

Demons in the Bible explained, lecture by Neville Clark 12/08/2018.

Good evening everyone. I think this is a very fascinating subject. This is one more step more tricky than dealing with the Devil and Satan. Think about it like this, when we talk about the Devil and Satan to interested friends, what we are telling them is that the Bible speaks about the Devil and Satan, and as Bible students our point to interested friends, is not that the devil, that is the conventional devil, doesn't exist but that he is simply not who you think he is. The devil certainly exists all the way through the Bible. Satan exists through the Bible. The devil just means "liar," the word "devil" means "liar," Satan just means "false accuser." Any one of us can be a Devil or a Satan.

When you come to the subject of Demons, it is one step more difficult. Once again the Bible speaks of demons as though they exist. Our point, however, in the conventional sense, they do not exist as all. We've got as they say, one additional problem as we come to the subject of demons which we don't have with the subject of the Devil or Satan. The simple answer to the problem of demons is that the phrase, "demon possession," or "unclean spirits," or any of the words similar to that that you read in Scripture are simply turns of phrase, describing in fact, something else entirely.

The common idea behind demons, that is the orthodox idea behind demons, there were one of two ideas, the most common idea is that they are wicked angels that rebelled with Satan at the creation of the world, and they were thrown down from heaven and they ruled the underworld as lesser deities to the Devil. A 2nd less common idea is that they are departed spirits of dead people who have come back to cause trouble on earth in the lives of those who are still here, like ghosts, if you like. So they are the 2 ideas that have grown up over time about what demons might be. Well obviously, both of them are wrong, and we are going to talk to you tonight about what demon possession really is.

As I said, "demon possession" is a euphemism or a turn of phrase. In fact it is a vernacular term from ancient times, or a turn of phrase or an idiom for mental disorders. So anyone in the Bible who is demon possessed is mentally insane. So you read of people who have a demon or a devil as the authorised version calls it, a devil and is dumb. This means they are intellectually disabled or mentally unwell and they can't speak. So people have all sorts of maladies in Scripture but the moment you read about them having a devil or a demon, it means that in addition to whatever problem they have they are also insane, they are mad, or have some mental derangement of some kind.

But, the question comes, Why does the Bible talk about madness in the terms of demons possession. What is going on, why should the Bible apparently obscure the true nature of the problem by using language such as this. Well of course, this is what we are going to talk about tonight. To begin, we have got to understand how the Bible used this sort of language. In the Old Testament the word "devils" only occurs 4 times, and these are the 4 times I've got on the screen and every one of these times you can see, the word "devils" refers to idolatry. So in Lev 7 v 17 it tells us that They

shall no more offer sacrifices unto devils after whom they have gone a whoring. These devils were simply false gods that the nations or nations about Israel would worship. Deut 32 v 17, They sacrificed unto devils, not to God, to gods whom they knew not. So evidently from Deut ch 32, you can see that the devils in that verse are clearly nothing more and nothing less than pagan gods, or idols. 2 Chron 11 v 15. Jeroboam ordained him priests to the high places and for the devils and for the calves which he had made. You remember that Jeroboam set up golden calves in Dan and in Bethel. Well evidently he worshipped other false gods in addition to the calf gods he had made.

And finally the 4th and final use of the word “devils” in the OT, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils. In Psa 106 v 37 which in v 38 of that Psalm, those temples are called “the idols of Canaan.” So clearly 4 references to idolatry by use of the word “devils” in the OT. Now why am I labouring that point? Well this is why. As far as the Bible is concerned none of it is true, none of it whatsoever is true. Isa 44 v 8 Is there a god beside me. Yea, there is no god, I know not of any. So there is only one true God. The fact the nations worship all manner of deities of every kind. There is only one true God, therefore all of this idolatry is nonsense, as far as the Bible is concerned, it is nonsense. Isa 45 v 5, I Yahweh, there is none else, there is no God beside me. Psa 96 v 5 for all the gods of the nations are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens. None of the pagan gods can do anything at all, they are all false, notions of men’s minds without any power or true existence in the world, there is only one God. So the scripture is very clear, no mistake, but now come with me to 1 Cor. 10. Look at this, this is where it becomes important. So we said there are 2 points. 1 that the word “devils” in the OT is a reference to pagan idols. 2. That pagan idols though they may be worshipped by people are not in fact true. There is only one God, it is Yahweh the God of Israel.

In 1 Cor 10 v 19 we read this, What say I then, that the idol is anything? Or that that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God, and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. For the word “devils” in v 20 is a translation of the Greek word daimonion, δαιμόνιον, and it ought to have been translated “demons” and not “devils.” A very useful exercise for you when you go home would be to get out your concordance and look up the word “devil” and “devils,” and find out where it says daimonion, and colour that in one colour and find out where it says diabolise, which is the usual word for “devil” as in Devil and Satan, diabolos, liar, and colour that in a different colour. The problem with the authorised version is that it has taken 2 Greek words, the word for demon and the word for liar or slanderer and translated them both by the same English word “devil.” So sometimes you read “devil” in the NT, it is demon. Sometimes you read “devil” and it is false accuser or liar. That is a bit of a problem. Here I am telling you it is the word “demon.”

