

OpenTheo

Demons (Part 1)



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this presentation, Steve Gregg discusses the topic of demons, including their existence, influence, and how they can affect people. He covers major points such as the recognition of demon possession by Jesus and his apostles, the different terms used to refer to demons in the Bible, and the impact of demonic activity on individuals and society. Additionally, Gregg examines the role of Christianity in addressing demonic possession, and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a clean and upright life after experiencing deliverance from demonic power to prevent future reassertion.

Transcript

In 1973, there was a movie that everybody remembers who was alive at that time. It was called *The Exorcist*, and it was based on a book by the same name. The book and the movie, *The Exorcist*, were actually based on an actual case of demon possession, though names and many details, including the gender of the victim, were changed in the movie in order to preserve the privacy of the persons that really endured it.

The actual case that the movie was based upon occurred in 1949 and was spread out over a period of four or five months where a young boy, 13 or 14 years old, began to have very strange occurrences happening to him and around him. His family witnessed these things, doctors witnessed them, eventually Catholic priests were brought in. The family was Lutheran, and so initially they brought in a Lutheran pastor, but he threw up his hands and felt he could do nothing to help the situation, and so he actually recommended Catholic priests be called in because in 1949, there were very few mainline denominations that actually believed in demon possession.

The Lutheran pastor didn't believe in it, and about that time, it was very uncommon for educated people to say they believed in demon possession, but the Roman Catholics had always preserved a belief in exorcism and in demon possession. There's always been an order of priests in the Catholic Church called exorcists, and they have a ritual, a book actually, to guide them in this. It's full of a lot of superstitious nonsense, it seems to me, but in some cases, it's better than nothing at all, and so it was in this case.

After several months of treating this young boy, there was a deliverance, and the boy is now, of course, he'll be in his 70s now, and has had no further problems since that time. Now, some of the things in the movie *The Exorcist* were somewhat sensationalized. Things like the girl, who was the victim in the movie, with her head twisting around completely on its neck and so forth, no such thing happened in the actual story, but things very weird did happen, and they were witnessed by very many people.

In fact, a few years ago, a diary was found in a hospital room where some of this exorcism took place. It was the diary of the assisting priests and exorcists, and it actually is a journal of what happened day by day. It was not known that this journal was available until recently, and a Roman Catholic journalist found out about it, took it, and wrote a book-length treatment of it, which I've read, and as I read it, it's very sobering.

I mean, if you see the movie *The Exorcist*, which I do not recommend, many people threw up watching the movie. Many people were bothered by paranoia and fears after they saw the movie. In fact, there are allegedly many weird supernatural things that happened in the making of the movie.

I don't know, I can't comment on this, but in the actual case, there were tremendous numbers of supernatural things happening, like almost every night at a certain time of the night, this young boy's bed would begin to vibrate and move across the room. Dressers would slide across the room. The family would walk in, and these things were all moving around.

The boy was lying stiff on the bed, not moving at all, terrified. Other things unmentionable occurred. It's quite a fascinating read.

What's particularly fascinating to me is how the ministers who were called in to deal with the situation knew so little about what to do, or even what the problem was, and it took so long for any of them to actually realize that there were demons involved, because in modern times, it is not fashionable to acknowledge what ancient people all took for granted to be true, and that is that we are not alone here. Not only is God in our universe and are there angels, but there are also evil beings that we cannot see. They are apparently under the command of Satan.

Their exact relationship to Satan is never fully described in the scripture, nor is their actual origin described in scripture. There are passages that Christians have tried to patch together to try to make a coherent theology or demonology, as it's called, of where demons came from and so forth. But really, the Bible is quite silent on many of the questions that we would like to have answered on this subject.

But it is not silent on the fact that there are such beings and that they cause a great variety of problems to human beings, one of which is the phenomenon that is usually referred to as demon possession. But that's not the only thing. The demons are involved

in other activities as well, and a person may never become demon-possessed but may yet have a great amount of struggles with the demonic realm.

If you would look for a moment with me at Ephesians chapter 6, a well-known passage on spiritual warfare, probably the best known on the subject. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 10, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, which simply means human beings. Our war is not against people, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

And then he of course lists some of the things that he refers to as the armor of God, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, and the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And then there's some weaponry there too, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God and prayer. These are the things that Paul says we have been given to equip us to withstand the enemies with whom we have to do.

These enemies are, he says, principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. This is not very clear what is meant by these terms. Principalities and powers, for example, is a term that Paul uses frequently in Ephesians and in Colossians and even uses the term in Titus.

And in the book of Titus, it's very clear that when he uses the same terms, he's referring only to human governmental authorities. It's very clear, for example, in Titus chapter three and verse one, Titus three, one Paul says, remind them, meaning the Christians to be subject and the way the new King James reads to rulers and authorities to be subject to them, to obey and to be ready for every good work. Well, the term rulers and authorities here in the Greek is the very same term that's over in Ephesians six principalities and powers.

Principalities and powers can mean human authorities, and they certainly mean that in Titus three, one or as in Ephesians chapter six, where Paul says principalities and powers. And others in the heavenlies or in the heavenly places, these would be, of course, not earthly authorities, but spiritual authorities, demonic authorities. There are many who have concluded that Paul's list here, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age and its spiritual host of wickedness and heavenly places, that these are not all synonyms, but rather what we have here are ranks as organized as in an army of the demonic powers.

Now, it is not possible to ascertain that this theory is true. I've heard it taught

dogmatically, but there's absolutely no way biblically to ascertain that this is actually what Paul is revealing here about ranks and in the demonic armies. But one thing is clear.

He is saying that we are wrestling, we are fighting, we are at war and the enemies are unseen beings, wicked beings. Powerful beings, beings that wield, in some cases, a measure of authority. And we know very little about who they are, what they do, what they're likely to do to us and what we are likely to experience if we are unprepared for them.

We know very little in general how to discern the presence of demons. And what to do if we do how to deal with them. And so I wanted to give some time, this will be a short series of two or three or I don't know how many, not very long lessons on the subject of demons.

And I want to focus in the latter part of the series, particularly on the subject of demon possession. Now, the handout I've given you, I've spent all day today and all day yesterday preparing, although I've taught this before. Last time I taught it was last summer and I have misplaced the notes that I had.

So I had to do this basically from scratch. So I spent all day yesterday and today looking up scriptures about demons, a very edifying thing to study, actually, only because Jesus is Victor. That is something that you'll soon learn as you study what the scriptures say on the subject.

However, what it is he is Victor over is not a pretty picture. And so I'd like you to study the scriptures with me today, and I want to I want to just look at the range of subject matter we're going to cover as you look down the notes that are printed on both sides of that sheet I gave you. I want to talk, first of all, about what demons are and what they do.

That would include. Other terms that the scriptures use that may give us some insight into what they are, it will include talking about what demons do to people. This would not be only in cases of demon possession, this would be in general what demons do to people, whether or not they are possessed, how demons think and react to certain things.

I've got, as you can see, lots of biblical verses on all these points. I want to talk about the historical activity of demons, and that's broken into several parts. First, in the Old Testament times, yes, they are mentioned there, but not much.

The primary information about demons in the New Testament is in connection with the ministry of Jesus. The Gospels tell us that Jesus cast out demons just about everywhere he went, but there are eight notable cases of which we have a measure of detail, not

much in some cases, but cases where Jesus actually cast demons out of individuals. They are in your notes there.

And then after talking about the activity of demons in the Old Testament and in the life of Jesus, I want to talk about the activity of demons in the ministry of the disciples. And in the book of Acts and in modern times, because the activity of demons has continued to this present time, I remember when I was raised in the Baptist church. It never occurred to me that demons existed.

It didn't occur to me that they didn't either. It just never crossed my mind until when I was probably about 12 or 13. Some missionaries that our church supported came home on furlough from Africa and they were telling on a Sunday night some of their experiences.

