

WORKGROUP



BACK TO THE BIBLE

“ Can Christians be possessed by demons?” Bible study by pastor Ing. M.v.d.Kraats.

Lesson nr. **2**

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders ,

Warm greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We're busy in the work of the Lord. In our last letter we promised that we would deal, in this letter, with the question, if Christians also can be possessed. We have covered the subject of the casting out of demons in unbelievers, in which we saw that people have been troubled, by demons for the last three thousand years. The devil is the same and ministers, evangelists and elders should keep this in mind and be prepared to deal with this, in a biblical way, if confronted with it. The question arises however, if it is possible for a born again Christian to be possessed by a demon or demons. Many Christians would answer "of course it's not possible". Other Christians would say " reality proves differently". They will then go on to recite stories, in which demons have been cast out of born again Christians. What is the truth? Who is right? The necessity of studying the bible for the answer is obvious in the light of these different opinions. In this letter we will be using many quotations which perhaps will make the letter a bit more difficult to follow. You've been warned! To make it simpler to read we have chosen to use the word demons, instead of powers of darkness or evil spirits.

What happened that the world became enslaved?

Because man is a descendant of Adam, he is a sinner and needs redemption. Once man had listened to satan, he did it more often. Once satan had tempted man, he did it more often too. It became a habit that man was constantly tempted to sin. No, it became even worse. Man sinned from within himself. The

Bible says that there is nothing good in man. Paul writes this in the letter to the Romans. Rom.7:18 says: *"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."* King David, the psalmist, expresses it very clearly: *"The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no-one who does good, not even one."* (Ps.14:2,3) Why is it so important to understand that there is no good in man?

The answer is, because man is completely responsible for his own actions. Satan does play an important role in this by constantly tempting us, but he is not the chief culprit. It is man himself who is the sinner. Satan will be punished for his deceptions but that is something between him and God and we have nothing to do with that. If it seems that man is in bondage, then that comes because of all the terrible sins that he has committed himself, and is still committing. Paul, with the same view as Jesus, calls these people slaves of sin. (John 8:34, Rom.6:17) It appears as if it's satans fault that we sin, because of the big part he plays in tempting us, but this is not true. Man sins because he is himself a sinner and allows himself to be led and deceived by the devil.

Do "indwelling" demons cause Christians to sin?

- The Englishman, Derek Prince, describes in his latest book, which is a kind of biography on the last thirty years of his ministry, several cases where Christians cast out demons. As previously mentioned in earlier letters, Derek Prince feels it is important to know the names of the resident demons. He has mentioned in his book a number of names: *"demon of hate, demon of pride demon of jealousy demon of self pity, demon of unfaithfulness, demon of lies, demon of flirting, demon of touching, demon of adultery, demon of criticism, demon of gossip, demon of murder, demon of rebellion, demon of religion, demon of violence, demon of masturbation, demon of perversion, demon of suicide, demon of witchcraft, demon of anger, demon of rebellion, demon of lust; demon of gluttony demon of nicotine, demon of yoga, demon of alcohol, demon of blasphemy, demon of impure language, demon of doubt and demon of exaggeration."* The Dutchman, Hans Koning mentions in his book, "Jezebel-spirit" the same kind of demons and also a few other ones such as: *"demon of manipulation, demon of control, demon of fortune-telling, demon of strife, demon of desire, demon of provocation, demon of domination, demon of sorcery, demon of inferiority and demon of unforgiveness."*

- The American, Robert Liardon also writes in his book, "Destroy the controlling powers", about the "demons of religion", but also about "*demons of control, demons of poverty, demons of fear and demons of bitterness.*"
- The Canadian, Rev. Ray McGraw has listed 21 demons, which should be taken into account when counselling Christians. Such as: "*demon of false prophecy, demon of error, demon of disobedience, demon of destruction, demon of jealousy, demon of the anti-Christ, demon of condemnation and demon of indecision.*" The American psychologist, Ken Thornberg talks about the following demons: "*demons who call themselves Jesus Christ, demons of independence, demons with black boots (women) and the demonic light.*"
- The American, Jim Brewer mentions in his book, "Setting the Prisoners Free" the following demons: "*demon of revenge, demon of anger, demon of murder, demon of confusion, demon of alcohol, demon of loneliness, demon of brainwashing, demon of sorrow, demon of pain, demon of crying, demon of sadness, demon of homosexuality, demon of hate for Jehovah God, demon of laziness, demon of selfishness, demon of impatience, demon of haughtiness, demon of self-glorification, demon of suspicion and demon of the flesh .*"
- The American couple, Frank and Ida Hammond list in their book, "Demons and Liberation", no less than 250 names of demons. The list consisting of ten pages records similar names of demons that we have just mentioned here. In the foreword they express their gratitude to Derek Prince, from whom they have learned a lot about Christians with residing demons.

