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Can Believers be Demon-Possessed?

God's Word is our only reliable source of truth about Satan and demons.

Princeton theologian and scholar Dr. Charles Hodge rightly warned, "No amount of learning, no superiority of talent, nor even the pretension to inspiration, can justify a departure from the truths taught by men to whose inspiration **God** has borne witness. All teachers must be brought to this standard; and **even if an angel from heaven should teach anything contrary to the Scriptures, he should be regarded as anathema** (see the commentary on **Galatians, to see link click Aj – No Other Gospel**)**.** It is a matter of constant gratitude that we have such a standard whereby we test **the spirits (First John 4:1-6) to see whether they are from God.**

What does **God's Word,** the benchmark of truth, say? Can **demons** inhabit **a** true **believer**? Can **demons** walk through an open door and become a squatter? Proponents of today's spiritual warfare movement say yes, but they base their answer on subjective experience, not on **God's Word**. The Bible makes it clear that such a claim has no justifiable basis.

There is no clear example in the Bible where **a demon** ever inhabited or invaded **a** genuine **believer**. Never in the books of the B'rit Chadashah are **believers** warned about the possibility of being inhabited by **demons**. Neither do we see anyone rebuking, binding, or casting **demons** out of **a** true **believer**. The epistles never instruct **believers** to cast out **demons**, whether from **a believer** or **unbelieve**r. **Messiah** and **the apostles** were the only ones who cast out **demons**, and in every instance **the demon-possessed** people were **unbelievers**.



The collective teaching of Scripture is that **demons** can never literally indwell **a** true **believer**. A clear implication of **Second Corinthians 6** (see **Bi – Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers**), for example, is that the indwelling **Ruach Ha'Kodesh** could never cohabit with **demons, "What harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God** said: **I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (6:15–16). Yeshua** said: **I am the light of the world (John 8:12) and His light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5).** In other words, **the light drives out the darkness.** At the moment you are saved, **the Lord** (along with **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh and God the Father)** takes up residence in you. **You are the temple of the living God (First Corinthians 6:19).** And since that **light** lives in you, and **drives out the darkness,** no **believer** can be **"demon possessed."**

In **Colossians 1:13, Paul** says **God "delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."** Salvation brings true deliverance and protection from **Satan**. In **Romans 8:37, Paul** says we overwhelmingly **conquer through Messiah**. In **First Corinthians 15:57, he** says **God** gives us victory. In **Second Corinthians 2:14 he** says **God** always leads us in triumph. In **First John 2:13, John** says we have overcome **the Evil One**. And, in **First John 4:4, he** says the indwelling **Ruach Ha'Kodesh is greater** than **the Devil, Ruler of this world**. How could anyone affirm those glorious truths, yet believe **demons** can indwell genuine **believers**?

Demon possession and true conversion: Many of the leading voices in today's

spiritual warfare movement are too quick to hail every profession of faith in **Messiah** as proof of salvation. That reflects the easy-believism that has swept this generation.

A thorough biblical understanding of the doctrine of conversion makes it clear that **demons** could never indwell or possess **a believer**. Jonathan Edwards (1703 to 1758), one of the chief fathers of the Great Awakening, wrote about genuine conversion, “Scripture describes conversion in terms which imply or signify a change of nature: being born again, becoming new creatures, rising from the dead, being renewed in the spirit of the mind, dying to sin and living to righteousness, putting off the old man and putting on the new, becoming partakers of the divine nature, and so on.”

“It follows that if there is no real and lasting change in people who think they are converted, their religion is worthless, whatever their experiences may be. Conversion is the turning of the whole man from sin to **God**. **God** can restrain unconverted people from sin, of course, but in conversion he turns the very heart and nature from sin to holiness. The converted person becomes the enemy of sin.”

“What, then, shall we make of a person who says he has experienced conversion, but whose religious emotions soon die away, leaving him much the same person as he was before? He seems as selfish, worldly, foolish, perverse and unbelieving as ever. This speaks against him louder than any religious experiences can speak for him.”

Speaking of those who had made a profession of faith only to end up back in the world, **John** writes: **They went out from us, but they didn’t really belong with us (believers). For if they had belonged with us, they would have remained with us; but their going** back into the world **showed that none of them belonged with us (First John 2:19 NIV).**

In **Yeshua Messiah**, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither a dramatic experience nor a quiet one, neither a wonderful testimony nor a dull one, counts for anything. The only thing that counts is being **a new creation** (see **Bb – A New Creation**).

In **Matthew 12, Messiah** rebuked those who were following **Him** just for the sake of witnessing great signs and wonders: **When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find**

it. Then it says, “I will return to my house from which I came”; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation (Matthew 12:43–45).

Instead of responding with spectacular signs and wonders, **Messiah** addressed their need for salvation. Many people appear to have their lives in order. But in reality, they have not trusted **Messiah** as **Savior and Lord**. Their souls are “unoccupied” — that is, **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** does not indwell them. Thus, they are open to **demonic** invasion. That cannot be true of those whose **bodies are temples of the Ruach Ha’Kodesh (Second Corinthians 6:16).**

According to **First Peter 1:5** when **Messiah** reigns in a person’s life, that person is **shielded by God’s power**. As a result, **the Evil One does not touch him (First John 5:18).** When **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** inhabits a person, no **demon** can set up a house as a squatter. Indwelling by **demons** is only evidence of a lack of genuine salvation.[174]