

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## There's More: Learning to Deal With the Demonic

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“Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness... <sup>7</sup> ‘Going-about, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”’ <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.” Matthew 10:1,7-8

“The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ <sup>18</sup> And He said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. <sup>19</sup> Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.’” Luke 10:17-20

“When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.” Matthew 8:16

When you read about the ministry of Jesus, one of the things that He did that was drastically different than other religious leaders, OT prophets, or even John the Baptist, is that He cast out demons. There are twenty-seven verses in the first three gospels where Jesus, or His disciples, were said to be casting out a demon (Matt. 8:16,31; 9:33,34; 10:1,8; 12:24,27,28; 17:19; Mk. 1:34,39; 3:15,22; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18,28; 16:9; Lk. 9:40; 10:2; 11:14,15,18,19,20; 13:32).

There were others who claimed to be able to remove demons at the time, Jewish and pagan “exorcists”, “magicians”, or practitioners of witchcraft (like there are today). **The pagan mindset was to use spells, sacrifices, or magical formulas to bring the demons under an “oath” (*orkos*) or “legal power” to compel them to leave.** Often, they would use external means to make it uncomfortable for the demon (at least that is what they thought). Sometimes they would afflict the person with fasting, beatings, or make them eat foods to make them sick, or have them sit in foul-smelling smoke, to try to convince the demon to leave. They would concoct potions and “medicines” that were supposedly designed to weaken or repel the demon. **By contrast, Jesus expelled them with a word** (Matt. 8:16).

Interestingly, the word “exorcism” or “exorcist” is *never* used of what Jesus and His disciples did. The only reference to “exorcists” is Acts 19:13, referring to the seven sons of Sceva. They were not believers in Jesus, but they tried to use His name to put the demons under their authority to make them to leave. The demon knew who Jesus was, but recognized that these men did not have authority from Him, and attacked and overpowered them. Every other time the word “*exorkizō*” occurs in the Bible, it refers to putting a person under oath (Gen. 24:3; Judg. 17:2; Matt. 26:63).

**Before going any farther, we should define what a “demon” is.** The words, “*daimōn*” (Matt. 8:31) or “*daimonion*” were used in the Greek language to describe an evil spirit, or even a minor deity (Acts 17:18; 1 Cor. 10:20,21; Rev. 9:20). The word “demon” occurs over sixty times in the NT (Matt. 7:22; 9:33,34; 10:8; 11:18; 12:24,27,28; 17:18; Mk. 1:34,39; 3:15,22; 6:13; 7:26,29,30; 9:38; Lk 4:33,41; 7:33; 8:2,27,29,30,33,35,38; 9:1,42,49; 10:17; 11:14,15,18,19,20; 13:32; Jn. 7:20; 8:48,49,52; 10:20,21; Acts 17:18; 1 Cor. 10:20,21; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev. 9:20; 16:14; 18:2). **It described a spiritual being that was neither human nor Divine. In the pagan worldview, however, these spirit-beings were viewed as having power, and were often appeased by offering sacrifices or some service.** The Greek translation of the OT indicates that such demons were behind the idol worship of the Gentiles (Deut. 32:17; Psa. 96:5 [idols=demons]; 106:37). This understanding carries over to the NT (1 Cor 10:20; Rev. 9:20). **Demons are equated with “unclean spirits”** (Lk. 8:28-30; 9:42 cf. Matt. 10:1; Lk. 9:1). The phrase “unclean spirit” occurs over twenty times in the NT (Matt. 10:1; 12:43; Mk. 1:23,26,27; 3:11; 5:2,8,13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:25; Lk. 4:33,36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Acts 5:16; 8:7; Rev. 16:13). The word “unclean” would seem to be in contrast to what is “holy”, meaning that **these are spirits that have been “defiled” in some way.** In Lk. 4:33, a man was “having a spirit of an unclean demon”. The Bible does not give us a straightforward definition. We are left to surmise what demons are. There is absolutely no support for the notion that demons are the spirits of humans who have died, or “ghosts”. When people die, they go to either Hades or to be with the Lord (if they are believers in Jesus). We know that angels are spirits, or spirit-beings (Psa. 104:4). We also know that when Satan rebelled against God, angels joined in his rebellion (Rev. 12:7-9). They were thrown down from heaven to the earth. At the end of the age, the devil and his angels will be consigned to the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). **It would seem, then, that demons are fallen angels, spirits who have become defiled or unclean by their sin. Satan, too, is a fallen angel, a *daimonion*, a spirit-being who wants to be worshipped.** He is referred to as the ruler of the demons (Matt. 9:34; 12:24-26).