Now why have I turned you to 1 Cor 10 v 20. Well, because your margin would tell you that v 20 is a quotation from the Old Testament. Which quotation? Deut 32 v 17. Now you have to know that. If you learn nothing else from tonight, remember that, that the word “demon” in the NT in 1 Cor 10 v 20 is a quotation from Deut 32 v 17. So what? Well do you remember Deut 32 v 17 is a reference to idolatry, so demons in the NT are the idols of the OT. That is a vital point to appreciate, and this proves it,

you see, directly. V 20 quoting Deut 32 proves that the demons of the NT are nothing more, nothing less than the idols of the OT. We have already established from 2 quotes in Isaiah and one quote in the Psalms that the idols of the OT do not exist. They exist in people's minds but not in practice. There is only one true God. And in fact that's the same message of the NT.

Come back one page to 1 Cor 8 v 4. 1 Cor 8 v 4 says, As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. So the demons of 1 Cor 10 v 20 are simply idols and idols aren't true. The demons of the NT are simply the idols of the OT. We know that because the word daimonion or demon occurs in 1 Cor 10 v 20 quoting Deut 32 v 17 and 2ndly demons aren't true, idols aren't true, the only true God is Yahweh. All right, well there is the simple answer to demons.

Let's now confront some problems, come with me to Acts 16. So when I deal with this subject, this is the order I proceed in. I start with those quotes from the OT, show directly from 1 Cor 10 that Idols and demons are the same thing. And now move to Acts 16, because here is a really interesting quote. It is a quote in fact that is used to prove the existence of demons, that is to say, that demons are lesser deities, they are personalities working for the Devil or something like that. But it proves too much. Now let me show you why. Acts 16 v 16, It came to pass as we went to prayer, this is. Paul, Luke and others, A certain damsel possessed with the spirit of divination which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried saying, these men are the servants of the most High God that show unto us the way of salvation. And this she did for many days, but Paul being grieved turned and said to the Spirit. I command ye in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and he came out the same hour.

Now does that prove, those 3 verses, 16 to 18, does that prove, do you think that demons exist, because that's definitely what these verses would be used to prove. That this woman was mad, she's possessed by, it is says, a spirit of divination, she follows Paul, she, if you like, preaches the truth about Paul, and Paul is very embarrassed to have this kind of advertisement, so he commands the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to come out, and the spirit does so. Does that, or does that not prove, that the spirit inhabiting this woman, a personality which controls her mind, etc etc. Well who was this spirit that inhabits this woman? Do you see where it says in v 16, it is a spirit of divination. The margin is saying that it is the spirit of Python. That's because the word "divination" is the Greek word Pythos, as in Python the snake. Python was a Greek mythological deity, a snake demon that in fact guarded the oracle of Delphi. Delphi is a little place in Greece about 10 k north of the city of Corinth, and at the location of Delphi was a shrine. And Python in Greek history, guarded the shrine of Delphi. He was killed by the god Apollo, who subsequently inherited this shrine, and so therefore the ancient ruins of the Temple of Apollo today are seen at Delphi.

Well let's ask the question, Are demons true? Well the church will tell you, Yes they do. Well then do demons exist? Yes. Can you prove it? Yes sure, Acts ch 16. Does Python exist? Well now we have a problem, don't we, because Acts 16 says evidently that Python does exist. Well then does Apollo exist? Because Apollo killed Python, you know. Well then, do all the Greek gods exist, the entire gods of the

Greek pantheon, do they all exist. You see, this is proving too much. If demons exist, then we know the name of the demon Python, and the moment you admit that Python exists, you have to admit that Greek mythology is true, and that in fact, we are not sitting on a planet floating around the sun in the solar system, we are actually perched on the shoulders of Atlas though you didn't know it. It proves too much, so if you want to use Acts 16 to prove that demons are true, well you have shot yourself in the foot before you have got out of v 16 you see, it is a problem.

So if v 18, proves that demons exist, v 16 proves that Greek mythology is true and nobody wants to concede that. But understand the times that the people lived in in the 1st century. Come across 1 page to Acts ch 17. This is the occasion where Paul went to Athens. Acts 16 he was in Phillipi, he was making his journey in the north of Greece and after Phillipi he goes to Athens. By Acts 17 v 15, he's got himself down to Athens. And he speaks, in the city of Athens, at the amphitheatre there, and it tells us in v 18 that certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him, and some said, What will this babbling man say? And others said, Wow, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange demons. The word gods is the word daimonion, demons, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. So Paul was preaching gods that the Greeks that at that time in Athens hadn't heard of, and they thought these gods, well they were just additional gods to the Greeks, they were like idols. One perhaps was called Jesus, the other perhaps was called the resurrection. What is he talking about they say. He is a setter forth of strange demons.

