

A Sleeping Church

C. H. Spurgeon

There is a fortress, yonder, far away in India. A troop of Sepoys have surrounded it. Bloodthirsty vicious warriors they are. If they once gain admission, they will rend the mother and her children, and cut the strong man in pieces. They are at the gates. Their cannon are loaded. Their bayonets thirst for blood, and their swords are hungry to slay.

Go through the fortress, and the people are all asleep. There is the watchman on the tower, nodding on his bayonet. There is the captain in his tent, with his pen in his hand, and his dispatches before him, asleep at the table. There are soldiers lying down in their tents, ready for the war, but all slumbering. There is not a man to be seen keeping watch. There is not a sentry there. All are asleep.

"Why, my friends," you would say. "Whatever is the matter here? What can it be? Has some great wizard been waving his wand, and put a spell upon them all? Or are




they all mad? Have their minds fled? Sure, to be asleep in wartime is indeed an outrage. Here! Take down that trumpet; go close up to the captain's ear, and blow a blast, and see if it does not awake him in a moment. Just take away that bayonet from the soldier that is asleep on the walls, and give him a sharp prick with it, and see if he does not awake. Surely, nobody can have patience with people asleep, when the enemy surrounds the walls and is thundering at the gates. Now, Christians, this is your case. Your life is a life of warfare. The world, the flesh, and the devil; that hellish trinity, and your poor flesh is a wretched mudwork behind which to be entrenched. Are you asleep?

Asleep, when Satan has fireballs of lust to hurl into the windows of your eyes; when he has arrows of temptation to shoot into your heart; when he has snares into which to trap your feet? Asleep, when he has undermined your very existence, and when he is about to apply the match with which to destroy you, unless sovereign grace prevents? Oh! Sleep not, soldier of the cross! To sleep in wartime is utterly inconsistent.

Great Spirit of God forbid that we should slumber.

The Bible View



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Which Spirit?

Bill Brinkworth

"And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he [Jesus] turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke 9:54-55

Reading in Luke 9:55 should make us aware that there are different "spirits" in this world; and they are not all of God. Although James and John thought they were doing the right thing by protecting Jesus, Jesus told them that the spirit controlling their actions and attitudes was not of God. Christ similarly discerned that one time Peter was letting the wrong spirit direct his thinking (Matthew 16:23).

A little knowledge of the different spirits described in the Bible can help us know, when



dealing with people, if what we are dealing with is from God or from satanic influences.

There are three sources of "spirits" in this world. The most commonly addressed spirit in the Bible is man's own nature and character. Hundreds of times this spirit is talked about, as was the spirit of Jacob (Gen. 45:27), Elijah (II Kings. 2:15), and other people of the Bible.

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Letting the Devil In

Bill Brinkworth

Luke 8 brings to light a frightening, but true, story. A man was possessed with many devils. Because the crazed man was named "Legion", which was a division of the Roman army numbering 2,000-6,000, there may have been thousands of these demonic beings influencing him.

Hollywood movies somehow try to glorify this rare occurrence of demonic possession as something "cool" and interesting.

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Which Spirit?

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Secondly, there is a spirit clearly of God. Sometimes it is referred as “Spirit”, with capital letters, because it is a proper noun. It is God. Other names for His spirit include: spirit of God, Holy Spirit, and Spirit of the Lord. This spirit from God can also work in a person’s life. These spirits can be recognized when a person is giving godly wisdom (Deut. 34:9, Eph. 1:17). These may include: a contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18), a broken spirit (Ps. 51:17), an excellent spirit (Dan. 5:2) a spirit of grace (Zech. 12:10), a faithful spirit (II Cor. 4:13), an ability to do the impossible (Jud. 14:6, 19), spirit of truth (John 14:17, 15:26), and a spirit of meekness (I Cor. 4:21, Gal. 6:1).

There are dangerous, demonic spirits that we also have to be wary and cautious of. This is why Ephesians 6:23 warns of an unseen, invisible battle that is part of our everyday lives: *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

Some of the spirits that are not of God but are of satanic

origin include spirits of:

- ✿ Denying Christ (I John 4:3)
- ✿ Destructiveness (Mark 9:20)
- ✿ Disobedience (Eph. 2:2)
- ✿ Divination (*“Attempting to foretell the future”* - Acts 16:16)
- ✿ Evilness (Judge 9:23)
- ✿ Familiar spirit (what wizards and witches speak to)
- ✿ Fear (Rom. 8:15, II Tim. 1:7)
- ✿ Foulness (Mark 9:25)
- ✿ Jealously (Num. 5:14, 30)
- ✿ Judgment
- ✿ Lying
- ✿ Not talking (Mark 9:17)
- ✿ Perverseness
- ✿ Troubled or vexed spirit (Ecc. 4:4)
- ✿ Uncleanliness (Mark 1:23)
- ✿ Whoredoms (Hos. 5:4)

Knowing a little about these different types of spirits can help one discern the source of good or evil in their everyday life. This knowledge can help one know if the situation he is facing is of God, his flesh, or from a force that is against God. Proper decision-making based on considering where the influence is coming from can help one make fewer mistakes.

Letting the Devil In

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When an unholy spirit has any control in an unsaved man, it is not “cool”. It is devastating. This story, found in Mark 5 and here in verses 22-39, tells us what these demonic spirits can do to a life. Here we see that they:

- Can be multiple demons (vs. 27).
- Can make one’s life miserable for a long time (vs. 27).
- Can influence a person to be immodest (vs. 27).
- Can inhibit a person from being socially acceptable (vs. 27). This man could not live in a house like normal people.
- May encourage a person to be infatuated with death (vs. 27). This man lived in tombs.
- May make a person tormented by these spirits (vs. 28).
- Will make a person live an unclean life and commit “dirty” things, and have a filthy lifestyle (vs. 29).
- Will take away one’s freedom (vs. 29). This man had to be bound by chains. He was so socially unacceptable and had abnormal behavior, others tried to lock him up.
- May give a person supernatural, destructive strength (vs. 29).
- Control the person (vs. 29) and can give one a lonely life.

Although this account and the one in Mark does not tell why this man was inhabited by these destructive forces, other Scriptures indicate that intentional exposure to sin can allow these “devils” to control a life of an unsaved person. No matter what level of control these demonic powers are allowed to have in a life, there is good news. The good news is that Jesus can cleanse any life.

Here in this chapter, Jesus commanded the spirits to leave, and they did. The man was converted to a controlled, decent man (Luke 8:35), who had a new desire to live for the Lord. He was a changed man.

Some of these demonic traits can be seen in people in today’s society. The “possession” occurrence is not as common as the fictional movie accounts portray it, but exposure to sin can rob any life of the joy and freedom it should have.

The only cure for a devastated, ruined life is salvation. When sin is forgiven, a new desire is born in a person to live for God and follow His commands. With this new direction, a life can be transformed, as was this man’s. When Jesus comes into one’s life, old ways can leave; if the person allows the Lord to lead in his life! There is always hope through Jesus!

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” *I Peter 5:8*

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” *I Thes. 5:6*