

Observations on Demonic Activity, #3

The last two lessons we have looked at the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke to make what observations we could from the various scriptures dealing with Jesus and the disciples “casting out demons”, and how that is a part of the “Great Commission” to us as believers. The “full gospel” means that we do not limit salvation to forgiveness of sins, but also include the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, physical healing, and deliverance from demonic oppression.

There is a gift of “discerning of spirits” listed in the gifts of the Spirit set in the church (1 Cor. 12:7-11), and we should be seeking that such a gift would be revealed and exercised here, but all of us can learn some things from scripture and from experience that will allow us to recognize the presence of evil spirits, so that we can cast them out, and “set the captives free”.

Why is this gift (or even our natural discernment) necessary? Because people don’t wear signs saying “I have a demon”. In fact, they are probably not even aware of it. Demons by nature want to remain hidden, and do not advertise their presence, because they are thus able to work undisturbed to bring their destructions to bear in the lives of the afflicted.

What motivates evil spirits?

If we want to fight effectively against the forces of darkness, it helps to know what motivates them.

- Hatred of God – they have entered a rebellion against the authority of God
- Hatred of mankind – they are utterly unable to defeat God directly, so Satan and his confederates have declared war on the human race. Why? Because man is made in God’s image, and they see that the only way to work against God is to wreak havoc on the human race.
- Also, evidently evil spirits have lusts and perverse desires that cannot be satisfied without a physical body to work through. Somehow they get an evil satisfaction by driving and influencing men to evil acts.

We should also know generally, what kind of evil spirits we face and fight against. (These are not all but some of the major categories. Occult spirits have been dealt with in a previous lesson.)

1. Principalities and Powers

Under Satan, the most powerful evil spirits seem to be those spoken of in Eph. 6:12 – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” This could be translated, “the world-rulers of this darkness”. These are not mere demons affecting a person, but powerful spiritual “generals” that try to control nations, or regions, or religions, or even cities.

Dan. 10:12-14, 20 – the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” fought against a mighty angel of God to keep him from getting through to aid and answer Daniel’s prayers and fastings, and only broke through with the aid of Michael, one of the “chief princes”. After Daniel’s prayer was answered, this angel went to “return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.”

Now obviously no mere man-prince can fight against a mighty angel of God. These are referring to mighty angels (both good and fallen) who are warring in the heavenlies to either resist God or to work his will in the earth, in large scale (kingdoms, empires, nations, etc.)

2. Religious spirits

- Those who receive worship through idolatry
 - Dt. 32:16-17 – “They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God ...” (also Lev. 17:7)
 - 2 Chr. 11:14-15 – wicked king Jeroboam got rid of the real (Levitical) priests, and “ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.”
 - Ps. 106:36-38 – “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils”

1 Cor. 10:20-21 – “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God” (see also Rev. 9:20)

- Those who inspire deceptions and false doctrine
 - 1 Tim. 4:1 – “... some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”
 - 2 Cor. 11:14-15 – “false apostles, deceitful workers ... no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

I believe that spirits are often what causes church splits, a religious opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit, the dilution of historical doctrinal truth, and other church problems.

3. Spirits of infirmity

Lk. 13:11, 16 – the woman had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years ... “And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

Ac. 10:38 – “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

Also, consider all the examples of spirits of blindness, deafness, and dumbness we saw in the previous two lessons, where the people were healed when Jesus cast out the demons.

In modern day testimonies, there are examples of spirits causing cancers, and many other physical ailments. In dealing with physical problems, we need to be able to discern whether we are dealing with a purely physical problem or whether it is being caused by an oppressing spirit.

4. Unclean spirits of perversion and vice

Jesus often cast out “unclean spirits”. e.g., Mk. 1:23-27, Mk. 5:1-19, Lk. 6:17-19, This is more than merely needing a bath. They are spirits that move a person to thoughts and acts of perversion, moral uncleanness, and vice.

Examples: lust, gluttony, greed, sexual promiscuity, sexual perversions, hatred, bitterness, murder, violence, ...

How do we fight against these evil spirits?

Obviously not by ignoring them. Our lack of willingness to resist them will NOT cause them to leave us alone. We are in the fight, whether we like it or not. Acquiescence is defeat. So how do we fight:

- **Principalities and powers?** Not by casting them out, but by the wrestlings of intercessory prayer, and fastings (Eph. 6).
- **Religious spirits?** Maybe by casting them out, but more usually by the faithful teaching of the Word, and exposing lies and heresies as they arise. Also by fighting against the temptations to spiritual laziness and apathy. Specific personal activities in other religions, or false cults and doctrines, should be dealt with by specific confession and renunciation, and destruction of all supporting materials.
- **Spirits of infirmity?** By casting them out in the name (by the delegated authority) of Jesus. This can be done by believing Christians, not just by “licensed exorcists”, whatever that means. There are times when more powerful demonic oppressions may require specific prayer and fasting.
- **Unclean spirits?** Also by casting them out.

Preview of what is next:

1. How you can recognize demonic activity in or against yourself or others
2. Some possible causes of such oppression, and
3. How to gain deliverance by faith in Christ.