Well Paul, of course, v 22 is going to stand on Mars Hill and he is going to explain to the the truth of the matter. And it says that Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and he said, Listen, you men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown god. So they've got altars lining the road up to the temple, and each pedestal has got a carved god on the top of it, and one occasion he finds a pedestal with nothing on top, but an inscription on the pedestal saying, To the unknown god, as if we are offering to everything and we are going to offer to that blank altar, just in case we have forgotten one. Well he says, I am going to tell you who the unknown god is that you don't know about up until this point, Him therefore you ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you. It is the God who made all things, and he proceeds to teach them the truth.

But here is the point. Do you see in v 22, the last word in v 22. Ye Greeks, he said, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. It is the Greek word, δεισιδαιμονέστερος, deisidaimonesteros, demon estero and it means "extremely devoted to demons." So superstitious people are people who believe perhaps in gods all over the place like these Greeks did. So these Greeks were extremely devoted to demons, says the apostle. And his conclusion is in v 24, well, the one god that you don't worship, I am going to declare to you. I am going to teach you the truth. So there were gods all over the Greek world you see, the Greek world in the 1st century. They didn't really know whether they were worshipping the right one or not, so they worshipped everything.

They were extremely devoted to demons, or superstitions as the English has it in v 22. And how did they do this. Well of course they would offer sacrifices to the gods, and they would speak to the god, they would pray to the God, whichever statute this

might have been. But in return they would look for messages back from the god. Well how was that going to happen because the god was made of stone or wood or metal or some other substance, but clearly, not only did it not exist as far as the Bible was concerned, and even if it did, it couldn't speak, I mean it was a statue. What would you do. And this is the story, for example of the oracle of Delphi.

Delphi, the temple of Apollo at Delphi was in use between 1400 BC and 400 AD, that's about 1800 years. The key attraction at the temple of Apollo at Delphi was the Pythia and the Pythia was a woman who would become the medium through whom the god would speak. In the 1st century AD the high priest of the oracle of Delphi, this temple was in fact this famous historian Plutarch. He was the high priest at Delphi. And he surmised in his writings that the main ingredient apparently affecting the revelations of this Pythia, this girl, was a sweet smelling gas which came up from underground. Now Plutarch is right, and perhaps he is a bit of a scientist of some kind, but he surmises, Hmmm we send these girls into the chamber underneath and they come out ga ga. I happen to observe that whenever I smell that smell, they are going to come out intoxicated, and whenever I don't, they are not. There is something going on.

Well what happened of course, was that this Pythia, this girl, would go down to the chamber underground in the basement of the temple and come out intoxicated in some manner, gibberish in some manner, make pronunciations which the high priest would then interpret as the revelation from the god. So people would become the mouthpiece of these idols and that's how the idol would communicate with man. You'd need a medium, you would need a go between. Well was that reality, well of course the idols not true, well the statue existed certainly, but the existence of the idol that the statue represented was not true. And this Pythia, or this woman, was in fact uttering nonsense. She wasn't making any kind of revelation from the god because the god wasn't true. So what was going on?

Well in 1981 a fault line was discovered at Delphi by a geologist surveying the site for use as a potential nuclear reactor facility. Now obviously if you are going to put a nuclear reactor the last thing you want is a fault line anywhere near it because there are not a lot of solutions for nuclear accidents. The surveyor discussed the importance of the find and didn't appreciate the significance until he talked many years later in 1995 to an archaeologist. That archaeologist didn't believe what the surveyor was telling him, because historical archaeologists had been looking for the fault line at Delphi for the last 100 years based on what they had read in Plutarch's writings. In 1998 after extensive work was done a 2nd fault was found running north/south directly under the ruins of the old temple and amongst the gases found to be emitted from that fault line from the fissure was ethylene gas, a sweet-smelling, highly narcotic gas, lethal in high concentrations, used for general anaesthetics in the western world through 1930 and 1970.

That discovery was published in Science magazine, Nature magazine, and National Geographic magazine in 2001. What is the point? The point is that the Pythia was intoxicated. If you breathe ethylene gas, you will become drunk, if you breathe too much from you it will kill you. That's what gave her visions, that's what gave her hallucinations, and that's why she babbled uncontrollably when she came out of the underground cellar, apparently giving revelations from the God, from Apollo, but in

fact, not true at all. And even Plutarch 2000 years ago surmised that something more scientific and less religious was going on, now he was the high priest of the shrine.