And they had well, they told of some cases where demons had had to be cast out of people in Africa where they labored. And they just spoke of it very matter of factly, just like the biblical writers do. But to me, it was an entirely foreign subject.

I had read the Gospels before. I had, of course, seen the word devils there, which is the way the King James translates the word daemon, which is demon. I read about demon possession, but I guess it had never crossed my mind until that time, until I heard missionaries telling stories of their modern day experiences.

That demon possession was a phenomenon that is still happening now. Intellectuals usually would say that ancient, primitive, pre-scientific people believed in demons and they conjured up the idea of demons to explain the inexplicable. When disasters happened, when mental illness struck, when people had epilepsy and things that were simply frightening and inexplicable, they would say, well, this person has a demon.

Now, of course, some of the people who say these things are actually Christian people. And if you would ask them, well, then why is it that Jesus spoke of demons as if they were real? Usually the answer that would be given is that Jesus was accommodating the superstitions of the people of the time. Well, I have not found Jesus in his mystery in general to accommodate superstitions or traditions of the time.

As a matter of fact, he seemed to hit him head on. And yet he spoke very plainly about demons. He not only cast demons out, spoke to demons as if they were real personalities, but he actually talked about them on occasion and spoke of them truly as if they were personalities.

In the course of this, of these talks, we're going to focus on the subject of demonization, which is an anglicized form of the Greek word demonizomai, which is the Greek word that is translated demon possessed in our Bibles. I'll tell you why I don't prefer the term demon possessed, it's not a very good translation of the word demonizomai, and so we'll

simply refer to demonization. We will, when we get to this point, it won't be tonight, talk about the definition of various related terms.

What is demon oppression? What is demon possession? What is demon bondage? We're going to talk about the symptoms of demonization. How does one know if somebody is demonized or not, is demon possessed or not? How do you tell? Well, there are a great number of symptoms drawn from the scriptures primarily and somewhat from the missionary experiences that I've and my own personal experiences with demonized people that I can appeal to. But primarily from what the scriptures tell us, we want to see from the behavior of demonized persons and also from the behavior of the demons toward demonized persons.

You know, I didn't realize this until doing a great deal of research on it, but that demonized people don't just behave strangely themselves. Demons come to them and afflict them and do things to them. And the Bible lists those kinds of things that happen to demonized people.

The demons basically are there to afflict and to torment. If you have thought that you'd know a demon possessed person by their evil behavior, and if you thought demon possessed people must be people like Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson and people who are serial killers and cannibals and so forth. Now, these people may indeed be demonized.

I certainly have no doubt that Adolf Hitler was demonized. I have no doubt that Charles Manson is demonized. I've had correspondence with him.

There's no question in my mind he's demonized. But in the Bible, when people were demonized, there is no reference made to their wickedness. Generally speaking, the man of the tombs would be one exception to that general rule.

But the rest of the cases, the demonized people are simply described as victims of torment. The demons afflict them and torment them. And in many cases, historically, demon possessed people are not people who are more than normally immoral, but they are people who have come under the control of demons whose manifestations are not usually in the form of gross sin, although they can be.

But the manifestations are more of a nature of insanity and sometimes physical illness. In the Bible, we have many cases of this. And so the person who is demonized is actually afflicted.

But how does one know that a person is demonized if you're going to try to deal with a person as a demon possessed person? In other words, if you're going to try to cast demons on somebody, it's rather embarrassing to do that if they don't have demons. It doesn't work. And that has caused a lot of people who might otherwise be useful in this

area from ever attempting to be useful in this area for fear that, well, what if I try to cast a demon out and the person doesn't have a demon? How do I know if they do or not? Well, there's much light from scripture on this.

In the course of the study, we're going to talk about this question. How do people become demonized? Why are some people demon possessed and other people aren't? What happened in the life of that person that they came to be afflicted in this way and another person did not? How does that happen to people? Then, of course, we need to talk about how are demons expelled? And in looking at that, we're going to look specifically at all the things Jesus did from scripture and all the things the disciples did and try to draw conclusions from that. In closing, we will be discussing some controversial questions, one more controversial than the other.

The less controversial question is why demons sometimes do not come out or stay out of people. The other one, much more controversial, is can Christians be demonized? And when we come to that, we will look at the scriptures that are used in support of the negative answer to that question. No, Christians cannot be demonized.

But we will also look at the scriptures that are used to support the affirmative. It is it is an ongoing controversy. If you have not caught wind of it, it's only because it's not the hottest thing in the theological world of controversies at the moment.

But there have been times when it has been very hotly argued and there are people who say Christians cannot be demonized and give the scriptures that they think prove that point. And there are people who say Christians can be demonized. And there are scriptures that would seem to point that direction.

Obviously, the scripture can't teach both doctrines, A, that a Christian can't be demonized and B, that a Christian can. So someone must not be understanding the scriptures correctly, but we will look at that in due time. We'll save that for last.

Let's talk about what demons are right now and what they do. Many people assume they know what demons are. Aren't they fallen angels? Aren't they a third of the angels who were once loyal to God and then their leader, Lucifer, also a good angel, decided to stage a rebellion against God in the heavenlies.

And he took with him a third of the angels. And they, too, entered into rebellion against God and having been defeated in this rebellion, having their rebellion put down by God, Lucifer became the devil and his angels became the demons. This is what we've all been told.

And indeed, it might be true. We don't know because the Bible doesn't say. Perhaps you thought it did, but it does not say the Bible does not tell us where demons came from.

Now, the Bible does, of course, tell us there are fallen angels. That's not controversial.

Some angels who apparently were once faithful angels have fallen and are no longer faithful angels.

We see this, for example, over in Second Peter, chapter two, verse four says, for if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell. This word hell. In the Greek is Tartarus, it's the only place in the New Testament that this Greek word is found Tartarus, the word hell as found in our New Testament is usually from the Greek word Hades or from the Greek word Gehenna, which is sort of a Greek, Grecian form of a Hebrew term.

But the point is that only once in the Bible is Tartarus found and that is referred to here. It's translated hell in our King James, New King James. And this Tartarus is where God has cast the angels who sinned and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment.

The same datum of information is given to us by another writer, Jude, in his epistle and Jude, verse six. So then the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Now we see then from this, there are angels who sin.

There are angels who did not keep their first estate. There are angels that have fallen. However, in both verses that tell us of these angels, and these are the only two that specifically say so in so many words.

Both passages mention that these angels who fell are reserved in chains under darkness in Tartarus. Awaiting the judgment, it does not sound as if they are at liberty, it does not sound as if they are at large. Now, it is possible that the reference to them being chained is symbolic and speaks of some kind of spiritual bondage that they are in rather than physical.

But at the same time, if this is in any sense literal, then we would have to say that the fallen angels are not at large. The fallen angels are reserved in a place called Tartarus. Awaiting the day of judgment.

And how then could they be identified with the demons who everywhere in scripture are seen to be active and at large and causing problems? They're not just reserved somewhere. They are busy and active in the scripture. It raises certainly questions as to whether the fallen angels are the same creatures, the same beings as the demons.

Now, many people think that the demons are the spirits of wicked people. This is not as popular of you as the idea that they're fallen angels. In fact, I never heard this view until I was an adult studying various opinions about this.

Some people believe that the demons are actually the spirits of wicked people who in their lifetimes bound themselves over to Satan by some kind of blood covenant and after

death are required to serve him, although they hate to. And there are this information does not come from a direct passage of scripture and therefore is not we can't say there's biblical support for this, but there's no biblical support for the other view either. All we can say is we don't really know the Bible is silent.

It's this information I just gave has been drawn from people who have dealt with cases of demon possession and have drawn information about the people they're dealing with. And in some cases, the demons they're dealing with and they've concluded such things they may or may not be right. It's not apparently very important for us to know since the Bible doesn't God didn't choose in the Bible to tell us if the demons are fallen angels or if they're the spirits of wicked people.

