

Sermon Mark S. Aites
DEMONS & DEMON POSSESSION
(Taken From Material by Wayne Jackson)

TEXT: Mark 5:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

1. Article -- Anderson's Journal**
 - 1) Journal: sounds like hollywood production.
 - 2) Numerous modern day accounts; articles, books, TV, Movies.
 - 3) Perhaps most famous: Exorcist
2. Let's look at a biblical account (**Mark 5:1-13**).
3. Hayes-critic of Bible: *"Mark 5:1-13 relates an incredible story wherein Jesus casts out the 'devils' from an unfortunate man. He then causes the devils to enter, instead, a herd of swine, & the swine, thus bedeviled, race over the cliff, fall into the sea & drown. Fundamentalists would have us believe that this is a true story. That tells us a lot about fundamentalists. Belief in demons & fairies & goblins & dragons ended, for most people, ages ago, & is remembered only in some Fairy Tales. Such primeval superstitions should be left behind, in our colorful past, where they belong."*
4. These are extreme views: belief in demons wreaking havoc; & denial of their existence.
5. Let's look at what we can understand from Scripture.

DISCUSSION:

I. ORIGIN.

- A. Some evidence -- word *demon* from a Greek word meaning "to know." (Vines)
 1. Plato, an ancient philosopher, referred to the term as *daemon* meaning "knowing or wise."
 2. The Ancient writers attributed such a definition to their belief that demons were "intelligent beings." (McClintock & Strong, 1968, 2:639)
 3. **Mark 13:6-7** *When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do"*
 - 1) We note a recognition of the Lord's name.
 - 2) We also note a recognition of who Jesus really was, *the Son of the Most High God.*
- B. Two theories are given, out of four, which give us some indication of the possible origin of demons.
 1. Some have stated that demons can be identified with fallen angels.
 - 1) **2 Pet. 2:4** *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. (cf. Jude 6)*
 - 2) Theory -- believe that these fallen angels were permitted, for an specified time period, to leave confinement for the purpose of inhabiting people. (Theory: held by C. Hodge)
 2. Theory 2: demons were wicked spirits of dead men who were allowed by God to leave Hades. This view was embraced by A. Campbell.
 3. But in actuality: we have no definitive explanation as to their origin, rather fallen angels or wicked spirits of the dead.
 4. The Holy Spirit did not see it as essential that we know their origin with any surety.

II. THE NATURE OF DEMONS.

- A. We are specifically told their nature in **Matt. 8:16** *When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick.*
1. Spirit & demons used interchangeably.
 2. **Luke 8:29** Referred to as *unclean spirit*
 3. **Luke 24:39** *for a spirit does not have flesh & bones.*
 4. From this we conclude that demons were not physical.
 5. This makes sense since they possessed the bodies of men, & made them do things they normally would not (cf. Legion).
 6. Legion: **Luke 8:29** *...For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.*
- B. We have noted already that demons had knowledge; knowledge of events and individuals.
1. **Matt. 8:29** *And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*
 2. We note that they not only knew Jesus as the Son of God, but also were aware of their fate.
 3. They were not ready to face punishment -- but they had knowledge of eternal punishment (hell).
 4. **James 2:19** *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble!*
 - 1) *Tremble* - Thayer: "to be struck with extreme fear, to be horrified."
 - 2) They know their future & the prospect of it was frightening.
- C. In **Acts 19:15**, to the 7 sons of Sceva, the Jewish chief priest: *And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"*
1. Again, it shows knowledge & intelligence.
 2. And of interest, respect for the Lord, and His servants.
- D. In regard to the nature of demons, we also note that they are characterized as *unclean* or *evil*.
1. *Evil* -- from the Greek meaning, "that which not only is morally malignant, but injurious as well." (Vines)
 2. **Matt 12:43-45** *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.*
44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.
45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.
 3. We note that the spirit is referred to as *unclean*.
 4. We also note that it was possible for more than one unclean spirit to indwell within a man.
 - 1) Mary Magdalene -- 7 demons (**Luke 8:2**).

2) Legion: 2,000 (**Mark 5:13**).

