement with demonic forces look like practically in the life of an individual believer and in the life of the church today?
- We believe that the gift of healing and casting out devils were sign gifts, and that they served a particular purpose during a particular period in redemptive history. Eventually these sign gifts ceased so that they are no longer active in the church today.
- To engage the forces of evil today is to live a life of obedience to God’s Word, seek after righteousness and holiness, and preach the life-transforming message of the Gospel.
- This doctrinal position does not completely eliminate the idea of rebuking or calling out evil spirits and demons.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-6** *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”*

**Ephesians 6:11-12** *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

- We do not run from evil! We stand strong in the power of God!
- We do not stand in pride, but in humility!



**James 4:1-10** *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*

**Conclusion:**

1. There are unseen forces of evil at work in the world.
2. The influence of these forces can be observed in many practical ways.
3. The strong demonic influence often referred to as “demon possession” is possible in the life of an unbeliever, but not in the life of a believer.
4. The most effective way to fight against the demonic forces in the world is the spread of the Gospel.
5. Believers should be actively engaging in spiritual warfare through a life of obedience to Christ.