Some have suggested that the demons are the Nephilim or the spirits of the Nephilim, that they were the product of marriages between angels and humans. You are probably aware of the passage that that they're alluding to when they talk of such things in Genesis, chapter six, that says it came to pass when men multiplied on the face of the earth, that the sons of God beheld the daughters of men, that they were beautiful to look upon and they took them wives of as many as they chose. It goes on to say there were Nephilim in the earth in those days, usually translated giants.

There were Nephilim in the earth in those days and also after that, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and children were born unto them, the same became mighty men in the earth and so forth. Now, there's much ambiguity about the wording of the passage in Genesis six, but there are not a few people who believe that the Nephilim are the products of these marriages between sons of God whom they interpret to be angels. There are other possible views.

And human women and that these offspring of angels and humans. Were unusual, to say the least, I mean, they were not mere human, they were different, they were giants, they were a different kind of creature, neither fully human nor fully angel. And and that when these were destroyed in the flood.

That their spirits have remained in the region to haunt or to give people problem that these are to be recognized as the demons. Now, these are various theories that people have suggested, but none of them can be supported biblically. The demons appear without explanation.

And apparently the writers of scripture seem to feel they need no introduction. They assume that their readers are acquainted with the reality of demons. And all ancient peoples have been acquainted with the reality of demons.

Demons have been the object of the fears. Of almost all primitive peoples. As a matter of fact, when Paul came to Athens and we consider the Athenians a positive primitive, they were the intellectuals of their world in their day, the philosophers and so forth.

They had idols and shrines all over Athens. And Paul said to them, we spoke to him on Mars Hill in Acts chapter 17. He said, I see that in many ways you are all very superstitious.

The King James says superstitious. I think some of the modern translations say religious. The actual Greek word that Paul used is it literally means fearing demons.

The Athenians, he said, I can tell that you fear demons. Now, the word fear there is a term that suggests the idea of worshipping demons. Now, you might say, what an insult to come to these philosophers.

You guys worship demons. But the Greeks didn't consider that an insult to them. The demons and all spirits were good.

And all physical things were evil. That was part of Plato's philosophy that the Greeks had adopted before the time of Paul, this platonic dualism. So the idea that demons were spirits.

And that they worship them when they worship their idols was not insulting to the Greeks, they understood this, they did fear demons, they feared them in the sense that godly people fear God. And they worship them. Modern tribal people still do the same thing.

And people throughout history have feared demons, demon activity has been known throughout history, but we live in a sophisticated age since the mid 1900s. Mental disorders, as we would call them today, insanity, psychosis, schizophrenia, these kinds of things are now given therapeutic names. And psychiatrists and psychologists act as if they know something about the origin of these things.

They don't. But if they told you they didn't, you wouldn't pay them any money to try to cure these things. The fact of the matter is, much of what is treated in the mental health professions is the very same phenomenon that Jesus and the apostles would have recognized as demon possession.

I say much because not all. I mean, some people have, you know, small struggles with depression or anxiety. And I would not certainly suggest that all these people are demonized, although I do say their problems are spiritual, not psychological.

But certainly much, many of the people who are in mental hospitals, hospitals are there because of behaviors. And life problems, which in biblical times would have been assumed instantly to be demonic, but we give them scientific names now because we live in an age where all supernatural things are questioned or rejected out of hand and therefore demons can't be accepted either. In fact, to suggest that you believe in demon possession today would give many people the impression that you're a superstitious person holding on to a primitive religion.

However, the people who cast the demon out of the boy. And I mentioned earlier in 1949, if someone would tell them there are no demons today, they would have to laugh them to scorn the demons speak, the demons manifest, the demons do supernatural things. Back in the either the late 40s or 50s, 1940s or 50s, I don't remember the exact date.

There was a missionary in Manila in the Philippines and he heard on the radio a news report about a young woman who had been taken into the custody of the police, the Manila police, for her own protection. And her behavior is described and this missionary who was he happened to be a Pentecostal missionary, Lester Sumrall, he believed that from what he heard on the radio, this woman was demon possessed. And he went and asked permission of the Manila police to meet with this girl and to try to minister to her.

And they permitted it. And he cast a demon out of her. It was such a notable case.

And so well publicized that it was read in the in the magazines over here, in fact, Life Magazine wrote it up. There was a story in Life Magazine about this case. This man, Lester Sumrall, became fairly well known in charismatic circles after this, partly because this incident launched him into into the prominence.

But the demons would come to this girl. And they would molest her. They would fight with her.

They would beat her. She would fight back with them. And in, you know, it'd be at night they would come to her.

And in the morning she would have fists full of hair that was not her own hair. And, you know, experts who looked at it looked like the hair of a boar, a hair of a pig of some kind. But she would have bite marks on her body in places she could not possibly bite herself, including the back of her neck.

This continued even when she was locked in a prison cell for her own protection. She had these visits and these demons would come to her and afflict her in this way. When Lester Sumrall cast the demons out, he told her that they would come back and that she should call out to Jesus and command them to go when they do come back.

And they did come back and she did. And they went away and never came back again. This is not the stuff of.

Genetic mental illness that psychiatrists would like to make it out to be, there's too much supernatural going on there. In the 1840s, to be exact, it was 1842 and 1843. In a little village in Germany, Motlingen, there was a pastor named Johann Christoph Blumhart, who was the pastor of a very small reformed congregation, little village church.

And there was a young woman in his congregation of whom it was reported to him that

she was having some problems. Now, she had had problems since childhood. She was an orphan and she lived with her older brother, sister, who were, of course, orphans as well.

And she she had various problems from childhood, physical problems. But she started having really strange problems. And and Pastor Blumhart was called in when he heard of it because she was seeing spirits in her house and she and the other inhabitants of the house began to hear thumping in the house every night coming from the walls and the floors and the ceiling and so hard that sand would fall out of the ceiling under the floor.

And the pastor came in and he began to investigate the situation. And so and he always brought the mayor is a small village, the mayor and a medical doctor with him. And he I read recently again for the third or fourth time just this last weekend, I read his account that he wrote to his synod back in 1843.

He reported this two year battle that he had with demons that spoke out of her, that manifest out of her. And I'll tell you, I've read many cases of demon possession on this pew over here of a book published by Moody Press called Demon Experiences in Many Lands. It does not contain any of the stories I've told tonight, but it's got 30 different missionaries from three different countries write experiences they had with demon possession, some of them very strange.

But this is the strangest I've ever heard, and I will not give all the details because they're too grotesque. But suffice it to say that this woman had very strange things happen to her. Demons of all kinds spoke out of her in several languages and voices that were not her own languages.

She had never learned. They beat her. As if with fists, she would bruise, they would cause marks of blood to appear on her.

This happened to the boy also about whom the Exodus movie was made. The demons inside him would actually write words in blood. On his skin, that would appear that people watching could just watch the words appear in blood as the demons would write on this kind of thing happened with her.

She began to bleed profusely from every part of her body, her eyes, ears, nose, mouth. Sometimes she would bleed buckets of blood, more than a human body contains. Human body only contains eight pints.

Once the whole village was watching while blood was pouring out of her and filled the whole living room where she was sitting. These are the least grotesque aspects of her demon possession. As I say, the account of it is very detailed.

I've read it several times. It was very well documented as the pastor who wrote it became very well known in Germany. Interestingly enough, this demon finally left screaming, Jesus is Victor and left.

I say this demon, there were actually several thousand demons that came out over the two years this pastor dealt with him. But the last demon went out and there was a revival in the town. People began to repent of their sins.

People from all over Germany came to repent of their sins. And then there were healings done in this pastor who had just been ordinary Lutheran type pastor, found himself in the middle of a healing revival going on. Karl Barth, the famous theologian, actually was influenced by this man.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was influenced by him more than by any other. Some very well-known Christians came under the influence of this man, Blumhart, and his son who took his work over after him. But this man's life was changed from that of an ordinary parish preacher in a small German village to that of a man who found himself inadvertently at the center of a great revival because of this great spiritual conflict that he found himself in with this demon possessed girl.