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Comment workgroup: Every Christian receives salvation from Christ at his new birth, he is made righteous before God through Christ and he receives the Holy Spirit as a guarantee. From that moment on, by the grace of God, the process of holiness has begun. Inwardly, he is being renewed daily. He learns to say no to sin and choose the new life. Nevertheless, this is a struggle for him as he has to resist satan and also his own sinful nature. We are aware of the influence on us of demons from the outside, but it is certain that they do not come from inside. (Eph.6:12) It is a matter of walking by faith, learning to resist sin and listening to the indwelling Holy Spirit. The bible describes this as producing the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal.5:22) As opposed to these positive fruits, the sinful nature produces negative fruits, the works of the flesh. (Gal.5:10-22) If we now compare the above mentioned names of demons, it is interesting to see that they look very much like the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh are: "*sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.*"

To claim that it is the indwelling demons that produce the works of the flesh in the lives of Christians or in some Christians is not right and also not biblical. When Paul writes in the letter to the Galatians about the works of the flesh, he means the works of the old man in us. In the first chapters of Romans, Paul clearly says that man, whether Jew or Gentile is a sinner. According to him sin comes about because of the old man in us and not because of indwelling demons. In desperation he cries out: "*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin*" (Rom. 7:24-26).

Paul doesn't blame indwelling demons for the sin in his life but his own flesh, the old man. Somewhere else in his letters he writes that satan tries to tempt and deceive Christians but he encourages himself and his readers to resist the devil. "*Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*" (Eph. 6:11). When the bible uses the term works of the flesh, it literally means works, results of the flesh. This is a definite act, something that is done by the old man in the Christian, therefore by the Christian himself. He is, and stays responsible for the actions of his old self. Nowhere does the bible ever blame a demon or demons for someone's sin. The sinner is responsible for his own sin. He or she sins and it's not an indwelling demon.

Do "indwelling" demons cause Christians to become ill?

Derek Prince believes this to be so although not in every case. In the book we previously mentioned he lists the following demons of sickness: "*demon of death, demon of fever, demon of stiffness, demon of arthritis, demon of cancer, demon of epilepsy, demon of migraine, demon of thrombosis, demon of asthma, demon of paralysis, demon of headache, demon of rheumatism, demon of weakness, demon of sickness, demon of tiredness, demon of deafness, demon of blindness, demon of dumbness, demon of enteritis and demon of dental decay*".

Hans Koning doesn't mention in his book, which we previously mentioned, demons that cause sickness. The same goes for the American, Robert Liardon. Only Rev. Ray McGraw mentions two: "*demon of deafness and the demon of dumbness.*" The American, psychologist, Ken Thornberg, the American Jim Brewer and the American couple Hammond do not mention demons, who cause sickness. We can conclude therefore, that it is only Derek Prince who states there are such demons indwelling Christians. There will certainly be others who think the same as Derek Prince. We however, don't know about them. He wrote in his last newsletter at the end of last year that he had cancer. After an operation to remove the tumour he should have followed a course of treatment. This wasn't necessary as an Anglican pastor prayed for him and the demon of cancer was cast out. He felt the demon leaving his stomach and according to him, he was now healed. A few years later he died though.

Comment workgroup: Medical science has been trying for years to find out the cause of sickness. Although they have made a lot of progress they have still a long way to go. It has not yet been confirmed, that in some cases demons could be the cause. At least, we don't know about it. Derek Prince has no support from medical science.

Most Christians would point to the fall of man in Paradise as the general cause of sickness. When God punished Adam and Eve for their sin and confronted them with death, the physical condition of man started to deteriorate. Sickness entered. This applies to everyone, Christian and non-Christian alike. We read about these things in the Bible. This is simply a fact. To say that sickness is a result of indwelling demons is a contradiction to the facts. In Job's case, satan was given permission for a short time to make his body sick. There was a spiritual purpose behind it. After the time of testing it wasn't necessary to cast out demons. He was healthy again. In the New Testament we read several times of Jesus casting out demons where there was also a sickness. Here we could conclude that Derek Prince is therefore right. Jesus however, never passed this on to His disciples as the standard model to follow. After Pentecost, we never read about the disciples healing people by casting out demons.