Well back in Acts 16 therefore, the woman possessed with Python, who Paul cured was actually mad, but acted an awful lot like the Pythia from Delphi, and hence you can see that mad people who acted in a way that looked like intoxication were called demon-possessed, because normal people allowed themselves to become demon-possessed in order to convey a message from the false god to the rest of society. And the behaviour of those 2 people brought strong similarities to each other. So you can see, therefore, how the phrase "demon-possession," slips into the common vernacular of the day, because people who were actually mad behaved in an incoherent manner, very much like people who were intoxicated on behalf of the gods that they were mediums for. Demon possession, therefore, is just a euphemism, or a turn of phrase to speak of madness or insanity.

I will show you that from the Bible, come with me to Matt Ch 8, That's exactly how the Bible uses the phrase, because you've got to ask yourself, How can the Bible on the one hand teach that demons aren't true, which it clearly does, because it says there is only one God, but on the other hand, use the phrase as if they were true, unless the phrase is just a an idiom. Now look at this verse in Matt 8 v 16. When even was come they brought unto Jesus many that were possessed with Demons. And he cast out the spirits with his word and healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. Now can you see the parallel between verses 16 and 17? In v 16 he says, He cast out the spirits and he healed the sick.

So he did 2 things, he cast out the spirits and healed the sick, and that fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah, which said what? That he would take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. So the spirits of v 16 are the infirmities of v 17, and the sick of v 16 are the sicknesses of v 17. Casting out spirits, therefore, is curing their infirmities, it has got nothing to do with religion in that sense. Casting out spirits in v 16 is performing medical cures, v 17. Demon possession you see, is in fact madness. Well, you might say, yes, yes, but the Bible doesn't really talk like that, The Bible does say "he cast them out," he didn't just cure them, I mean you don't cast out madness from people, you medicate them, you treat them, or you cure them, you don't cast them out, so what is going on as far as the Bible is concerned, then.

Well this is what is going on, The Bible is using an idiom and an idiom is a mode of speaking peculiar to a language and we do this sort of thing ourselves every day of the week. We say things like "the numbers speak for themselves." Well numbers do not speak, they don't have a personality, they can't convey anything, but you understand what we mean when we say "the numbers speak for themselves." "Money talks," it doesn't talk, but it does communicate as though it did talk. These phrases are idioms, and so Jesus would rebuke an unclean spirit in Luke 9 v 42, he would cast out devils in Matt 8 v 16. The devils would then depart, in Matt 17 v 18. Yes, yes, that all sounds like the devils, or the demons as the word is, have personalities and that you can did things with them, but in fact, whilst Jesus rebukes an unclean spirit, he also rebukes a fever, and there is no personality in a fever.

He also rebukes the wind in Matt 8 v 26, and there is no personality there. But he

cast out the devils, Matt 8 v 16, yes but the Bible speaks about casting out sorrow in Job 39 v 3. It speaks about casting out hypocrisy in Matt 7 v 5, you see? These are idioms, the Bible speaks like this all over its pages. But then you say, yes but then the devils actually depart in Matt 7 v 18. Well leprosy departs in Luke 5 v 13, diseases depart in Acts 19 v 12. You see? The fact that the demons appear to have personalities or are treated by the Lord as though they actually exist, in a personal capacity, it really preaches nothing well unless we want to say fevers, and winds, and sorrow and hypocrisy also have personalities.

This is how the Bible speaks, and we have to get to grips with the language and the turns of phrase that scripture uses. I might add, that these turns of phrases, they are actually in the Greek. The Greek does support this, these are not just dubious English translations, the Greek does speak like that, this is the language of the Bible. Come with me to John 7, lets learn a little more about what the apparently uneducated people of the day thought and how they spoke. Look at this in John 7, now this is the idiom that the normal common people used. John 7 v 19, Did not Moses, this is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking, Did not Moses give you the law and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me. The people answered and said, Thou hast a demon, who goeth about to kill you.

Now what are they saying? They didn't actually mean that Jesus was possessed with a spirit of any kind, they used the phrase because they, well, What is he saying? You don't keep the law and you are trying to kill me. What do they say? Don't be ridiculous, you are mad, who is trying to kill you? You see what they are saying? That they say, they just say, they don't just say he's mad, even if they had said that he was, they wouldn't have meant that he was clinically insane, they would have said, You are being silly, you are overreacting. They say, Thou hast a demon. What they mean is you are mad, that is an irrational comment you've made in v 19. They made an extreme statement by calling him mad but they used the phrase, Thou hast a demon, you see? This is how the common people spoke, they did not mean to say that he was possessed by anything, they were just taking exception to his paranoia of v 19.

