

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Classes.....9 A.M.
Worship 10:00 A.M.
Worship/Bible Study..5 P.M.

Wednesday:

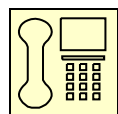
Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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Weekly Bulletin May 30, 2021

Do Demons Possess People Today?

by Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

Occasionally, I run into those who want to know whether or not demons possess people today. We see accounts of supposed demon possessions in newspapers, magazines, and television shows. It has also been a favorite subject in Hollywood, with such moves as “The Exorcist” and “The Omen.” With so much fanciful material bombarding our lives, it’s no wonder we run into people who have questions about it. Let’s look then at what the Bible says about it.

First, one who examines the Bible will immediately see that demons or unclean spirits did possess people in the days of Christ. There are numerous examples: The man in the synagogue (Mark 1:23-28); the two men of the Gergesenes (Matt. 8:28-34); Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9); as well as others. Jesus demonstrated His power by casting out these demons, and was even wrongly accused of using Satan’s power to cast them out (Matt. 12:24). The power to cast out these demons was also given to His disciples (Matt. 10:1; Luke 10:17). No one, then, can deny that demon possession did occur at one time.

The question we want to address, however, is whether or not demons still possess people today. Let me say from the outset that I believe that the Bible strongly indicates that people ceased to be possessed by demons after the days of the New Testament. Several things cause one to come to this conclusion. First, the ability to cast out demons was usually connected with the ability to speak in tongues, heal people of diseases, and to prophesy (Mark 16:17-18; Matt. 10:1; cf. Matt. 7:22). We know from 1 Corinthians 13 that the ability to prophesy and the ability to speak in tongues ceased with the coming of the complete revelation of God. We realize that, in general, the miraculous spiritual gifts the early disciples possessed were given to them in order to confirm the word that was being revealed at the time (Mark 16:20). When the complete revelation had come, there was no more need for them. These spiritual gifts then ceased from the earth upon the completion of God's revelation, and one would assume that the ability to cast out demons ceased with the ability to speak in tongues and prophesy and heal the sick and so on. If the ability to cast out demons has ceased, then it would follow that the possibility to be possessed by demons no longer exists. It would be ridiculous to think that God would allow us to be possessed by demons with no way out of it.

I'm sure, however, some who read this will say, "All right, I realize that the abilities to prophesy and speak in tongues have ceased, because they are specifically mentioned as things that would pass away. But demon possession is not so mentioned, so how can you be so sure that it ceased at the same time?" We can turn to Old Testament prophecy for that answer. Several Messianic prophecies tell us about what will take place during the time that the Messiah's kingdom is established. One such

prophecy is found in Zechariah 13:1-4. Here Zechariah talks of a day when "a fountain shall be opened" to his people "for sin and uncleanness." This is clearly a reference to the time when the blood of Christ would be made available to take away our sins. The prophecy goes on to say that three other things would happen "in that day." He says the name of idols would be cut off from the land—a reference to the fact that those in God's kingdom do not worship idols but the true God. He goes on to say the prophet and unclean spirit would be caused to depart from the land. As we have already seen, eventually prophecy ceased in the kingdom; it was done away with. If one claims to be a prophet today, we know he is a liar, because as Zechariah says, "if anyone still prophesies," he will be told, "you have spoken lies." It is impossible for one to speak prophecies when prophecies have ceased; and if one does, you know he is a false prophet. But notice at the same time the prophets were to depart from the land, the unclean spirit would also depart from the land. So just as surely as prophecies have ceased, people have ceased to be possessed by unclean spirits or demons. Homer Hailey makes the following comment concerning this prophecy: "In the conquest of Christ over Satan and his forces, unclean spirits have ceased to control men as they did in the time of the ministry of Christ and the apostles" (*A Commentary on The Minor Prophets*, p. 392).

While demons do not possess men today, we can allow Satan himself to control our lives. It is him we need to be concerned with today, not the demons who might possess us. While the demons of Christ's day came in and took control of someone against their will, Satan can only do it if we allow him to do it. We need to be diligent then in our efforts to keep him from controlling our lives (1 Pet. 5:8-9). We need to turn to Jesus and let Him control our lives.