We believe therefore, that Derek Prince's claims are weak and have no biblical foundation. Do "indwelling" demons make Christians spiritually or emotionally ill? Derek Prince believes that this is so. He has encountered in his ministry the following demons: "*demon of oppression, demon of fear, demon of self-pity, demon of claustrophobia, demon of helplessness, demon of stress, demon of depression, demon of misery, demon of loneliness, demon of worry, demon of restlessness, demon of desperation, demon of doubt and demon of schizophrenia.*" the following demons: "*demon of deep sleep, demon of torment, demon of indecision, demon of melancholy and demon of mourning.*" The conclusion is that, the vast majority of the writers we have mentioned, believe that those who have spiritual or emotional problems can be helped by the "Deliverance Ministry". They all assume that these Christians have problems with demons.

Comment workgroup: It's difficult to express a different opinion when the majority thinks otherwise. Some are very well-known and have a large following. Nevertheless, we must make a few comments. We want to make it clear, that it is not our intention to make people appear in a bad daylight or to criticise them. God protect us from that. We need to mention names in order to make our point concrete.

Firstly, it needs to be said that the writers seem to have little or no contact with each other. They don't mention each other's names in their books. It is therefore not clear as to how far they agree with each other's teaching. An exception to this is Joost Verduijn who has written clearly in an article about Ken Thornberg that he doesn't agree with his teaching. It is interesting to see that the mentioned demons all express normal human emotions. The exceptions to this are the demons of claustrophobia, schizophrenia, torment, phobia and repetition of nightmares and dreams. The burning question is: why are demons the cause when these emotions are found in people with problems, but not so, in people without problems? Another question is: are the last five demons not rather nervous diseases? Apart from this logical questioning- "prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled" the fact is that the Bible teaches little or nothing about emotional demons. These kinds of demons actually, only became known when the "Deliverance Ministry" became part of Christian counselling.

Although we can understand that it is difficult for counsellors to cope with the problems they come across in their work, we still need to keep the bible as our guideline. Otherwise, the danger is, that our experiences prevail over God's Word. The end result is that the one who needs help is not helped at all and we fail in our responsibility to be faithful to God's Word. "*Watch your life and doctrine closely persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*" (1Tim.4:16)

Is it possible that "family demons" live in Christians?

Several of the eight mentioned writers or pastors teach that a Christian can have problems from "indwelling" demons which they have inherited from their ancestors. In our next letter we'll cover this and also speak about living under a curse and the breaking of it.

Are there special types of "indwelling" demons in Christians?

Derek Prince lists under the different demons which he has recognised the following: "*demon of witchcraft, demon of yoga and the animal demon.*" Hans Koning mentions in his book: "*demon of sorcery or clairvoyance.*" Robert Liardon doesn't mention any special demons in his book. McGraw mentions the following special demons in his list of 21 demons: "*house demon, world demon, anti-Christ demon, demon of heresy and demon of death and destruction.*" Ken Thornberg has strange ideas about how to expel demons but he doesn't give them any special names. (see letters: nrs.8 and 9) Jim Brewer lists the following names in his book: "*demon of anti-Christ, demon of brainwashing and demon of compulsiveness.*"

The Hammonds mention the following ones: "*demon of sulking, demon of daydreams, demon of fantasy, demon of restlessness, demon of intellectualism, demon of irritation, demon of mental anguish, demon of crying, demon of boredom, demon of caffeine and demon of shyness.*"

Comment workgroup: To say to someone who is seeking help, that he needs to be freed from, a demon of anti-Christ, a demon of an animal or a demon of the world seems to us to be very difficult from a pastoral point of view. If the one seeking help is a born again Christian, who has the Holy Spirit in him, then it is not possible to argue from the Bible that his spiritual life is governed by a demon. If a Christian, one who believes and loves Christ, hears that a demon of anti-Christ is living in him then, this is no longer the Christian message.

The same applies to a Christian who needs help, when he is told that he has a house demon or a demon of death and destruction in him. Ken Thornberg really goes too far when he claims that there are 2 million demons in one Christian who sought his help (see above). How is it possible that he who is a born again Christian could be possessed by two million demons? If this were true wouldn't one immediately reject the gospel? Happily the person in question didn't do this, but he was very upset with Ken Thornberg and his counselling team.

What actually are demons?

We have taken it for granted that our readers know this. We'll touch on this briefly, for those who aren't so sure. We can't go into too much detail as this would make the letter too long. The vast majority of Christians agree that demons are fallen angels, who instructed by satan try to make life difficult for Christians. There are a few who believe that demons are a special type of earth creatures who are instructed by satan to trouble us. Derek Prince shows this inclination. Another evangelical group, coming up these last twenty years, believes that it's possible to discover how the hierarchy of satan's kingdom works. They speak about chief demons, city demons and district demons.

Comment workgroup: We don't believe that demons are special earth creatures but fallen angels. They make life difficult for people as instructed by the devil, the chief fallen angel. He was the first to disobey God and since then he does everything he can to tempt mankind to be disobedient too. In our next letter we'll deal with the organisational structure of the kingdom of darkness. We will also talk about the subject "spiritual mapping".