I would tell more of the details of this, but I dare not because there are children present. But there are some very, very strange things that happen. Now, people, if any of these cases I told you, if a modern, sophisticated theologian would come and say, well, these are just mental problems these people have.

This is not demons. There's no such thing as demons. Those who witness such things would just have to laugh them to scorn.

And you and I may never see such phenomena. I hope we may never. But not all cases of demon possession are that sensational.

In the Bible, there's only one very sensational case of demon possession, and that is, of course, the man of the tombs. Very sensational. The man was psychotic, paranoid, we would say today.

But he was I mean, really, his behavior was just caused by demons. The man had supernatural strength to break chains when he was bound. He lived naked in the tombs, cut himself and screamed out and wailed all night.

He had a legion of demons in him. That's the most remarkable and sensational case in the Bible, but there are many other cases in the Bible. They're not anywhere near as sensational.

Where a little bit of erratic behavior, a particular physical handicap, is all the manifestation there was of the demon and then it got cast out. And so when you hear really sensational stories of demon possession, you have to realize that those are not the norm. They exist and they are real.

And hearing about them once in a while is good wake up call for us, because when you

read the details of these accounts, which are all very well documented, you say, OK, there is something going on here. I can't deny it. Now, you and I, as I say, may never encounter such cases, but we may encounter cases that are much less sensational, but every bit as needy of attention from a Christian who knows what they're doing.

And that is one reason I'm interested in our study in this matter and becoming according with what the Bible tells us on it. Now, while we can't be sure that the fallen angels are the same beings as the demons, they might be. It simply is not apparently important for us to know, since God would have told us if it were important.

There are a number of alternative terms that the Bible does use for demons. And I say these are alternative terms because many passages in talking about a single case of demon possession will use these various terms interchangeably. The most common term.

Other than demon itself is the term unclean spirit. There's one time in the Old Testament, this term is used in Zechariah 13 to that the rest of the occurrences of this term unclean spirit are in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark and Luke all use the term and Luke uses it also in the book of Acts.

I have the references in your notes. We won't look at them now. Another term that is synonymous with this and used interchangeably with demons is evil spirits.

Now, actually, you might be surprised to learn that the term unclean spirits is used much more frequently than the term evil spirits. But the term evil spirit does occur in the Old Testament, at least in the King James version. For some reason, the new King James translators, apparently squeamish about it, changed the term evil spirits in the Old Testament to the term distressing spirit, talks about a distressing spirit from the Lord came to Saul, for example.

But in the King James, it says an evil spirit. And in the New Testament, the term evil spirits are used, but only by Luke. Luke uses this term twice in the book of Luke and twice in the book of Acts.

Evil spirits, same thing as unclean spirits, same thing as demons. One time in Isaiah 19:14, the term a perverse spirit is referred to. Very commonly in the Old Testament, only we find the term familiar spirits, and there's no question as you read this term, as it's used, that it is synonymous with demonic spirits.

These are the spirits that fortune tellers and clairvoyants consult in the Old Testament. Familiar spirits there many times in the Old Testament, Israel is commanded to avoid all people who have any truck with familiar spirits. One notable case, of course, is Saul, king of Israel, in disobedience to God, went and consulted a medium, a woman who had a familiar spirit.

And for that, he lost his life the next day in battle. But familiar spirits, yet another biblical way of speaking of demons. And there are many references to it, I've given some of them in your notes.

Once in the scriptures, we read of a lying spirit, but a lying spirit certainly must be an evil spirit and therefore must be a demonic spirit as well. That's in First Kings 22 verses 21 through 23. And then we have a variety of other terms which probably refer to demons.

Some of them certainly refer to demons. That'd be a spirit of something. For example, Luke uses the term a spirit of an unclean demon.

That's putting all these terms together. Unclean spirit. Demon.

Well, on one occasion, Luke 4:33, Luke refers to a person who had the spirit of an unclean demon. Didn't know there were any other kind of demons than unclean ones. But Luke uses more variety in his vocabulary of speaking about such things than any of the other writers of the New Testament do.

Luke also refers to a spirit of infirmity that a woman had in Luke 13, 11, a woman who was bent over and could not stand upright. She had a spirit of infirmity. Now, we have to be careful when we find a phrase in the Bible, a spirit of something, because it does not always refer to a personal spirit.

It might, but there's reason to suspect that it doesn't always, because the term a spirit of something can refer to simply the nature of a thing or the attitude of a thing, so that when we find the scripture talking about a spirit of bondage or a spirit of fear, it may or may not be a reference to a personal demon. But certainly the spirit of infirmity does refer to demon possession, because when Jesus loosed this woman from the spirit of infirmity, it says that he said that she had been bound by Satan. For these 18 years, and so she was in bondage to an evil spirit, there is a woman in Acts 16 encountered by Paul and Barnabas to not Paul, Paul and Silas and Timothy on their second missionary journey in Philippi.

It is said in most translations she had a spirit of divination. Now, in the Greek, it's literally a spirit of Python, which is obviously a species of snake and exactly what is meant by spirit of Python might be explored if we had more interest in it. But the fact is that translators have understood this to be a spirit of divination.

She was able to divine and tell fortunes when that spirit was cast out or she couldn't do it anymore. As I said, there are a number of phrases, a spirit of acts that the Bible uses which may or may not refer to personal demons. Paul says in Romans 8, 15, that we have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear.

But he does say we've received the Holy Spirit, the spirit of adoption, crying out the father. Now, since the spirit we have received is a personal spirit, the Holy Spirit, the

spirit we have not received, in contrast, may very well refer to a personal demonic spirit too. It's hard to say for sure.

Certainly a spirit of bondage to fear could be a demon or may not. Paul says in Romans 11, 8, that God has given the Jews who are unbelievers a spirit of slumber. So that they don't understand, he's kind of blinded their eyes.

Second, Timothy 1, 7 says we've God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind, a spirit of fear, is that a demon? I don't know. In first John four, three and six, it mentions the spirit of error and the spirit of Antichrist as the same thing. The spirit of Antichrist is every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

And he says, this is how we know the spirit of truth from the spirit of error. Certainly God's spirit is referred to elsewhere as the spirit of truth. And so the spirit of truth is not just truth, it is the Holy Spirit that is referred to there, the spirit of truth.

Jesus referred to him as the spirit of truth in the upper room discourse, he said, I will send you another comforter, even the spirit of truth. And so he's referring to a personal spirit, the spirit of truth, and therefore, by contrast, the spirit of error is very possibly a personal demonic spirit that promotes error in Hosea twice. There is a term spirit of in King James, the spirit of Harlotry's modern translations probably say spirit of harlotry.

This is a spirit that has come upon the nation of Israel in Hosea's time. It seems to me likely that this is a demonic spirit. Of course, it could be simply a literary way of speaking of the fact that they have become immoral people.

But it would seem when says that they have a spirit of harlotry that has come among them, that this would be putting some of the blame on a spirit that they have come under the influence of. Whereas if it was just if God just wished to say they were harlots and he wouldn't have to distance the behavior from themselves in that way, it seems probable they came under the influence of a demonic spirit of harlotry. Well, these are some of the terms for demons.

And when you find these terms, just realize that you're not reading about different things. You're reading about the same thing. The term unclean spirit is used synonymously with evil spirit, is used synonymously with demon, is in some cases synonymous with the spirit of infirmity or spirit of divination or an unclean demon.

These are just various ways of speaking about demons. Each of these terms may tell us something different about them, but it is not different beings that are described by these different terms, but the same beings. We know this because you can simply see how they're used in parallel and interchangeably within within one passage, talking about one case.

Now, what do demons do to people? A number of things in First Timothy, chapter four, Paul speaks about seductive spirits that promote false doctrines. First Timothy four, one says now the spirit that be the spirit of God expressly says that in latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, doctrines of demons would be doctrines or teachings that are promoted by demons. Obviously, false doctrines, deceptive doctrines that are seductive, they seduce people or they allure people.

