



Is DID Found in Scripture? A Brief Overview

(Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder, MPD)

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This question of whether or not the diagnosis of DID is consistent with Scriptural teaching has been raised on many occasions where people are dealing with someone who has experienced severe trauma. A general overview will be provided here, beginning with the mental health perspective because that is where the term originates. I was taught in graduate school (early 80's) that this disorder was extremely rare and that it would be unlikely that I would ever see more than one or two people suffering this way. Professionally, what I found was that it was a great deal more prevalent however I didn't generally "see" it for a long time until the signs and symptoms were much more familiar to me. Then I could look back and remember people that had similar behaviors that I didn't yet recognize. Personally, I have not really considered it an illness but rather a type of a coping mechanism which is largely based in genetic inheritance. Whether or not it is expressed in a person's life has to do with the presence or absence of trauma at a very early age. It is in a sense a beautiful way to cope with desperate situations. A child may not be able to physically escape a bad situation but if they can "go away" in their mind, there is some degree of protection to their ability to grow as a functional relational person. If severe abuse is experienced without that capacity, it often skews every aspect of the individual's mind, will and emotions, making relationships and just living life extremely difficult.

I find it interesting that there was a great deal of interest in this subject in the 1980's and 90's but it fell off by the early 2000's, shortly before the time that those presenting themselves who it became evident were dealing with this issue also seemed to decrease. This follows a pattern at the end of the last century, with professional literature of the late 1800's addressing similar symptoms, only to see that drop off in the early 1900's. I have wondered whether or not there was any connection with the Great Spiritual Awakening that happened in America at that time. In recent years, there has been so much controversy over the illness, as well as the question of whether or not therapists are themselves "creating" or leading people into it through hypnotic means that it had become "a lawsuit waiting to happen." Many facilities or mental health professionals refused to consider it real or a matter for treatment. *(Just FYI, I did not use any*

kind of hypnotic or guided imagery with my clients but rather focused on identifying the symptoms and consequences with prayerful restoration. DID people especially are very visual and quite filled with the images they already experience and I saw no wisdom in confusing the matter.)

Popularly known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) it was re-evaluated and re-named Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) by those who develop the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual which is the standard used in mental health treatment facilities. The choice to rename had to do with the recognition of the difficulties and fine points that had been involved previously in making a diagnosis. In very general language, the standard for MPD involved determining whether or not any of the different aspects of behavior and appearance that were presented were distinct enough to be considered fully developed personalities. This is often a very difficult judgment call, especially when the different parts, known as alternate personalities or alters, may either fear to or are defiant about making themselves' known to a mental health professional. Rather than focus on this distinction, the new name and criteria focus on the process that is involved, which is called dissociation.

Dissociation involves a sort of "mental going away" of one part of a person's memory and behaviors while another part steps in, which may or may not be amnesiac to the others. People can be dissociative without having the extreme experience of having dissociative identity disorder (DID). This process may be minimal, along the lines of a recurrent and consistent daydream or severe to the extent that there are many completely amnesiac parts. Dissociated aspects may be emotions, thoughts, or physical sensations and any given individual may have specific areas of disconnection. For example, they may not remember a specific incident of abuse but they are well aware of the emotions that went with it without knowing why they exist. They may also remember an incident but be completely unaware of their emotions during it. When it becomes more comprehensive these groups of experiences or emotions are organized into what is called alternate personalities. In a brief description, I would say that a recurrent abusive situation drives a frightened child into "mentally going away" and the "place" to which they go then becomes more fully developed, almost like a completely different person. This "person" holds the terrible memories of what has happened, while the original child is spared having to live with that knowledge. I have often used cupboards as an example of compartments in the mind; some alters having a strong, thick wall of amnesia about the others and some having only a gauze curtain. This is VERY much of an oversimplification but perhaps it will help comprehend the concept.

In effect then, DID can be said to be a fragmenting of the mind, will and emotions which has been cemented in through establishing great fear. This fear can be of the abusers, what has happened in the past or what may happen in the future, to ones' self or to loved ones. (I have examined this aspect in a small PowerPoint Teaching entitled "To Whom Do You Cling?" which is found at our website.)

For those who have experienced what I have called more "normal" trauma, such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse of one kind or another, there is usually just one group of alternate

personalities, several to perhaps a dozen. For those who have experienced cult related or intergenerational trauma, there can be a set of groups of alters, called systems, with the number of alters easily into the hundreds.

If we move out of the mental health territory and begin to examine this experience from a Biblical viewpoint the immediate question that always seems to arise is whether or not this is purely a demonic phenomenon rather than one involving the mind, will and emotions. Of course, most mental health professionals would completely deny the possibility. On the other hand, many of those who believe in the Scriptures would deny that it could possibly be an issue of the mind, will and emotions. My experience is that it is a “both/and” situation, often as clear as mud.

I do see it as a coping mechanism associated with childhood and powerlessness, and would not consider it sinful in that context. However, when an adult becomes aware that this is their choice of coping mechanism it moves into a different “category.” I hesitate still to name it as a “sin” because the person has often been rendered so incapacitated that a careless or premature use of that designation could cause more harm than good!