III. THE EFFECTS.

- A. We observe the physical effects: While in some individuals, there was great strength.
1. Legion **Matt 8:28**: described as *exceedingly fierce*.
 - 1) The Greek bears out that he was dangerous.
 - 2) Translated *perilous* **1 Tim. 3:1**.
 2. **Mark 5:3-4** *and no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.*
 3. 7 sons of Sceva: **Acts 19:16** *Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*
- B. Other physical effects:
1. Irrational & antisocial behavior:
 - 1) **Mark 5:5** *And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.*
 - 2) **Luke 8:27** *And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.*
 - 3) His irrationality is evident from the statement made in **Mark 5:15**: *Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind.*
 2. The inability to speak (**Matt 9:33**).
 3. The inability to see (**Matt. 12:22**).
 4. Sounds like epileptic seizure; **Mark 9:17-18** *Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. 18 "And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid.*
- C. Before moving on, I should say something about the charge that anything people could not diagnose was attributed as demon possession.
1. **Mark 1:32** *At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.*
 2. Bro. Wayne Jackson notes: "The double use of the definite article, together with the conjunction, reveals that two distinct classes are under consideration -- those who were merely sick, & those who were demon possessed & may or may not have had attending problems."
 3. Lenski: "Two classes are markedly distinguished; those suffering from ordinary diseases & those possessed with demons. The distinction shows that the latter cannot be classed with the former in spite of modern attempts in that direction."

IV. THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

- A. It is rightly noted that their purpose is not specifically spelled out, but a reasonable conclusion can be drawn from Scripture.
- B. The basis appears to be in helping to establish the deity of Christ & authority of His apostles.
- C. Bro. Jackson points out how the Lord's authority is established.

1. Christ exhibited power over diseases & physical ailments; material objects, the elements of nature, the force of gravity, & the ability to raise the dead.
 2. All of these things transpired for the purpose of establishing that He was the Son of God.
 3. It seems a reasonable conclusion that the ability to cast out demons also was a profession of His deity.
- D. Jesus had been falsely accused by the Pharisees:
- Matt. 12:24** *"This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*
1. They accused Jesus of casting out demons i.e. by the power of satan.
 2. Jesus: **Matt. 12:26-29** *"If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
27 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.
28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.
29 "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.*
 3. In **Luke 11:20** Jesus speaks of casting out demons by the finger of God.
 4. Point: He cast out demons, the servants of satan, which He could not have done unless His power was superior to satan's.

V. DEMON POSSESSION TODAY.

- A. Modern claims of demonism differ considerably with Scripture. (Woodward)
1. When "exorcisms" are performed today, they are generally limited to a secluded environment, & sometime later they are publicized. When Jesus cast out demons it was public & open to critical examination.
 2. The Lord could expel demons with but a word, & the effect was immediate; but in modern times, such as in Blatty's book, *The Exorcist*, a Jesuit Priest supposedly took two months to prepare fasting on bread & water.
 3. The demons of the first century were afflicted mentally & physically, but were otherwise appearing human. However, through the centuries, & even in our own day, they are described as being grotesque.
 - 1) Roman Catholic Priest Luigi Novagese: "A man's skin turned white like paper, his teeth became transparent, his eyes bulged with balls of flame & fire issued from his mouth."
 - 2) This sounds too much like a Hollywood script.
 4. Modern demons supposedly utter "fierce curses" & "bursts of blasphemy."; but in the New Testament they were always respectful of deity.
 5. The demons in the first century caused their human hosts to have great strength. A university professor said: "If we have demon-possessed people today, why in my travels in over 40 countries of the world have I never seen a person who is so strong that you couldn't bind him with chains."
 6. The ability to cast out demons in the 1st century was given in order to confirm the truth of the Gospel message (**Mark 16:17-20**). Modern "exorcists" preach everything but the Gospel.

- B. Another aspect to consider is the length of time that demon possession was permitted by God (Jackson).
1. No miracles exist today. "No one can walk upon the water, raise the dead, calm a raging storm, turn water into wine, instantly heal an amputated ear, extract money from a fish's mouth, etc."
 - 1) A miracle is the breaking of a physical law.
 - 2) True miracles cannot be denied, even by critics; however, there is no proof of their existence today.
 2. The purpose of spiritual gifts was to confirm the authenticity of the spoken word (**Mark 16:20**).
 - 1) Since the process of divine revelation has ceased, when the last New Testament book was written, the need for miracles ceased.
 - 2) Bro. Jackson likened them to a scaffolding that is removed when a building is finished.
 3. The Bible clearly mentioned that the day of miracles was going to cease.
 - 1) Paul made that clear in **Eph. 4:8-16** & in **1 Cor. 13:8-10**.
 - 2) "The apostle Paul said that when "the perfect" or "the complete" arrived, the partial revelation, which came by means of spiritual gifts, would cease."
- C. I point this out to say this:
1. If it is the case that miraculous gifts have ceased, & they have; if demon possession were still possible, then it would give satan an unfair advantage against us.
 2. **1 John 4:4** *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*
 3. If the gift of casting out demons no longer exists today; then it is reasonable to conclude that demon possession also no longer exists.

CONCLUSION:

1. Application: Those of the world, who believe in demons, have a different understanding than Scripture.
2. Now, just because demon possession no longer exists, does not mean that we do not need to be concerned about satan.