Come across another couple of pages to John 10, here is another example. John 10. 19. There was a division therefore again amongst the Jews for these sayings, and many of them said, He hath a demon and is mad. Don't listen to him, they say. Others saith, These are not the words of him that hath a demon, can a demon open the eyes of the blind. So you see once again, the common language of the day was to attribute irrational behaviour of any kind whether serious or not to madness. They would use the word madness, or as they say, he's got a demon, possessed with a demon. Now you might say, Why do people talk like that, well we talk like that. If I say you are a lunatic do I mean you are struck by the moon, do I believe that the moon is having an affect on your mental stability. No I don't, I mean that would be silly. Well what about if I say there was pandemonium in the room, pan-demon-ium. I mean there is an uproar. I do not intend to make any reference to the existence of demons. But pandemonium means "many demons," What if I were to say that the hymn board is bewitched, what do I mean, there's something gone wrong with it, there is something strange, I thought I had put up 395 but it is 391. The hymn board is bewitched. I am not making any claim that I believe in witch craft, but we use this sort of language today, in the same way as they did in the 1st century.

All right, so where does this idea of demon-possession come from. Here is an interesting book a book by Dr William Sargent who is a psychiatrist and I think this book was published in about 1965, and he gives an excellent explanation about what demon possession is really all about, and particularly how it affects religion, including 20th Century religion, like Pentecostalism. The states of supposed possession has probably been with man always and certainly remain with them still. What is believed to happen is that God or the Holy Spirit or the Devil, angels, evil spirits and Satan, whatever of these are enter a man's body and take control of In. So what are we saying, is that is the common view about what demon-possession means. For thousands of years all over the globe certain forms of madness and other major abnormalities of behaviour have been accounted for in this way.

But possession has also very often been deliberately induced to give a human being the most direct and immediate possible experience of a deity, by becoming its living vessel and to enable them to act as a channel of communication to earth. So you see what he is saying, Forms of mental instability have been presumed historically in uneducated societies to have been caused by demons or false gods inhabiting that person, and bending to their will, on the one hand. On the other hand people have deliberately tried to be controlled by the false gods in order to communicate a message from that god to people like the Pythia at Delphi, and the point here is that the behaviour of both groups of people is almost identical. And therefore mad people and deliberately demon-possessed people, act the same way and therefore the word has come to mean one or both.

In the room there was drunken dancing, in the 20th century room. In the room there was dancing drunken dancing the men and women going round and round to an ever increasing and exciting crescendo of drums until they were possessed by a variety of gods and goddesses. It was possible to tell by the behaviour of the dancers which particular deity was possessing them and often talking through them. So in Fiji, and these sort of places, tribal culture particularly, they beat their drums, they dance around the fire, faster and faster and faster and all of a sudden their body becomes so exhausted their brain stops thinking normally, concentrates simply on breathing and keeping the heart beat going and they become delirious. They think at that point they have been possessed by demons.

In the states of possession of trances seen in Brazil were some of the most violent and dramatic extraordinary facial expressions and almost all of the possessed ended up in a state of collapse. Often they fell to the floor and had to be carried out into a special private room. The point is demon-possession so believed still exists today in the 21st C in primitive cultures. Well it is not demon-possession, but you can work yourself up into a state where you think you have been demon-possessed and your conduct approaches madness, which another group of people conduct themselves in, not trying to be demon-possessed, they are actually mad and both of them act the same, that's what Sargent is telling us.

In ancient Mesopotamia, all forms of sicknesses, including psychological illnesses were put down to possessing spirits, and so numerous were the demons and evil ghosts that might fasten on a man, that fear of them was being described as one of the most important factors in the daily life of a Babylonians. Specialist priests

exorcised sufferers. Their principal technique was to transfer the disease demon to an animal or object by means of a present and repeated incantations which with the disturbed patient in a state of heightened suggestibility, may well have had the desired effect.

Now think about what he is saying there. In ancient cultures you have got a person who might be mad, like mentally deranged. The priest thinks they are possessed by demon. It is not true, they are mentally deranged. And to cure the patient, today you would give them drugs, maybe perform some kind of surgery, but you deal with it in a medical manner. When you do deal with this problem, how do you convince the patient that he is cured? Well these priests wanted to take the demon out and release the demon into an animal and if the animal ran away in a mad sort of state, the patient would be very likely to believe that they have been cured of their madness because the animal had gone mad in its place. That's how in the ancient world treatment was done. But the critical thing is that you have got to convince a mad person that he has been cured.

Now how does a mad person going to evaluate whether he has been cured or not? By using his brain. But that 's a problem isn't it, because it is not working. I mean if I've got a broken arm and you have fixed my arm, I can use my mind and evaluate whether it is fixed or not. If my mind is broken and you have fixed my mind how do I evaluate if in fact my mind is fixed, how I know I am not going to lapse back into another bout of sickness. Well you've got to show me how you've cured me.