Neither does a person who has DID and a history of severe trauma experience that trauma as something that happened years ago. Rather, it carries power in a very daily and present way since their alters may not be at all aware of the passing of time. So efforts to confront someone and accuse them of holding on to the past in a sinful way, keeping unhealthy anger alive unnecessarily, can also often do more harm than good.

When a person has progressed in treatment to have some understanding of what has happened to them and how it is maintained, there generally comes a time when they need to decide if they want to continue to depend on that human way to find “safety” or trust more fully in our Father and Creator. I see it as belonging to the concept of needing to put away childlike things as we grow to maturity, yet also remembering to be grateful that a way of escape had been possible.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

1 Corinthians 13:11

So, on to the question at hand: Is DID in Scripture? No, I don't believe it is by specific reference, but yes, by principle: by being aware of how we have been designed/created we can see how the creation has been distorted and maimed. I don't believe the specific term is there any more than jet propulsion is in Scripture though the principles of physics are consistent with Scriptural Truths that involve a universe in which jet propulsion can be achieved.

The term "demon possession" has been used but I take exception to this. The term in Scripture is "*daimonizomai*." Here again, I see a question of outcome vs. process. How often or how deeply does a person have to be experiencing demonic oppression or harassment to be considered demon possessed?

My suggestion is that it is also a process. An individual may be under occasional influence of these wicked entities or more frequent influence. It is a matter of which lamp of the spirit is being tended...are we cultivating an attitude open to the transforming work of the Ruach haKodesh which leads to righteousness; wisdom, understanding, wise counsel, power, knowledge and awe under the leading of the central heart of the Spirit of YHWH? (Isaiah 11:1-2)

OR

Are we cultivating an attitude that opens one up to the influence of the ungodly opposition, as listed in Proverbs 6:16-19, resulting in haughty eyes, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, feet that run swiftly to evil, mouths breathing out lies/false witness and strife among brothers, all wrapped up in the schemes of the wicked heart.

Is demonization in Scripture? Yes, it is described and noted on many occasions though before Yeshua, apparently no one had any clue how to deal with it and deliverance just didn't happen much. Perhaps David's harp playing for Saul might be one example of how it relieved Saul of the oppression, but it did not release him of it. **His own actions gave ground.**

After Yeshua, people experienced deliverance at His command, and sometimes at command of disciples. Usually we have record only of AN encounter and deliverance, not an ongoing process, which is different than how we have experienced it.

If someone has "normal" trauma without the ritualistic or satanic aspects, they may have oppression issues that will need to be dealt with spiritually in order for them to experience health and wholeness.

BUT if someone has been traumatized by intergenerational satanic families, satanic ritual abuse (SRA), there has been a specific intentional process by which demons were layered in to the various personality structures. I do not believe that this can be dealt with sequentially by seeing a pastor and then seeing a counselor, or vice versa, but that the person they work with needs to have both bodies of knowledge, in faith through prayer, to be able to correctly discern how to proceed.

This kind of DID and demonization is so intertwined and so convoluted that the person would be devastated if they were "delivered" all at once: no sense of self left; like an assault in itself. Just as the Israelites had to proceed step by step to take the land, because otherwise the wild animals would have been too much for them, so do we see restoration from SRA/DID. (Exodus 23:29; Deuteronomy 7:22)

- Is every person who is dissociative also demonized? *No, I haven't seen that to be true.*
- Do demonized people play at being dissociative? *Yes, I have seen that.*
- Do dissociative people sometimes play at being demonized? *Yes, I have seen that.*

Sometimes it has appeared that an alter is a demon and sometimes that a demon is pretending to be an alter. YHWH's wisdom, discernment and prayer are always crucial to determine what one is dealing with so as to know how to deal with it. I have seen great damage occur when "either/or" thinking is used, resulting in someone treating a person/alter as though they were a demon or in trying to accept a demon as a part of a person. Leaning into prayer on such matters is essential.

A Few Further Thoughts

I had heard a teaching years ago about the "shattering of the holy people" as being a reference to DID. (Daniel 12:7) Though it makes a sort of intuitive sense, I wouldn't "go there" now. I think it becomes clear that it is an end time reference and not necessarily to be considered in the same sense we would think of it in the shattering of the psyche.

I have also heard a connection made with the idea of a broken heart being a reference to DID which would seem to make a little more sense.

In Hebrew context, generally the heart refers to the mind, where thinking occurs, which is the seat of the will. In brief, Hebrew understanding of body, mind, will and emotions is that all are of one piece without possibility to tease them apart. Still, we DO try to understand and see different aspects of the whole. In the general sense that the heart represents the mind, will and emotions it could be said that it is a broken heart, but only in a very specific sense. It would not be accurate to say that any kind of a situation that involves sadness or grief, what we think of as a broken heart, would lead to DID in every case.

A fragmented will maintained through fear bonds is the issue in DID as I see it. In SRA/DID that is further complicated with demonization and many interpersonal systemic connections and triggers to maintain it all. At the risk of oversimplifying here, may I say that it is the ability to experience trusting relationships and joy with our Father and His People that will make it possible for an individual to break free from those fear bonds.

This is an effort to present very briefly about an extremely complicated subject. Hopefully it will be of help to those dealing with this for the first time. May you and yours be blessed, strengthened and protected in our Messiah Yeshua through whatever kinds of these encounters you may experience.