

Exorcism

1. Use a Bible dictionary or any dictionary: what does the term exorcism mean?

From the Greek term *exorkizein*, exorcism is to administer an oath to conjure, call out or drive out something troublesome and menacing. The term has been used in both pagan and Christian religious practices in the context of evil spirits and may or may not have a variety of rituals attached to it.

2. Who has the capability to exorcise demons? Consult Mark 3:14-15; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1; Matthew 7:22; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:15-16; 8:5-7; 16:16-18; 19:11-13.

Jesus gave the Apostles explicit authority over evil angels (Mark 3:14-15; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1). In later accounts, Christians are seen with the ability to exorcise in Jesus' name (Matt 7:22; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:15-16; 8:5-7; 16:16-18; 19:11-13). Jesus gave all Christians the authority to rebuke and command demons to leave an afflicted human being.

3. What is the basis for the Christian's authority over Satan and his demons (Luke 10:17; Matt 17:14-21; 2 Cor 12:7-10)? Can you discern a purpose for exorcism (Luke 8:38-39)?

The power to cast out demons is a consequence of Christ's victory at the cross (Heb 2:14; Col 2:15). With Christ's crucifixion, mankind's sin was completely forgiven. This decisive victory denied Satan any rightful authority over human beings who believe in the saving grace of Christ's atonement.

Therefore, based on the supremacy of Jesus Christ and arising from the power of the Holy Spirit, the power to cast out demons does not come from a Christian's physical strength or will. The ability to exorcise is determined in part by the depth of one's faith in Jesus Christ and whether the action is determined by the will of God.

The Old Testament does not have any clear examples of an exorcism, and all of the recorded instances of exorcism in the New Testament are found in only 4 books: the Gospels and Acts. When performed by either Christ or a disciple, exorcisms demonstrated Jesus' authority and dominion over demons. Exorcisms served as a powerful testimony of Jesus Christ's deity and compassion.

4. What are the results of exorcism? See Matthew 9:33; 12:22; 15:22-28; 17:18; Mark 7:30; 9:26; Luke 6:18; 8:2, 35; 11:14; Acts 16:18.

The result of an exorcism is:

- a. Complete physical and psychological healing. However this does not necessarily include spiritual healing (Matt 9:33; 12:22; 15:22-28; 17:18; Luke 6:18; 8:35; 11:14).
- b. Departure of the demon(s) (Mark 7:30; 9:26; Luke 8:2; Acts 16:18).
- c. Spiritual awareness of God (Luke 8:38).

Some theologians believe, based on the parable of Matthew 12:43-45, that a human being that has been exorcised needs to immediately hear the Gospel lest the demonic spirit(s) return and render the victim in an even worse state. While the parable of Matthew 12:43-45 was used metaphorically to refer to the Pharisees and the state of Israel, its realism suggests the possibility of its occurrence despite an absence of any recorded instance of such an event in the New Testament.

Exorcism (page 2)

5. Is it necessary for a Christian to be capable of exorcising or can one simply pray about a person and ask God to do it?

The ability may not be necessary; however, if confronted with an occasion when the skill is required, one should directly intervene and not simply appeal to God. God has given human beings an active role in carrying out His plans. A Christian's direct involvement and activity demonstrates a willingness to be used by God, affirms one's faith, and is a testimony of the power of God.

6. How is exorcism done? Study Matthew 7:22; 9:38-40; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:15-16; 8:5-7; 16:16-18; 19:11-13.

1. Before anything can be done, one must have an abiding faith in God. (Matt 17:18-20).
2. Command the spirit to leave the person. This command need only be confident, brief and quietly spoken. In all of the accounts in the New Testament, none of the deliverances were loud or argumentative protracted battles with the evil spirit(s). The authority to cast out is from the Holy Spirit.
3. Don't forget to command the evil spirit to never return.
4. Minister the affected person and give the glory to God. Christians are to rejoice in our great salvation (Luke 10:17-20).

The Apostle Paul clearly perceived and understood that spiritual warfare required the use of divinely inspired weapons (2 Cor 10:3-4). In our rationalistic world and culture, authority is determined by physical and military might. Is your faith deep enough to believe that the simply spoken name of Jesus Christ is sufficient to signify spiritual authority?

References:

1. Dickason CF, *Demon Possession & the Christian*, Westchester, IL: Crossway Books (1990).
2. Grudem, W, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1994).

Exorcism

1. Use a Bible dictionary or any dictionary: what does the term exorcism mean?
2. Who has the capability to exorcise demons? Consult Mark 3:14-15; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1; Matthew 7:22; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:15-16; 8:5-7; 16:16-18; 19:11-13.
3. What is the basis for the Christian's authority over Satan and his demons (Luke 10:17; Matt 17:14-21; 2 Cor 12:7-10)? Can you discern a purpose for exorcism (Luke 8:38-39)?
4. What are the results of exorcism? See Matthew 9:33; 12:22; 15:22-28; 17:18; Mark 7:30; 9:26; Luke 6:18; 8:2, 35; 11:14; Acts 16:18.
5. Is it necessary for a Christian to be capable of exorcising or can one simply pray about a person and ask God to do it?
6. How is exorcism done? Study Matthew 7:22; 9:38-40; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:15-16; 8:5-7; 16:16-18; 19:11-13.