I believe that we see that phenomenon in many of the cults. That are quasi Christian, ostensibly Christian, they call themselves Christian, but in fact, they have a deceiving element in them. In fact, I have found, though I've never had wonderful success converting Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, I have had many conversations with people toward that end with Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, and I found that I've had very little success at all when I simply resorted to arguing with them about theology from the Bible.

But at the times when I had reason to anticipate the visit and had time to pray and to do warfare against the spirit of deception that was in them, the spirit of Antichrist, I have found softer hearts. I've found that the things I had to say seem to be seem to penetrate more to the core of the of the person. And I have reason to believe that some of them may yet, if they have not already, be delivered and come to faith in Christ.

I have not had the privilege of seeing them do so upon a first visit with them. But I have noticed very decisive differences in the receptivity of the people to what I had to say when I had taken authority over spirits of seduction and deception. Demons do deceive people.

So Paul refers to it as such. They also divide people who ought not to be divided. That is, demons.

Promote disunity, the Bible says that it's a good and pleasant thing inside of God and man that brethren should dwell together in unity, but sometimes inexplicably for no rational reason that can be explained. There just seems to be a wedge that comes between two brothers. Sometimes neither of them can articulate what it is that is the matter of offense between them, but they just there's just distrust and suspicion or whatever that comes from them.

I've seen this many times. This usually is one of the factors involved when there are church splits, especially if they're ugly church splits. In many cases, people who don't have any real reason to be upset with each other, they just take up a grievance and and are alienated from each other.

This is attributed to evil spirits in the scripture, in the book of Judges, one of Gideon's sons, Abimelech, actually made himself illegitimately king and murdered his brothers

and did some other horrible things. And finally, God's judgment caught up with him and he had come from a town of Shechem. And it says in Judges chapter nine and verse twenty three, God sent us the new King James says a spirit of ill will.

The King James just says it more simply, an evil spirit. God sent an evil spirit. Between Abimelech and the men of Shechem who had formerly supported him and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech.

Now, it doesn't indicate there was any particular thing he did that made them dislike him. God did it. God released an evil spirit into this situation.

And the work of that evil spirit was to alienate people who were otherwise on good terms. What else do demons do besides deceive and divide people? Well, they torment people, particularly when they possess people, they torment people. The word torment is used frequently with reference to demon possessed people.

I'm actually going to show you more verses on that under another point later on. But just an example of this would be found in Luke 6, 18 says, well, middle of a sentence, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits as these people were brought to Jesus and they were healed. So tormented with unclean spirits, that is a very common term in scripture.

Explain what demons do to people, they torment them. It does not have to be the case that the person is so tormented are possessed. But demon possessed people are said to be tormented.

I've known people who are tormented by demons who I do not believe were personally possessed or demonized in that sense. I have lost count long ago of the number of people who have told me privately that they have had very frightening experiences at night where they wake up from their sleep and they'd feel as if a human being was laying on their chest, but no one was there. They'd feel the pressure, they'd feel the weight on them, or they'd feel that hands were around their throat choking them.

But there was no one there, no invisible there, no physical person. And in every case I've heard, the people were Christians and they called out to Jesus and that and the thing was relieved instantly when they did so. I have no doubt in my mind that this is a demonic attack.

This is a demonic torment. It is not probably possession. The people in question, I believe, were Christians and there's no reason to believe from the rest of their conduct in life that they were possessed, but they were certainly terrified and terrorized by demons in these cases.

I hope by suggesting the things I don't frighten you, because it is my position that there's not a thing in the world for a Christian to be frightened of if they are walking the way the

Bible says we should walk with Jesus. The Bible says greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. The Bible says resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

Jesus, I give you. Jesus, I give you authority over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall in any way harm you. All these promises belong to Christians, but only as Christians are being obedient, knowing that there is an enemy out there and he's a scary enemy should be helpful to us.

It should give us some incentive to stay close to the Lord. Now, someone might even refer to this as scare tactics to get people to live good lives, to scare them with scary stories about demons. If you don't be good, the demons come after you.

Well, I'll tell you something, even if you are good, the demons might come after you, but they won't win because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. And there is nothing I'm not afraid of demons. I'll tell you, I once was.

I remember very distinctly back when I was about 19 years old. Maybe I was 18. I was out of high school, but I was in a Christian band and we played various places, including some Christian camps, and there was this one Christian camp up in the mountains in Southern California.

And our band was called there to play. We did evangelistic music. And we played a set of material and then we took a break and then when it came time to do a second set of material, one of our singers was was was not there as a young woman who actually wrote some of the songs and sang the lead part of some of the songs.

So it was not really convenient to start without her. So we looked and looked for her, couldn't find her. Finally, we did the music without her, which we just it was difficult.

But we after that, the whole camp dispersed to look for this lady. And they found her sitting on the edge of the woods, staring out into the dark. And she was shivering and shaking.

In fact, she was terrified and she they actually gave her tranquilizers to calm her down and so forth. And when she was more herself, she said that she had been sitting out there just thinking and she saw someone out in the woods, a figure that she concluded was the devil, probably a demon. I doubt the devil paid that much attention to her, you or me.

He's busier with more important folks than that. But I suspect she saw a demon. At least that was what I understood at the time.

And he was trying to allure her with his holding silver and gold and and riches and trying to allure her over to come over to where he was and she wouldn't do it. But she was kind of terrorized. But I tell you, when I heard that story and I hope it doesn't have the effect

on any of you.

I was frightened. I didn't see it, but just hearing that she saw it frightened me because the first time I'd rather I'd known anyone who had had a direct encounter with something like that. And I remember for about two weeks after that, I was very shaken.

I was very frightened. I mean, just the reality of demons, you know, was brought very close to home to me, close to home, in fact, so much that I didn't like being even at home, even in the daytime. I didn't like it.

I didn't like being there alone. I was afraid I'd look over in the corner, be a demon staring at it, afraid to look in the mirror in the bathroom and there'd be a demon looking back at me. I want to tell you that never happened.

I didn't see any such things. I want to make that clear to you. But I was frightened when I first heard about this situation.

And then after a couple of weeks, I came to my senses that, wait a minute, what if a demon did appear to me? So what? What can it do to me? I've heard people say they'd be more afraid to see God than to see a demon. Not I. I look forward to seeing God, but I wouldn't even mind seeing a demon as it comes. Now, I mean, I have I happen to know that as a Christian, I have authority over such things.

And it doesn't bother me at all. If I if I there have been times in more recent in my older age that I have felt very strongly the presence of demons in certain places so much so that I wouldn't have been surprised to look over and seen one. I never seen one, but it wouldn't bother me if I had, because I've learned there's actually nothing to be afraid of if you're walking with God.

The people who don't walk with God, they got plenty to be afraid of, but I'm not trying to strike fear into you. On the other hand, I don't want you to be unaware of reality. These are fearful realities and they exist.

And the only protection Christians have is to stay close to Jesus Christ himself and to walk with him. And I'm not saying that everybody who doesn't walk with Christ is going to have some scary experiences of demons. Probably only a very small minority of people have these experiences.

But I will say this, if you stay close to the Lord, you'll never have any reason to be afraid of demons. But that's a big if not all Christians do walk with the Lord real well. And I'm going to I hope that you will be more interested in doing so once you contemplate what the scripture has to say on these subjects.

Another thing demons do to people is they inhabit people. Now, this is what is usually referred to as demonized in the Bible. A more traditional translation is is a demon

possessed.

A good example, although there would be many in scripture where it is very clear that demons do at times inhabit people, they don't only attack from the outside. They sometimes come and live inside and take control of a life from that posture is what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12. Verses 43 through 45, Matthew 12, 43, Jesus said, When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest and finds none.

Then he says, I will return to my house, referring to the man he came out of. He refers to him as his house from which I came. And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and put in order.

Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there where in that man. So demons can inhabit a person. It's interesting, Jesus refers to the demon looking at the person they inhabit as a house.

I there's been a lot of theories that I've heard people give as to why demons inhabit people. Why do they want to? I remember hearing some lady preacher once speak dogmatically as if the Bible was on her side in this matter, which is totally speculating. And she said, well, the angels have bodies.

The Bible doesn't say that, but she said that. She said when the 30 angels fell, those ones that fell lost their bodies. Bible doesn't say anything like that either.

But she said that as if it was gospel truth. And she said, and now, of course, the demons who are these fallen angels lost their bodies are craving bodies to live in. And so they try to come into human bodies and live there.

Well, all of that. You know, is is 100 percent speculation, and it doesn't really jive with the facts very much, because in many cases in the scripture, when demons came into someone, they didn't seem to want to stay there very long. They wanted to kill the body they were in.

Sometimes they'd cause the person they had to fall into water trying to drown him or to fall into fire to burn them up. If the demon was just looking for a nice place to live, he'd be cutting his tenure there very short if he brought that person to an untimely end. And even in the case where the demons came out of a man and into a herd of swine, they immediately drove the swine into their death.

And I mean, demons don't seem to have any real attachment to their house necessarily, though it does seem like sometimes they do want to be in a house. My suspicion is that demons just want to do damage and they can do damage from inside or outside. And there's times when they they can get inside and do damage from inside.

But if once they're inside, they don't necessarily want to live there forever necessarily. Sometimes they want to kill the person, as we have cases in the Bible of. I wish it was a prettier picture than this that I could paint, but this is what the Bible tells us.

Another thing that demons do to people, and this is the thing that makes some people actually court demons or pursue demons. Or follow after familiar spirits, as the Bible uses the term, is that demons can empower people with supernatural powers. We already considered the man of the tombs.

He broke chains. People can't do that. The demons enabled him to do that.

The girl in Acts chapter 16 was able to read tell fortunes for people apparently accurately until the demons were gone. Then she couldn't do it anymore. And the presence of occult powers in a person is one of the better ways of knowing that a person actually has a demon.

And the Bible describes in the Old Testament people who follow after these demons, people who seek these that have familiar spirits because they want these powers. I'll tell you something, it's not worth it because people who court demons because they want power usually find out that the demon retains all the power for itself. They don't empower the person, they victimize the person.

And the promise of power is the bait that they use to draw people to surrender to them and to invite them to take control of their lives. But once that has been done, though they may in fact deliver somewhat on the promise, they may provide a bit of power. The price tag is enormous when it finally comes due.

And this is the only one of the things the Bible says demons do for people that might sound attractive. They empower people's supernatural powers, but so does God. And he adds no sorrow with it.

The blessing of the Lord. Isn't accompanied by grief, but demons do deceive people that may be one of their main activities in the world, certainly as the devil's main activity, and they seem to work for him. They do divide people.

That is, they cause strife between individuals. Let me just say in connection with this, I'm summarizing points I've already made, but I was living in 19, what was it, 1978. I was living in a Christian ministry house in Oregon, actually not living in it only.

I was running it. I was the leader of the house. There are about a dozen people living in it.

And we had an outreach to the town of Albany, Oregon, where we lived. And there was there was there began a strange problems in the relationships between the people. I'm really strange.

These people are all Christians. They were all friends. They were they love the Lord.

They seem to love each other. All of a sudden there seemed to be this this incessant bickering and suspicion and accusation going on between these people. And there was absolutely no rational basis for it.

I mean, I I would sit down with the whole house and say, OK, listen, we've got to work out these problems you guys are having, because it wasn't between me and them. It was between them and them. And I said, OK, you guys are having these problems.

Let's sit down and figure out what's going on here. Now, you said what about him? And she said, what about you? And so forth. And we tried to talk it out.

And it was bizarre because no matter how calmly the discussion was conducted, no matter how much rationality was tried to intrude into the situation, people simply were having almost an irrational friction between each other. A person would say something and another person would ostensibly be repeating back what they thought they heard was different than what they said. And one girl in there said, you know, could it possibly be that, you know, there's something demonic here kind of twisting things.

And, you know, when you when one person says something, it gets twist around before it reaches the ears of the other person. And I I have to admit, I was not very eager to diagnose it that way or to conclude that I've come out of a background that was very reluctant to find demon activity where there could be some other explanation. Not that I didn't believe in demons.

I just believe that if there's any other explanation, more natural, it was preferred over the suggestion of demon possession or not possession of demon activity. Now, I'm not sure why I ever thought that way in the Bible. They were very, very quick to recognize demonic activity.

They weren't embarrassed of it, like maybe we moderns are. But as it turns out, the house had to break up after several meetings like this, where we tried to find out what was wrong. Nothing got solved.

Everything just went crazy. In fact, once all the people left the house, I sent them out. I said, OK, I'm gonna go back where you came from.

The house is closing. The ministry is closing down here. I spent one last night in the house when no one else was there and most of the furniture was gone.

I slept on one couch that was left there. And as I laid there trying to sleep, I can't testify to anything that anyone else would be convinced by if they're skeptical. But I know.

That I sensed the presence of demons thick in that house, very thick. I couldn't see them

with my eye or hear them with my ear, but I could in my in my spirit, I could almost sense that they were just the room I was in was just full of demons. They're laughing and mocking and sneering and so forth.

And I remember feeling very strongly this presence there. And I I couldn't sleep. I wasn't afraid of them, but I didn't like them.

And so I got up and left the house and slept. I went over to a friend's house and slept over there instead. But.

Demons do divide people, they torment people, they sometimes inhabit people and they sometimes empower people with supernatural powers, that's what demons do, at least according to scripture. Now, how do demons in the scripture think and act and react? What are they up to? Well, we find. In the scripture that the demons had a very striking reaction to Christ when they saw him and they often were confronted with him.

And they didn't like it very much. I'll give you some examples from some specific cases in Mark, chapter one, for example, and verse thirty four. This was in a synagogue or no, this is just his this is actually Peter's house, says in verse therefore, then he healed many who were sick with various diseases and he cast out many demons and he did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him.

Now they were inclined to speak and they were inclined to speak about what they knew of him. He didn't let them do so, which seems kind of strange because the things they said about him were fairly flattering things. Look, for example, at Mark, chapter three and verse eleven and Mark three eleven says and the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him and cried out, saying you are the son of God.

Well, that's good doctrine, he is the son of God, they didn't say anything unflattering about him, but they knew him and he didn't want them to talk about it, he didn't let them speak. Sometimes they get that out before he'd tell him to be quiet over and look chapter four and verse forty one says and demons also came out of many crying out and saying, you are the Christ, the son of God. Now, that's that's all true, isn't it? He is the Christ.

He is the son of God. That's what they said. And he rebuking them did not allow them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ.

Does that does that go together in your mind, it's it's always confused me and I think a lot of people what these gospel writers were saying, Jesus didn't let them say anything because they were saying the right things, you know, Jesus didn't let them tell anyone who he was because they knew he was the Christ and the son of God and they were saying so. Well, it seems like that'd be a good thing to let them say. But it seems obvious that Jesus didn't want demons in charge of promoting his ministry.

The promotion of his ministry was left to the father, not to the demons, after all, if the demons continue to talk like that, it may very well give onlookers the impression that he's in league with them. After all, they knew these people were demon possessed and there were times when people later did suggest that Jesus was in league with them, that he was doing this by Beelzebub and so forth. And it may have been this very association he didn't want.

But what's interesting is the demons recognized him and acknowledged that he was God, that he was the son of God, that he was the Christ. They also expressed great terror in his presence. Interestingly enough, over in Matthew, chapter eight, we have an example of this.

Matthew, chapter eight. And verse. Twenty nine, this is in the case of the man of the tombs, it says, and suddenly they cried out, this is the demons in these two men, actually are two men of the tombs.