This is the basis for me taking you in a moment to Mark Ch 5 where he cured Legion, because you can see that Jesus is confronting this precise problems when he comes to cure a man. But before I got there, let me address one question that people that raise with me on the subject of Theistic Evolution. You might be surprised to learn demons, the biblical use and discussion of the subject of demons, is used by Theistic evolution to prove the theory of evolution. Now here is how their reasoning goes. In order to harmonise the doctrine of Theistic evolution and the creative record of Gen 1 and 2 which clearly teaches the very opposite of an evolutionary process, it is suggested that scripture has been deliberately written to accommodate the scientific beliefs of the people of the day. So here is the argument.

Mad people are said to be possessed by unclean spirits, demons whatever. Jesus went along with this idea and he cast out devils in order to cure people. However doctrinally speaking there is no such thing as demons, we've proven that. Medically speaking we understand that mental illness is not the result of demons. Therefore, in the same way that demon-possession was once the accepted explanation of mental illness, but is no longer, the 6-day creation was once the accepted explanation of origins, but is no longer. So you see the logic of the argument. Well the question becomes, How do you answer that? Does the way the Bible deals with demons allow the Theistic evolutionist to justify re-reading Gen 1 as simply the unenlightened explanation of the theory of evolution.

I do not believe so because of these reasons. The fact that the Bible explicitly teaches that demons are not true, proves that it is not trying to accommodate the accepted explanation of the day, because it teaches it against it elsewhere. Now that is a critical point. The Bible doesn't agree with the notion of demon-possession, there

is none other god but one. By contrast when the Bible teaches creation in Gen 1 and 2, it does not teach against it anywhere else in the Bible, in fact quite the reverse. The Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19 bases his prohibition of divorce on the creation record of Gen Ch 2. So there is no parallel at all with how the Bible with demons and demon-possession and how the Bible deals with creation.

The reason mental illness is described as demon-possession is because people with mental illness, often display the same symptoms as those who allow themselves to be the mediums of pagan gods, as we have explained. Demon possession is therefore a figure of speech, or a synonym for madness, and not a scientific explanation. Even today we use words like lunatic, or pandemonium or bewitched as I have described, without intending to refer to the psychological influence of the moon, demons or witchcraft. But the answer comes back, Yes, yes, all very good, but in using this sort of language, this misleading demonic language of scripture, Jesus supports false doctrine, how do you account for that?

My answer is, convincing a mental patient that they have been cured is difficult because in order to evaluate their cure, the patient is required to use the very organ where the problem existed. That is the problem of madness. When healing psychological disturbed people Jesus had to use language that was helpful to the sufferer, the doctrinal education could come later. So think about it, You are required to go and cure somebody who is mad. In the kingdom age you might be required to do just that. When do you want to begin the doctrinal explanation, before or after your cure. There is no point in trying to this mad person about the fact that demons don't exist, if in fact they person believes they do until they are sane and in their right mind. And you have got to at some point convince them that they are now in their right mind, and in their right mind to stay, before you can have a gainful conversation. And they are going to use their mind to evaluate the issue but that's where the problem was.

Ok, so let's go to Mark Ch 5. Here is a man who was at times in his right mind and at times not in his right mind. Now how would you cure the madman of Gadara. He was the most notorious example in the entire nation. Wild man, fierce man, terrifying in his appearance. A man of super-human strength from time to time. He once lived in the city but now it appears he dwells amongst the tombs. Exiled from society, preying upon unwary travellers or anyone who might stray into his area. And Mark paints the picture in v 2 of Mark 5, When Jesus came out of the ship immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with chains, because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him and the fetters broken in pieces. Neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

So here is a man, an outcast from society, obviously mad and clearly dangerous who was about to be healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a more complicated example than anywhere else we find in the Bible, because the problem in this case was solved by removing it. Look at v 15, They come to Jesus and they see him that possessed of the demon and Legion sitting and clothed in his right mind. So clearly, he was mad before he's mad no longer, but though it was clearly mental insanity that

was involved, that is not how the patient saw it. In v 9, he thought he was possessed by demons. V 9 Jesus asked him What is your name? And he answered and said, My name is Legion for we are many. And Jesus, what's more in v8, Jesus addresses the demons. Jesus said, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And the demons answered him back, in v 12. All the demons besought him, the Lord, that is, saying, Send us into the swine that we may enter into them. So then the demons, in the story, transfer from the man into the pigs, v 13. Forthwith Jesus gave them leave. The unclean spirits went out, they entered the swine, the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, about 2,000 of them, and they were choked in the sea.

