

Demons and Their Titles

Since the article this month is about unclean spirits, I thought it would be interesting to do a word study on some of the other types of demons which were confronted by Jesus and the early disciples. This will help us to understand Satan's character and operations.

Where Satan is concerned, there are two dangerous extremes which we can fall into in the Christian life. One is to think too highly of him and to see him in everything we encounter and everyone we meet. The other is not to take him seriously at all and to disregard any knowledge of him or his kingdom. We are told twice in the New Testament that an understanding of Satan's kingdom is essential to our spiritual success.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Second Corinthians 2:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles (strategies) of the devil.

Ephesians 6:11

Demons are listed by ranks in Ephesians 6:12, but this does not give their characteristics and personalities. We are told their characteristics and personalities by the *titles* they are given in the New Testament.

1. *Evil Spirits (poneros)*. The same Greek word is used for *wicked spirits*, and it means "a malignant evil which causes labor and harm." Since it is an evil which is malignant, it grows steadily worse in its burdensome toil and physical harm. Satan is never content to rest, but seeks more and more domination until he destroys. Some of the scriptures dealing with this type of demon are Luke 7:21, Acts 19:12, 13, 15, 16, and Ephesians 6:12.

2. *Foul Spirits (okathartos)*. As you can see, this is also the same Greek word used for unclean spirits. The word means "impure" and in bondage. encompasses everything filthy and vile. Foul spirits are found in Matthew 12:43, Mark 5:13, 7:25, Luke 9:42, and Acts 8:7.

3. *Spirits of Infirmary (as theneia)*. This demon manifests himself as weakness, lack of strength, or inability to produce normal results. He confuses by disguising himself as an illness. There seems to be no real evident sickness, but the person is continually tired, manifesting symptoms of a disease, and whatever effort is expended to treat the illness brings little or no results. Jesus healed infirmities (Luke 5:15, John 5:5) and "took our infirmities" (Matthew 8:17). He also cast out spirits of infirmities (Luke 13:11,12).

4. *Spirit of Divination (puthos)*. This Greek word gives us our English word "python." Python came from Greek mythology and was the serpent guarding the Oracle of Delphi, where the gods prophesied to the people. It was said to have been slain by Apollo. The particular demon which took this name is mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 16:16-18, where it possesses a young girl in Philippi. As a fortune teller through the demon's power, she pretended to be a believer, calling the apostles "servants of the most high God." Paul was confused by this at first, but after a few days he recognized it as a demon, posing as a forerunner for his ministry. He cast out this devil, and it left the girl immediately.

5. *Seducing Spirits (pianos)*. What these demons do is obvious from their name. They entice and deceive people in order to lead them away from the Word of God. They exemplify Satan's main ministry of deception (Revelation 12:9). Satan and his demons appear as messengers of God and distort Scripture. They appear as sweet and religious, but underneath are vicious (Revelation 2:20). Paul warned us about them (First Timothy 4:1), as did John (First John 2:26). Seducing spirits begin by presenting the Word of God, cloaking themselves with it, but introduce a trace of error at the same time. Gradually, through that one lie, they will draw the believer away from the truth and place them in bondage.

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