Matthew mentions both, but only the other gospels only mention one of them. Matthew eight, twenty nine, and suddenly they cried out, saying, what have you to do? What have we to do with you, Jesus, you son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? Interesting, the demons, one of their principal activities is tormenting people. But they recognized in Jesus the one who could torment them, and actually they acknowledged there would be a time that they acknowledged to be the proper time for them to be tormented, but they thought this was a bit early.

Have you arrived early, son of God? Have you come here to torment us, you know, early, before the time? But they were obviously terrified in his presence, and they saw him as the one who would rightly torment them. The story of the man of the tomb is also found in Mark five and in Luke eight, and both other places also mention them saying these words and they begged him not to torment them. Now, that's how the demons react to Christ.

By the way, the demons sometimes react that way to Christ still. When the name of Jesus is mentioned, when the word of God is quoted, there are demon possessed people who cry out similar things that cause disturbances in meetings and so forth. And I believe they're still reacting to Christ in that way.

However, in scripture, we have another passage that tells how demons react to people who try to take authority over them, both people who have the right to and people who don't have the right to. We see a good example of both in Acts, chapter 19, verses 15. Through 16 says, and the evil spirit answered, this is when the sons of Sceva were trying to cast demons out of man, the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus, I know and Paul, I know.

But who are you? 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. That is, these seven men trying to cast demons out of one guy, the guy leaped on him, beat him up, tore their clothes off and they were bruised and wounded, bleeding, stripped naked and running out into that out of the house, into the into the public in order to get away from this violent man who is demon possessed. Seven men terrorized by one.

Such stories are not uncommon in modern history because demon possessed people sometimes do possess, at least at times. In surges, supernatural strength, I know of many cases I've heard of where it took a whole roomful of people to hold somebody down who is demon possessed while they tried to cast the demons out because the person was being so violent. But here we have a case where the demons said, we know Jesus.

In other words, if you were Jesus, we'd do what you're saying. But you ain't Jesus. And they said, and we know Paul, which is another thing.

If you were Paul, we'd have to acknowledge your authority, too. But we don't know who you are. You ain't Jesus and you ain't Paul.

But who are you? They said. And they didn't they didn't acknowledge their authority. Now, what's interesting here is that the demons.

We would react to Paul the same way they react to Jesus, that's what they're saying, essentially, and in fact, the verses immediately prior to how Paul was casting demons out of people in Ephesus and these seven sons of Sceva took their cues from him and say, hey, this guy's get better success than we are. They were exorcists of a Jewish sort. And so they start saying, we cast you out by the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches.

And that's why the demons said, well, we know Jesus, we know Paul, but we don't know you. Now, that suggests that. Paul had an authority.

As a Christian. That the demons would acknowledge to be essentially equal to that of Christ himself and their reaction to Paul would have been the same as the reaction to Christ. But they don't have that reaction to people who don't know Christ.

People like these seven sons of Sceva, they don't. It's dangerous just to go looking up demons in order to pick a fight with them. You see, they don't they don't respect people.

But they do respect Christ and they respect Christ who is in you. I heard a story not not very recently, a few many years ago now of a man who was confronting a demon possessed man, a minister, and the demon said, you can't cast me out because you haven't prayed and fasted. And Jesus said, this kind comes out only by prayer and fasting.

And the man was kind of taken aback for a moment and thought, oh, wow, I haven't been praying and fasting. And then he came back and said, well, wait a minute, I'm not casting you out. Jesus is casting you out.

And he has prayed and fasted. And so you have to come out anyway. And the man succeeded.

The demon did come out. But the demon will try to perhaps convince you that your personal qualifications are what is the issue in this confrontation. But that's not true.

The question is Jesus's qualifications and whether you are qualified to act in his name, whether Christ acts through you or not. The sons of Sceva didn't know Jesus and Jesus didn't act through them. Paul did.

And therefore, they had to acknowledge Paul as if as if he were Christ himself. Now, let me in the little time we have left here, talk something about the historic activity of demons in the Old Testament times. We have very little discussion of demons.

They hardly ever appear on the scene. You occasionally read of an evil spirit. For example, I mentioned we looked at Judges chapter nine where an evil spirit, God's an evil spirit against the men of Shechem that they turned against their former buddy Abimelech.

And that's that's one mention that's the first mention in the Bible of an evil spirit. A more well-known case is that of Saul, the first king of Israel, how that when he rebelled against God and was rejected from being king, an evil spirit from God came against him and he was tormented. And it required David to come and play his music for him to to drive the demon away.

And but this happened periodically. The man was visited by evil spirits from time to time and made him act insane at times and violently, sometimes throwing spears at David and so forth when this fit was upon him. So we know that the activity of demons along these lines, both on a group of people like the city of Shechem or on an individual like King Saul, are acknowledged in the Old Testament.

You have that line spirit that sent to the mouth of Ahab's prophets. You've got the spirit of harlotry that Hosea said had come upon the nation of Israel, and you have some other few references to demons, you've got, of course, the many references to familiar spirits, but more often than not, the references to the person, the medium than the spirit itself. The scripture talks about not going to those who have familiar spirits that would be mediums.

The acknowledgment is that there are media, there are familiar spirits, there are demons, but not much is said about the spirits. Usually it's the medium that is in view. So we don't have much light in the Old Testament on the subject of demons, but they

kind of appear suddenly and with a bang in the ministry of Jesus.

When Jesus comes on the scene, demons seem to be so common that every city Jesus went to, he spent his time healing all the sick and casting out all the demons out of people. I mean, as you read the Gospels, the impression is very strongly given that wherever Jesus went, there were lots of people who were sick who need to be healed. Lots of people were demon possessed, need to be having cast out.

And the people kind of took it for granted that there were demon possessed people among them. And in spite of the fact that there's very little about this subject in the Old Testament, there seems to be a great deal of it in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus actually spoke about the significance of his ministry of casting out demons.

In Matthew, chapter 12, there is reason to believe that there were perhaps larger numbers than usual of demons unleashed upon the nation of Israel by Satan at the time when Jesus was going to appear. Demons were worshipped in all other lands other than Israel and sometimes in Israel, too, when they adopted the pagan religions. But even in spite of that fact, you don't read of a lot of demon possession in the Old Testament.

There may have been a lot that wasn't mentioned, but we don't read about a lot of it. But when Jesus came, it seems like the devil sent his troops to Israel in force to try to stop him. And we read, for example, symbolic in the symbolic vision of Revelation 12, how the dragon was poised, waiting for the woman to give birth to the male child, which is Jesus, and so he could consume him.

And that may suggest that the devil was concentrating special efforts on that region to stop Jesus when he saw him coming. But in any case, Jesus indicated that his casting of demons was more than just an action of helping people. It was that just like healing was helping people.

There's more to it than that. In Matthew, chapter 12, verses 27 through 29, when he had been somewhat stupidly accused of casting out demons by the power of the devil of Beelzebub, Jesus said, And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. That is, the Jews had their exorcists in their religion, too.

And if Jesus' ability to cast out demons proved that he was in league with Beelzebub, then how about these Jewish exorcists? Who are they in league with? He's saying, Let them be your judges. He says, But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 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? Now, Jesus said, If I'm casting out demons by the spirit of God, which he was, then this should tell you something.

There's this is a there's a sea change going on here in the spiritual realm. The kingdom of God has entered. The kingdom of God has come and you haven't noticed.

And this the signal that this has happened is that people who were in bondage to Satan are now being delivered. It's as if I've gone into this prison house of this strong man and I'm opening all the doors, letting his prisoners out. He says, You can't do that.

You can't enter a strong man's house and spoil it, as I am doing to Satan, unless you first bind him. So what Jesus is saying is my casting out demons is a signal to you of things going on in the unseen realm that you wouldn't otherwise know. One is the kingdom of God has arrived.

The second is that Satan, I have bound him. I've bound the strong man. And now I'm just taking what I want from him.