So from all appearances in Mark Ch 5, demons really do exist, what on earth is Jesus doing, and how do you explain this problem. Well the first point to appreciate is that this cure, this form of cure, that is transferring the legion of the demons into the swine, came at the patient's request. Remember the demon possession of Babylon, the greatest problem with daily life in Babylonia, everyone in ancient Babylon believed that demon were everywhere. Well this man's got the same problem, and in ancient Babylon the priests would often exact a cure by transferring a demon into something else, well that is exactly what is happening here. The Lord cured many people by casting out their madness, the record says. This is the only occasion where the maleness or the demon is transferred into something else. My point is, it was not the Lord's idea to do this it was the patient's idea.

2ndly what is the result of the transfer of the demons? V 13 says, as we just read, the demons go into the pigs and then run down the hill and drown themselves in the sea. So the demons killed their hosts. So the demons asked to go into the swine and then apparently die, because they killed the swine. And they asked to go into the swine in v 13, instead of being sent out of the country in v10. What's wrong with these demons, what's going on? Why wouldn't they rather have been sent out of the country, if demons really do exist, wouldn't you think they would rather be sent out of the country, instead they go into the pigs and then drown the pigs? Well then what becomes of the demons, presumably they drown, unless of course they have tricked the Lord. They've tricked him somehow and they've gone elsewhere. Unlikely since he is more powerful than them it appears, don't worry about him. No, no, the fact is, that Jesus made the pigs run down the hill and not the demons, and Jesus killed the pigs, that's what's actually happening here.

3rdly, in v6, this madman comes and worships the Lord, look at what it says. When he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him. Why would the demons let Legion do that? If he really is inhabited by a Legion of demons, why would they let him go and worship Jesus Christ? Wouldn't seem to be very powerful demons were they.

4thly, Legion recognises the Lord Jesus Christ in v6. He appears to know something about him, and what he knows about the Lord worries him a lot. He is worried about what the Lord might do, and so in v 7 he cries with a loud voice and he says to Jesus, What have I to do to thee Jesus thou son of the Most High God. I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. So he is worried about Jesus possibly tormenting Him. And then in v 10 he besought Jesus much that he would not send him away out of the country, so he doesn't want to be exiled. So it seems as though that Legion in one of his periods of mental stability has learned quite a lot about the Lord, but that his mental stability is punctuated by episodes of madness. And when he is mentally

stable, in his right mind. When he goes mad he bursts his bonds asunder with apparently super-human strength, then he charged and runs down anyone who gets near. What is the problem of Legion, do you suppose? Well come with me to Isaiah 65 and I will make a suggestion. There is no doubt that the Lord does a miracle to cure Legion. Why however does Legion ask for the demons to be transferred to the pigs? Why do the pigs run down the hill and drown themselves in the sea? What's behind all that, Why does Jesus does that? Why doesn't he simply cast out the demons and just cure the man.

Well I think we probably have the story here, Isaiah 65 v 2, prophecy to the nation, 700 BC. I spread out my hands, says God through Isaiah, all the day unto a rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good after their own thoughts. A people that provokes me to anger continually to my face that sacrifices in gardens and burns incense on altars of brick, which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh and the broth of abominable things in their vessels, which say, Stand by thyself and come not near me.

That's interesting. So we've got a nation of Israel v 2, who are a rebellious people, and v 3 they offer sacrifices, they have altars and they employ themselves in some sort of cultic worship, illegal worship of idols. In v 4 they do it among the graves and they eat swine's flesh. Well how about that? Because in Mark 5 v 2, Legion lived among the tombs. And in v7 of Isa 65 it says, Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together saith Yahweh which have burned incense upon the mountains and blasphemed me upon the hills. Well in Mark Ch 5 v 5, Night and day he was in the tombs and the mountains, it says, crying and cutting himself with stones.

Do you know what I believe was happening in Mark Ch 5, Legion had been involved, it appears to me, in some ancient form of cultic worship which was illegal in Israel. And as part of that worship he would eat unclean animals such as pigs. And he knew he was breaking the law, because Lev 11 v 7 - 8 says, that amongst the animals that thou shalt not touch is the pig, the swine, though he divide the hoof and be cloven footed, yet he chews not the cud, he is unclean to you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, of their carcase thou shalt not touch, they are unclean, so he was in direct violation of the Law of Moses, not just serving false gods, but breaking the law with every meal he ate.

And there are consequences, you see, because he knew that when the Lord Jesus Christ returned, Zechariah 13 said, That in that day there shall be a fountain open for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, and it shall come to pass in that day, says Yahweh of Armies that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land. They shall no more be remembered and I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land. When the kingdom is established, that is when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, all idolatry will be cast away and every one associated with it will be too.

Do you remember what Legion said in Mark 5 v 10, Torment me not, and he besought them that Christ would not send him out of the country because he knew what the Messiah would do. So evidently in his periods of sanity, he knew quite a bit about what the Lord's work would involve. And removing idolatry and unclean spirits was part of it. They would be exiled and he didn't want that to happen, but what he

wanted instead was a cure. And at the end of all that, he knew the problem came from the pigs. Why did problem come from the pigs? Why did the patient specifically require that the cure to be effective had to involve the pig. Well you see there is a problem with pigs which is one of the reasons that they were unclean. Pigs have worms.