**What do demons do?** In spite of what your English translation might say, the phrase “demon possession” or “possessed by a demon” does not occur anywhere in the scriptures. In fact, it is often the other way around, ...a person is described as “*having a demon*” or “*being demonized*” (Matt. 9:32; Lk. 8:27; Acts 8:7). It is like a person “has” a cold, or a disease, or a parasite. **When a person is being harassed or troubled by a demon, it may be more circumstantial, geographic, or temporary, as in a spiritual attack** (2 Cor. 12:7). **But, when a demon has found a way**

**to infiltrate a person's life in a consistent manner, it tries to *inhabit* that person.** The person is like a "home" in which the demon tries to set up shop. **A demon can cause sickness (Lk. 4:40,41); disabilities (e.g., deaf and mute – Matt. 9:32; woman bent over double – Lk. 13:10-13); seizures, convulsions and physical pain (Matt. 17:15-18). Demons can trouble, annoy, disturb, afflict or agitate people (Lk. 6:18). They suggest sinful thoughts and plans (Jn. 13:2; Acts 5:3). They can turn people against one another (Jdg. 9:23), and can cause people to be violent (1 Sam. 18:10-12; Matt. 8:28; Acts 19:13-16). Demons will try to blind or distract people from understanding the word of God (Mk. 4:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). They will try to establish false beliefs and arrogant arguments to block their victims from coming to know God (2 Cor. 10:3-5). In extreme cases, a demonized person may display extraordinary strength (Mk. 5:3,4; Acts 19:16). Demons will often drive people to isolate themselves (Lk. 8:29), and live in degrading conditions (Lk. 8:27). They may resort to cutting themselves. They may wander about talking to themselves or even scream for no apparent reason (Mk. 5:5).**

**So, how are we to help someone who is being demonized?** So much depends on how or why we think someone may be troubled by a demon, and what the presenting symptoms might be. We should not assume there is a demon present in a person, unless there is clear evidence that indicates this is the case. **Going to God is *always* the first step.** We should pray for discernment. If we know of someone in the body who has the spiritual gift of discerning spirits, it would be helpful to confirm if this is indeed what we are dealing with. **If we are going to meet with the afflicted person, we should first gather to spend some time in worship and prayer before anything else. The Biblical order is to "submit to God", then "resist the devil" (Jas. 4:7).** The word for "submit" is to "be ordered under". The opposite is reflected by the previous verse, "God opposes the proud" (4:6). The word for "proud" refers to those who overestimate their own abilities. Instead, we are to humble ourselves, and yield to God. "God gives grace to the humble". God assures us that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us (4:8). During this time, we should consciously take up the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18), and pray for protection for our families, our property, and ourselves. **We are to empty ourselves of our agenda, and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide our time and our hearts. The "dagger" of the Spirit is the "rhēma-word" of God, ...the personal instructions of the Spirit in our situation.**

**What is our authority?** Jesus has paid for sin, overcome death and defeated the devil. Every charge that could be levied against us was nailed to the cross, and He disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities (Col. 2:13-15). He came specifically to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8). He *has* all authority on heaven and earth, and He *has given us* authority and power over the devil and his subordinates (Matt. 28:18; Lk. 10:19). **Just as all the armor for our protection is all about what Jesus is for us, ...in the same way Jesus is the source of our legal authority over the enemy.**

**Then we are to take a stand against the invading or harassing spirit.** This is the literal translation of "resist", both in Ephesians 6:13, James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:9. We are to "stand over against, or in opposition to" the evil spirit. **The thing that was most unusual about how Jesus dealt with demons is that He did not use theatrics, spells, incantations, or any other extraneous means. He cast them out with a word (Matt. 8:16; Mk. 1:25-27).** We see the apostle Paul do the same thing in Acts 16:18, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out!" The word for "charge" literally means to "message alongside". It means to deliver a notice, command or charge to someone. In Mark 9:25, Jesus used a different word, meaning "to exercise authority upon by giving specific instructions." He said to the deaf and dumb spirit, "I order upon you, come out of him, and no longer enter into him!" Neither of these are the normal word for "command". **He delivered the order or the charge, and then the responsibility was upon the spirit to comply.** However, in order to have a realistic expectation, we need to take note that **Jesus was repeatedly telling the man with the Legion of demons, and they did not respond at first.** "Taking a stand over against" is to stand firm on the charge you delivered, even if it is *not* obeyed immediately. Ephesians 6:12 describes the warfare as "intense-struggle" or "wrestling". We should not be surprised by resistance. **Jesus insisted.**

**The important thing to realize is that Jesus did not have to "beat up" the demon to get it leave. It left of its own volition, because it was legally required to do so. We do not have to use "brute force", ...not even "spiritual brute force"..., to get it to leave. That is not our function.** We are like a traffic cop in a busy intersection. That cop has legal authority that ranks *higher* than the raw power of those cars and trucks that he may be directing. In the same way, we have been given legal authority over these unclean spirits, when we are abiding in Christ. **God will enforce the authority that comes from Him. We are to deliver the command to leave, and then insist that it be followed.** We may need to ask God to enforce His word, and we may need to deliver the charge to leave repeatedly. That is importunity, ...faith-persistence in pursuit of our objective.

**During this time of oppositional struggle, the Holy Spirit may give us instructions that are specific to the case we are dealing with.** We must be open to acknowledge and respond to those. They may be "keys" to unlock and remove resistance. **The Spirit may use revelatory spiritual gifts to bring these to our attention.**

**Finally, we must be sure to "fill" the person with the love of God and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:43-45), and follow them up. Deliverance is more than just expelling a demon. It is helping the individual find freedom and healing.**