

Background bible references

Jesus and his disciple's engagement with evil spirits

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Indicators of a 'spiritual' rebellion (3 rebellions?)

1. Genesis 3 - the serpent (later identified in scripture as Satan) is in clear rebellion against God
2. Genesis 6:1-8 - at a the time where human wickedness is seen to be spreading, here is a strange account of 'sons of god' (perhaps part of Gods 'divine counsel'? see Job 1:6) rebelling, and taking human partners.
3. Deut.32:8 / Genesis 11:1-9 - There appears to be a designation of spiritual beings assigned over nations at the point of God scattering people from Babel. Psalm 82 describes God judging these forces because they had rebelled, causing human suffering. Isaiah 24:21-22 seems to show how God punishes such a host of the heavens for their rebellion. This matter relates helpfully to Daniel 9 & 10, where Daniel experiences 'princes' who appear to have some kind of jurisdiction over nations; and some are not good. Paul's description in Ephesians 6:12 of 'Principalities and Powers' fits with this picture.

So we have Satan; who is described as in charge of his angels (Matt. 25:41)
and we have evil spirits engaged directly with individuals
and we have territorial spirits who were assigned to nations/people groups.

All three are described in scripture in rebellion against God.

Jesus and evil spirits:

In all synoptics, Jesus is described in battle with the devil in the wilderness (Matt. 4, Mark 1, Luke 4) From the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus encounters and drives out evil spirits (e.g. Mk 1:21-28). Scripture gives a handful of specific demonic encounters with Jesus (e.g. Mark 5:1-20, Matt. 9:32-34) but also cites Jesus more generally casting demons out (e.g. Matt. 4:24, Matt. 8:16, Luke 7:21). In the same way (and frequency) that the gospels describe Jesus as a healer of sickness, he is portrayed as regularly setting people free from evil spirits.

The disciples and demons:

Jesus commissioned the Twelve to both be his messengers and to cast out demons (Mk 3:14-15), replicating his ministry. In Luke 10, 17-20 we find that yet more disciples return from mission, which included the successful casting out of evil spirits. So we can see very early evidence of many followers of Jesus engaged in his deliverance ministry.

Jesus' authority over all evil:

We find later in the letters that Jesus is described (after his death, resurrection and ascension) as being exalted above all powers and authorities: Eph. 1: 15-23, 1 Pet. 3:18-22. In 1 Cor. 15:20-26 describes Jesus finally destroying all these rebellious powers and authorities at the end of the Age.

Christians and demonic influence:

If a person is believer they cannot be 'possessed' by a demon (and this phrase is a poor translation of what is actually described in the gospels as 'demonised'). A Christian belongs to God and has been bought at a price (1 Cor.6:20), so no evil spirit can completely take over a Christian. However, Paul does say that we must not give the devil a foothold (Eph. 4:27); which indicates it is possible to allow Satan and evil spirits to 'infest or influence' us. This can be straightforwardly dealt with by living a life faithful to God, breaking with any persistent patterns of sin (ranging from embedded wrong attitudes, to porn addiction), and avoiding false or dark beliefs (like the occult).

Renouncing Prayers: To use to separate yourself from any evil influences

A simple prayer to realign your focus:

“Lord Jesus

I commit myself to being your follower today.

I choose to know and follow you over all other influences.

I reject the influence of anything negative from my past.

I renounce any connection to anything bad from my past.

I receive again your Holy Spirit,

I receive again your Word,

So that I can renew my mind and live a life full of your attitude, behaviour and power.

In your name,

Amen.”

Breaking links with the occult/ false beliefs/persistent sinful behaviours:

You can pray these prayers with another person or by yourself. If you have a trusted Christian friend, church leader or counsellor that will pray this with you, it will be most beneficial for you. For anything that is complex, which may involve mental illness, seek advice from your church leader. The scriptures emphasise that there is an additional element of healing when we confess our sins to each other (James 5:16). Confession is important because it signifies our agreement with God that we did something wrong. It clears the way for us to receive healing, forgiveness and cleansing from the ill-effects of our sin (1 John 1:9). If you are ready to confess your sin and turn away from it with no regrets, please pray the below prayers specifically for each area of the occult/wrong behaviour/belief you have been involved with:

“Father God, I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who was crucified and resurrected from the dead. I confess that I have sinned in the following ways:

_____ (list the sin). I renounce these sins and the use of my body in conjunction with them. I renounce any attempt I have made to seek power or knowledge from any source outside of Jesus Christ. Please forgive me, Father, for entering the realm of evil and opening myself up to the devil's influences.

I now take my position as a redeemed son / daughter of God in Jesus Christ in my family. Lord God, please cleanse me with the blood of Jesus and fill me afresh with the Holy Spirit. I receive your Spirit now. (pause for a time of silent prayer) Please unite my heart to live for you in righteousness. I now present my members as instruments for righteousness and not for sin. I am your vessel, Lord. Thank You, Father! I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”

If you prayed that prayer and meant it, you can be confident that God has forgiven you and purified you of your sin. In fact, God doesn't even remember your sin once you've confessed it. He said in Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." You can now move forward in your walk with God without condemnation concerning the past!