In the OT we know there was a cult that ate pork, you read it in Isaiah 65, you read it again in Isaiah 66 v 17. From the story of Legion we know that the problem as far as he is concerned has got something to do with the pigs. Well pigs have worms, and this is worm is a major problem, this is why the authorities today take particular care about the treatment of meat and particularly the treatment of port. I mean pigs run around with their noses in the ground, anything in the ground they are going to get. What does this worm do? Well you ingest the eggs of the worm by eating meat where those eggs are. And then in your gut, the eggs hatch and the worm crawls out, burrows through the wall of your intestine and sits in your bloodstream and then the females lay 1million something eggs. Those eggs float around your bloodstream and are likely to lodge in muscle and when they do lodge in muscle your body walls them off with calcium and they become a little lump. Doesn't affect you your muscles still work, they are very very tiny little things and they wait until you decompose and something eats you to hatch out again and the cycle will continue.

But your blood doesn't just go to muscles. Your blood goes to your heart and to your brain, but what happens when these eggs go to your brain? Well you can see there is central nervous system damage, so these eggs will go to your brain and when they get to your brain, your brain says, Oh I've got a foreign body. I've got to fight this foreign body and your brain builds a sac around it and walls it off, but your brain keeps fighting it and so the sac increases in size and now you've got pressure on your brain. And one moment you are mad and the next moment you are sane, the next moment you are mad because you've got a cast now in your heat, the only way to solve it is to operate.

The problem has come from the pigs. And the patient in this case knows where the problem has come from, because in World War 1 men got this. They are desperate for food, they are in trenches, unsanitary conditions, they ate whatever they could get. Or not cooking it properly, whatever the case may be. It was a common problem you got from eating pigs. And the patient says Send the demon back to the pig. In a moment of sanity it appears he understands the cause of the problem. So Jesus acquiesces to the wishes of the patient in order that he might solve the problem. Now what happens, Mark Ch 5 v 13, Jesus now has to prove to the patient that he has been cured. And it says in v 13, Forthwith Jesus gave them leave and the unclean spirits went out and they entered into the swine, the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, about 2000 of them and they were choked in the sea.

So can you believe, therefore, that Legion having seen this happen would genuinely believe that the problem had been solved, and that the sanity that he now found himself in, was never going to return, because he saw evidence of the cure. Now it was nothing to do with demons, it was a medical problem obviously associated with the worms, But how would you convince the fellow that that was the case, because he had been sane before. The next day he was insane, the next day he was sane, as this cyst developed in him. But what happens next is most interesting, because in v

18 it says, And when Jesus was come to the ship he that had been possessed with the demon prayed him that he might be with him. Legion now wants to accompany the Lord Jesus Christ. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not but said to him, Go home to thy friends, Legion, he says, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And underline the word "compassion" and write in your margin Mic 7 v 19 and then come with me to Mic 7 v 19. Mic 7 v 19, In your margin of v 19 of Mark 5, and now come to Mic 7 v 18, look what the lord Jesus Christ has done.

There is much more than this now than simply curing a man of his demons. Mic 7 v 18, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Legion Mark 5 v 19, Go home and tell those friends how great things the Lord has done for thee and that he has had compassion on thee.

What has Jesus done for this man. He hasn't really cured his demons, he has forgiven his sin. That's what he has done for him because that was the real burden of the problem wasn't it? Here was a man who was engaged in false worship who was breaking the Law of Moses every step of the day, who had contracted an illness, we suspect, from his conduct. The Lord confronts him, has a discussion with him, acquiesces to the desire of the patient to remove the illness and send it back to the pigs from whence it came. Jesus does that but he doesn't just do that, he then takes the pigs and buries them in the water, why? And then he says to the patient Now go home tell about what compassion I had and what was the nature of that compassion? V 19 of Micah. Cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You see what he has done, there is much much more to this than simply curing a man's madness. Which is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Take up thy bed and walk. You see the Lord proved his forgiveness of sin by every miracle he did.

Well our time is over, but we can perhaps hardly do better than conclude with the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 8 v 5 where he says this, For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) v 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, on account of him are all things, and we by him.

So what have we said, demons are just idols or false gods. Demon-possession is a figure of speech, an idiom, a euphemism if you like, for madness or mental disease, where patients exhibit the identical symptoms in their condition to those who deliberately acted as intermediaries for false gods. In fact there is only one God, the true God, the God of the Bible. The present day belief in demons or spirits is based on an incorrect understanding of the Bible and an incorrect understanding of the way turns of speech are used in the Bible. And as you can see, as I hope I have explained, a more detailed study reveals the truth.

Transcription by Fay Berry 2018

