

Exorcism

Who?

What?

Why?



By:
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A Christian!

Exorcism

I came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord while still in my teen years. It was while attending a **Baptist church** located in my home town on Long Island where I first heard the Gospel of Christ clearly proclaimed. This was a church that stood firmly upon the basic tenets of the historic biblical faith and that without watering it down or compromising it. Even though I have long since left that church and no longer live in New York, I am so grateful that God led me to such a congregation that was not afraid to take bold biblical stands.

I am now in my mid-seventies and continue to hold forth the Gospel of Christ and that without compromise. After graduating from high school I attended Bible College¹ and have both founded and pastored Bible-believing churches.² I've since retired from pastoring but continue to be involved in the Lord's work living in the mountains of central Arizona.

In this booklet I am touching on a subject that is often ignored in churches today. During my years in that Baptist church on Long Island and the years I spent in Bible College I virtually heard little if anything about this subject. I knew that the Bible taught that there is a spirit-being whom we know as Satan or the Devil. I can hardly remember ever hearing about demons. In fact, in **my background** as a Baptist and a Bible College student it seemed to me that demons were evil spirit-beings that were largely confined to lands steeped in paganism and heathenism such as in Africa and India. The only Christians that I can remember talking about demons were some of the missionaries who spoke and ministered while on furlough. They were usually from **Africa**.

¹ I graduated from Northeastern Bible College and also attended Northwestern College and Baptist Bible Seminary.

² Bethel Bible Church, Faith Baptist Church and Casa de Cristo Evangelical Church.

It was not until I became exposed to the Pentecostals and later Charismatics that I began hearing much about the devil, about demons and what some refer to as **exorcism**. Since then I have had opportunity to see and experience that which I had previously either avoided or was unaware of.

What is exorcism and is it real?

Exorcism is the **casting out or expulsion** of spirit beings that are evil. The Bible refers to these as "**demons**." A number of years ago Hollywood came out with a movie titled, "**The Exorcist**." It seems that since the showing of that film an increasing number of people in the United States have become **aware of the spirit world**. Though many people will "pooh-pooh" the reality and power of the spirit realm, yet few deny that there are **forces of evil**. *John Calvin*, the Reformer, promoted a teaching that is known as: "*The total depravity of man*." The Bible teaches that all human beings are sinners. That everyone of us is born with a nature that is prone to sinning. **See** – Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:12.

What and who are demons?

Demons are **spirit entities** that are **fallen angels**. When **Lucifer**, who became known as **Satan or the devil** rebelled in heaven against God, he with a host of angels were banished from heaven. **See** – Isaiah 14:12-17. This banished host came to dwell especially upon and around planet earth. **See** – Revelation 12:7-9. They are able to **inhabit** both human beings, places and some forms of the animal kingdom. **See** – Mark 5:1-13.

Ghosts and familiar spirits

"**Ghosts**" and "**familiar spirits**" are in reality demons. That which is called "**ghost**" in the **King James Version** of the Bible is more accurately referred to in the modern Bible translations as "**the spirit**" or "**breath**" of life of the individual. When an individual dies his or hers spirit **does not linger** and/or remain on earth as some **New Agers or Spiritists** believe. Upon death the spirit or soul of the individual leaves their body. Most Christians believe that this part of the believer enters into the presence of God (**Philippians 1:20-24**) whereas that of the unbeliever enters a place referred to as Hades

(Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:14-15) in the New Testament awaiting the day of Judgment at the Great White Throne. **See** – Revelation 20:11-15. It should be noted that where the older version of the **Apostles' Creed** states of our Lord that "**He descended into hell**" is not correct. Our Lord **did not** go to hell when he died. His spirit went to the place of the departed dead. Believers living under the Old Covenant upon death went to **Paradise**. **See** – Luke 23:39-43. While our Lord was in the grave his spirit went to this place and set the spirits of those **believers** free taking them to the Father. **See** – 1 Peter 3:19. The **unbelieving dead** went to **Sheol** (Hebrew) or **Hades** (Greek rendition). In fact, **no one is in hell** at this point in time. Hell is the place prepared specifically for the devil and his demonic host as indicated in the Book of Revelation. **See** – Revelation 20:10.

Biblical warning!

The people of God, both under the Old Covenant as well as under the New Covenant, are to avoid playing with or delving into the spirit world. **All forms of the occult** whether very innocently engaged in or seriously undertaken violate God's will for believers. **See** – Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; 2 Kings 21:1-15; 23:24-25; Isaiah 8:19-3; 1 John 4:1-6; 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

Exorcism is not confined to Christianity. The various religions of the world all recognize forces of both good and evil. They may be referred to in different ways and by different name, nevertheless they are very real to the people associated with these religions: Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Native American, Animism, Voodoo, etc.