Three different spirits in the body of a Christian?

When God created man in Paradise, He first made a body from the dust of the ground. He then breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living being. Man's body received a spirit, his own spirit. Man's life's journey had begun on earth. Sometimes satan managed to enter the spirit of man and place an evil spirit in him. Such a person was then recognised by others as possessed, and treated as such. Fortunately, this was not so common (see letter nr.17). Man served God or sinned against Him with his own spirit. He was influenced in this by his own sinful flesh and satan's temptations. Man was actually in a pretty miserable state. God however, loved His creation and put into action His eternal plan of salvation. Already before the creation God had His plan ready. With the fall of man God began immediately to announce His plan of redemption. It became real at the birth of His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus gave His life as a ransom for the sins of man and brought reconciliation between God and man. After this reconciliation God gave to man new birth and came to live in him by His Holy Spirit. Such is God's uniqueness and love. He, the great and mighty God was willing to live in His creatures. This creature can therefore say: *"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship, and by Him we cry, "Abba, Father."* (Rom.8:15)

The gospel means good news, and that's what it is. God's Spirit enters the spirit of man, which is empty and therefore can't function as He wants it to. That's why it is now possible to put aside the old sinful life and to be made holy through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Because of this he is able to honour his Maker, in a way that pleases Him. The born again man is even allowed to call God His Father.

Satan is not at all pleased with these events. This man no longer allows himself to be deceived by satan's evil spirit, but listens rather to the indwelling Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit helps man lead a holy life. Satan's deceitful tricks are no longer believed by this born again man. Satan concentrates his attention therefore upon the old man in the Christian, hoping to catch him out. The Holy Spirit tells the Christian to read God's Word, in which we read: *"For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."* (Rom.6:6) Christians have nothing more to fear from satan as long as they listen to God's Holy Spirit. After all that God has done could satan dwell with one or more demons, in a Christian? Is he capable of wedging his way in between the renewed spirit of man and the indwelling Spirit of God to take up residence there? This is not logical in God's order. His gospel is a perfect gospel with no room for "buts". The message of the Bible is one of love and trust. There is no more fear for a Christian. There is also no more reason to be fearful of demon possession. None of the writers of the Bible show any inclination to think like this. The born again Christian doesn't need to be afraid anymore of satan and his henchmen. It is therefore very unlikely that evil spirits

can possess a Christian. There is no place in his body for an evil spirit. He is filled with the Holy Spirit.

This brings up the question: if an evil spirit would be able to hold firm being so near to God's Spirit. It would mean a confrontation with the Holy God, Who cursed him in Paradise. When Jesus was on earth and had a confrontation with evil spirits they hadn't much to say for themselves and fled from His presence as quickly as possible. When Jesus met the possessed man at Gerasenes the demons asked to be allowed to enter the pigs. When Jesus gave them permission they rushed away from Him as quickly as possible and disappeared in the lake. In the letter of James we read: "*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder.*" (James 2:19) It is very unlikely that an evil spirit would be able to stand being the third spirit living in a man. He would then be very near to God's Spirit, who is living in the person. The Bible leads us to understand that satan can't stand being near Him and flees, shuddering.

How do we care for the one in need? Is the above teaching not hard?

We think that for the Christian who has serious problems it must be a wonderful relief to be told that he doesn't have demons living in him. We do acknowledge that Christians can have very serious problems and they do need pastoral care. If however, the ministry of casting out of demons is not biblical then we do need help of another kind. This demands much patience and coaching from the pastor. He will have to teach the person from the bible how he needs to live. How he needs to make room in his life for obedience to the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Bible is so complete that there is an answer for every person no matter how great his problems are. It does demand much patience and wisdom from the counsellor and persistence from the person himself

Concluding the subject of this letter and announcing the next one.

We feel that we have covered sufficiently in this letter the subject of "indwelling" demons in Christians. In our next letter we will deal with family demons, living under and being freed from a curse, territorial demons, etc.

Questions about Lesson 2

Was there always a satan with his fallen angels?

Did satan spoke in favour of God to men?

Did satan and his demons came to live in born again Christians?

What does he to try on the Christians with sin?

Are there special types of demons and should the Christian new their names?

Foundation: Workgroup "Back to the Bible"

Mailaddress: Populierenstraat 51, 8266 BK Kampen, The Netherlands.

Tel.038-3328234

e-mail: byblos@solcon.nl

website : www.backtothebible.nl

Local board: president - pastor R.v.d. Kraats
 secretary/ - A.A. Doorn
 treasurer