I'm plundering his house. I'm letting his prisoners go free. I'm casting his demons out of people and letting them go.

So this activity of casting demons out of people wasn't just another miracle Jesus was doing along with all the other miracles. It was a very significant miracle. It was it was symbolically showing that that Satan was no longer able to resist.

And he was no longer able to simply keep people in bondage to himself without challenges because Jesus had come one stronger than he and had bound him in this respect. In the same chapter, we have that passage we read a moment ago about when a demon goes out of a man. But I didn't read the whole thing.

And I will, because Jesus says it for the purpose of stating something very significant here about what was happening historically in terms of his coming. In verse 43 of Matthew 12, when an unclean spirit goes out of man, he goes through dry places seeking rest and finds none. Then he says, I will return to my house from which I came.

And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. And they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Now, this is part I didn't read before. So shall it also be with this wicked generation. What's that mean? So shall it be.

What shall it be like, it'll be like a man who's had a demon cast out of him, but the man doesn't clean up his act, his house is clean, but it's empty. The demon comes back. In fact, he says, hey, this is a pretty comfortable digs here.

I think I'll bring my friends in. So he brings seven more. And the guy is in far worse shape than before he was helped the first time.

He perhaps would have been better off if he'd never had the first demon removed because the demon found his friends and brought them back with him. Now, he says that happens to people, but he says, I'm telling you this not to tell you something about demons, but to tell you something about you, this generation, Jesus generation. He says, that's what this generation situation is going to be like.

Well, what's the parallel? Well, I believe it is this. That Jesus came, as I said a moment ago at a time when there was a spiritual sea change taking place, Satan had dwelt since the time of Adam and Eve. Unchallenged on the earth, walking to and fro in it and as the ruler of it, he's the ruler of this world, the God of this world.

And he basically had his way unchallenged until Jesus showed up, that Jesus introduced a new kingdom and he was the king and he was at war with the old king. He was coming to take the territory from the old king, and it was an easy thing for Jesus to do. He just he was stronger than him.

He went in, bound him and spoiled his goods. And as such, Jesus was liberating his generation from the power that the demons had imposed upon them. That generation of Jews that heard Jesus preach and that experienced the benefits of his ministry, they were like a man who had the demon cast out of them.

They were liberated. Satan's power was broken and Jesus, everywhere he went, he gave demonstration that he'd broken that power. However, once he was gone, the house was empty again.

And the demons came back, but more of them. Now, I don't know how much you're aware of this, but. Forty years after Jesus ascended.

The nation of Israel was destroyed by the Romans. And prior to its utter destruction, there was a war of three and a half years began in 66 AD and ended with the destruction of the temple and the deportation of all the Jews that survived it. Very few survived, but comparatively.

But the Romans did this in 70 AD. The temple was destroyed. One man who was a witness of that, who actually participated in that war and later became a historian was a man named Flavius Josephus.

And he wrote a very detailed account of Jerusalem before before it was destroyed. And, you know, it's an amazing thing to read what Josephus wrote about that, because he was there and he saw it. He said that although the Jews were fighting for their lives against an external enemy, the Romans outside the walls, the Romans besieged the city and they were starving inside.

They wouldn't let a food or supplies come in, the people inside were cut off and they were dying of famine and starvation and people were dying and rotting in the streets.

They were throwing bodies over the walls until the Valley of Kidron outside the wall was being filled up with dead bodies and they're all putrefying and and rats and so forth. I mean, the place was like a living hell.

There was blood running down the streets. Jerusalem, this before the Romans got in. And to make matters worse, the Jews inside the city divided themselves into three camps that warred against each other.

One group would be fighting the Romans at the wall, another group would come and ambush them from the back of their own countrymen who had as much at stake in survival of the city as the others. But they were insane. They you know, the whole city was starving for food and one of these factions would find a place where grain was stored by where these other factions, they'd burn it up and they were murderous of each other.

I mean, here the Romans were outside trying to get in. The Jews were locked inside and they were killing each other off like a bunch of madmen. Anyone who reads the account of what the Jews did during the siege.

And I came when I read it, I hadn't even connected with this verse here that we just read, but when you read what happened during the siege of the Jews, you say these people are acting like they're demon possessed or something. They're acting like they're totally gone crazy. And indeed, you know, I've not told you the most explicit parts, but the behavior of the Jews certainly was that of people who were totally thrown into confusion by demonic powers.

And I believe that that's what Jesus predicted here. He says this generation, they've had a demon cast out of them in my presence. But when I'm gone, the demons are going to come back seven times as bad.

And this generation is going to be like a man who's far worse off than he was before because of the amount of demonic attack and activity that will be found among them. I can't take the time to go into any detail on this, but I would just say, if you ever have the time to read about the siege of Jerusalem and the behavior of the Jews inside the city during that time, you will know that I'm not overstating the case at all. There is absolutely no explanation for their behavior, except that they were simply gone crazy and totally motivated by by evil spirits.

I mean, the people were like devils themselves. Some of them during the siege, the men would dress up like women so they could sneak up on people and kill them so they wouldn't be suspected. They'd find people who had been, you know, wounded in the streets and were crying for mercy.

And they'd kill them by poking them repeated times with their swords, not killing them

quickly, just torturing them when they had nothing in particular against them. They were just people who, you know, were dying sooner than they were. But just really horrible stuff was going on.

And I believe that that's what Jesus was predicting. He said, listen, I have come here. I've bound the strong man.

I'm freeing people. I'm spoiling his house. But this generation that is experiencing this deliverance.

Is going to be like a man who experienced deliverance, but does not follow up on it. He does not commit himself to Christ. And because he does not, that demonic power from which he's been delivered will come back in greater force than before.

And his latter state will be worse than his first. And that's what it'll be like for this generation, Jesus said. And it was.

And that is when we read of the stories of Jesus dealing with demons. That is really what it was about. It was it was a demonstration that the kingdom of God had come.

And that Satan's power had been broken. However, if people did not surrender to Christ and embrace his lordship, Satan's power could come back even worse than before. You know, this matter of the latter end of the man being worse than the first seems to be echoed in Peter's statement in second Peter, chapter two, second Peter, chapter two.

It says at verse nine and following, while they promised the false teachers promised them liberty, they themselves are slaves to corruption. For by whom a person is overcome by him also, he is brought into bondage. Now, whoever overcomes you will bring you into bondage.

This is true of demonic spirits as well. People become in bondage to the experience, which is for if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are again entangled in them and overcome the latter and is worse for them than the beginning.

Same thing Jesus said about that man who has 70 or the latter end of that man is worse than his first. Well, that's true of individuals, too. It was true of his generation.

It's true even of people who have known Christ. If they've known, if they've escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, if they're again entangled in it and overcome by it, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning, for it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. Now, it might seem, well.

It might be better for people not to hear about Jesus, then to never get delivered from demons in the first place at all, if being delivered may result in them having something worse come back. Well, that's not the only option. The option the Bible recommends is that once you are free.

You commit yourself to Christ, you surrender to Christ, you follow Christ, then the reassertion of demonic power cannot succeed. It is those who have experienced a measure of deliverance, but who have not followed through and followed Christ who end up in this worst condition that is here described. Now, next time we're going to look at the specific cases of demon possession that Jesus confronted and also the apostles confronted.

In the book of Acts, and then we're going to go into these separate questions about demonization, you know, what are the symptoms of it, how do people get that way, how do people get free from that, why don't demons sometimes come out and most controversy of all, can Christians be demonized? Those are the questions that remain ahead of us to talk about. We've just kind of had a introductory session and a brief overview of the pre-Christian history of demons, but we'll talk, as I said, about the specific cases that Jesus dealt with. There's much light to be gleaned from what Jesus did.

And of course, there are reasons why the Bible passes over many things without detail and then gives other things in detail. The details that are given of cases where Jesus cast out demons are no doubt intended to be very instructive to us.