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy have set forms (liturgy) that are used by their clergy who are designated as Exorcists. The various sects and denominations within **Protestantism** have developed their own guidelines for this practice. The liturgical **Anglicans** usually have a designated Exorcist in each diocese whereas **Pentecostals and Charismatics** do not have an order of exorcists but their pastors and others often either perform or **claim** this to be their ministry. **Evangelical and Mainline Protestants** usually either ignore this as a minis-

try or view all aspects of demonic activity as either emotional or psychological disturbances rather than Satanic.

Jesus Christ recognized both Satan and his host of evil spirits. One cannot read or study the four Gospel accounts of the life and ministry of our Lord without quickly discovering him dealing with these forces. Casting out demons was part of the credentials of our Lord as Messiah. **See** – Matthew 12:22-28 and Luke 11:14-20.

Is Satan, the Evil One, real?

Many modern day theologians scoff at the idea that there is a real spirit being who the Bible calls Satan or the Devil, i.e., *the Evil One*. As already mentioned Christ recognized the existence of this fallen angel. **See** – Matthew 4:1-11; John 12:31; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:7-10.

Satan's task is to deceive the people of the world. Since the beginning he has been the deceiver (Genesis 3:13). **See also** 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15.

Are Demons real or imaginative?

Biblical Christians believe that they are very real, that they do exist. Personally I do not go out looking for demons however, I am aware of their presence. Unlike some of my Pentecostal and Charismatic friends I do not see either the devil or demons under every rock. Nevertheless, I have had some experience in dealing with both. **See** – 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Demonic activity is multi-faceted. I view demonic activity largely four-fold:

1. demon-possession;
2. demonic-influence;
3. demonic-attachment;
4. demonic-oppression.

Biblical Commission

- Authority given to the twelve – Matthew 10:1.
- Our Lord commissioned the 70 in Luke 10:17-20.
- Note what these disciples were to rejoice in the above passage.

Who can exorcise demons?

Technically all believers have the authority to minister in this manner. See – Mark 16:17. To be effective in this ministry the individual must be prepared and properly equipped:

- Be a man/woman of prayer and the Word. See – Revelation 12:11.
- Minister in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. See – Ephesians 6:16-17; 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to lead and direct. This ministry must not be undertaken lightly as is the case among some Christians.
- Faith, prayer and fasting are essential. See - Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:27-29; Luke 9:37-43.
- Demons are cast-out in the Name of Jesus Christ. See – Acts 16:16-18.

Using the Name of Jesus *is not* a mantra or “good luck” charm (omen) and is misused by many *would-be* exorcists. Nevertheless the demonic is most effectively dealt with through the atoning shed blood and the Name and Power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. See – Acts 19:13-16; Revelation 12:10-11.

Use caution!

Whatever you do *always* use caution when dealing in the spirit realm. Too many followers of Christ barge into this realm without the proper preparation and equipping that the Spirit of God has provided for believers. As mentioned earlier be careful not to **see the devil or demons under every rock!** Always keep in mind that *the enemy* is not all powerful. God alone is omnipotent. **Be careful** of those Christian leaders who *claim* to possess certain powers in casting out the devil or demons. Unfortunately there are many who are counterfeiting this ministry within Christendom. See – Matt. 7:15-23; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:9-12.

Another danger to be aware of is **unbelief**. Christians in the West often relegate belief in the devil and the demonic as primitive beliefs. Yet, Satan and his host of spirit beings are very real. Unbelief is from the Evil One. Satan is alive and well but his eventual doom is noted in Scripture. See – Revelation 10:10 again.

Other dangers that Christians need to be aware of in this ongoing battle with Satan and his host are:

- **Apathy** from churches and Christians who are either unaware or just don't appear to care that demonic activity is a force to be reckoned with.
- **The uninformed** who possess zeal but not according to knowledge. They are causing great harm within the Body of Christ.
- **Lack of discernment** exhibited by some who are not in tune with the Holy Spirit's direction.
- **Instances of** the mentally unstable, psychologically disturbed, chemical imbalance and multi-facet personalities are not always the result and/or evidence of demonic activity. However, some are. It is not always easy for the untrained to discern the one from the other. When Christians embark upon ministering in the realm of spirit activity, they must use caution to be sure they are being led by God.

What can each believer do to confront and combat the forces of evil?

As Christians we need to be aware that every believer is engaged in a spiritual battle. It is referred to as a battle or warfare because **the enemies of God** are busy seeking to thwart the work of God in the life of the individual believer as well as within the Body of Christ. See – Ephesians 6:12.

- Actively resist Satan and his host. See – James 4:7.
- Keep in step with the leading of the Holy Spirit. See - Galatians 5:25.
- Properly and regularly equip ourselves for spiritual warfare. See - Ephesians 6:10-18.
- Recognize that God's truth breaks bondage and sets the captive free. See – John 8:31-32, 36.

We, believers in Jesus Christ, have the victory over Satan and his host. We need not be defeated. By the name and through the power of God **we are** overcomers. See – 1 John 5:4-5; Romans 12:21.

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