

From the desk of Kenneth W. Lent 2/28/11

**Introductory commentary on Pastor Mark Downey's *The Madmen of Gadera*:
Mt. 8:23-28, Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39**

Who or what was the "devil(s)" named Legion that Jesus drove into the swine? Why was this "devil" named "Legion" in the first place, and what did "swine" have to do with anything?

Many have asked these questions for centuries, and Pastor Mark does a superb job in relaying to us what the Scriptures have been telling us all along, but denominational theology has clouded.

As a preface to Pastor Downey's study (full text reprinted after preface), the reader may want to peruse a quick "mini history" review on some facts about the Roman Army Legion that occupied the areas from Syria to Galilee to Judea in the days of Christ. Let's consider the following:

According to Tacitus (AD 56 - 117, Roman senator and historian) the Roman Army Tenth Legion was in Cyrrhus "Syria" in the year 18 (Tacitus, Annals 2.57.2). This legion carried the emblem of the boar sign. Other Roman legions carried yet various other signs to designate their distinct unit. History records that the "Roman Boar" legion was on military duty call in the mid east area before, during, and after the time of Christ. The twentieth legion also carried the boar sign. Roman Emperor Octavian founded the Tenth Legion in 41 BC. This legion was also called Legio X Fretensis meaning 'the legion of the sea straits'.

Historical accounts show that this boar sign legion was in the Judean area as an ongoing commission because the Roman general Titus, who later laid siege to Jerusalem in 70 AD, had under his command the Tenth Legion, as well as three other legions. Thus it is important to realize the Roman military "boars" occupied Galilee/Judea during the writing of the Gospels concerning the "swine and Devil/Legion incident" involving Jesus Christ's ministry. In an historical examination of the Roman legions of Judea, Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer writes in her "Judea from Cyrus to Titus: 537 B. C.-70 A. D." (Harvard University, A. C. McClurg and Company, 1899, pg.333,334) "The men of the tenth legion were burning to revenge themselves upon the Jews (Judeans) for the disgrace they had suffered four years before when under Cestius Gallus." Simply put, there is no historical doubt that the Roman army legion that had occupied the Syrian/Galilee/Judean population during the 1st Century was that of the military occupation under the symbol of the boar/swine -- the Tenth Legion.

In further support of what the above mentioned historians have written, it is interesting to note that the various Roman Legions were given their own distinct coinage for pay in the service. Many of these coins now serve as historical artifacts in documenting the

signs of the several legions. Below is a coin of the Tenth Legion in the Judean and neighboring areas during the time of Christ. The boar and the numeral "X" (10) is clearly visible showing which Roman army unit was being depicted.



Roman Legion Coin, Circa 1st Century

Historic Connections, a company that sells archaeological artifacts and reproductions states: "The Roman Tenth Legion that occupied Judea for over 150 years stamped many bricks and pavers, some of them also bearing the symbol of a "pig" to great annoyance of the (Judahites)." <http://historicconnections.webs.com/roman.htm>

The later Twentieth Legion also used the boar sign as we see below in a Roman building tile commemorating that division. "LEG XX" (Legion 20) with a wild boar insignia.



Roman Legion commemorative tile

(photos British Mesuem)

With this in mind, Pastor Downey's enlightening Scripture lesson follows in a full text e-reprint. Enjoy.

=====

The Madmen of Gadera - Part 1

by Pastor Mark Downey <http://www.kinsmanredeemer.com>

Jesus said, “Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets” Mt. 5:16. He was referring to the veracity of the Old Testament, which we call the Scriptures. When the New Testament refers to the Scriptures, it is pointing to the Law and the prophets. Therefore, the Old Testament establishes the truth about demons and/or evil spirits and the laws pertaining to them. However, what Jesus told us not to think about or consider has been thought about and considered. People have destroyed the laws against idols and idolatry through a change in language and culture.

It can be shown quite convincingly that the demons and evil spirits of the Old Testament were nothing more than mere idols. I Samuel is a good example of these terms being interchangeable through the experiences of King Saul. Revelation 9:20 also equivocates “The works of their hands” with “devils” or “demons”, rather than supernatural entities. At the time of Christ, the pagan belief in demons was rampant and even Israelite societies were rife with sacrificing to idols. It was a perfect time for the arrival of the Messiah to pop their pagan bubbles. It was a time in which Israelites thought they were worshipping the one true God of Israel when, in fact, they drifted far away from the original worship their patriarchs practiced. Jesus said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me” John 5:46. But they didn’t believe Him did they? They gravitated to the devils and gods that Moses warned against in Deut. 32:17 whom “Their fathers feared not”, because they popped up out of nowhere and were the latest fad of make-believe “new gods” (made from the works or mind of man). Demons in the Old Testament always referred to idol worship. The Law is in perpetuity, “They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statue forever” Lev. 17:7. These particular devils were referring to a hairy goat-demon. The spirit of the law is telling us to not make anything, whether it’s by hand or in our minds, and giving it supernatural properties, because that, in essence, is a god. If you’re offended by that, then take it up with He who said, “To new gods that came newly up.” One doesn’t have to bow down to other supernatural entities independent of God to denote worship, but it is the belief system that is the problem --- with God!

The same is true today with the church departing from the Law and prophets and merging with those who crucified Christ, hence the judeo-Christian church practicing parallel idolatries of their ancestors i.e. the false belief in supernatural entities that don’t exist. Because of the tremendous amount of peer pressure, intimidation and fear to investigate the dogma of contemporary demonology, most people resign from challenging or even engage in critical thinking about such a story, that we will presently put under the microscope.

This, my fellow believers in Christ (or curiosity seekers), does not always lead us to razor sharp details of how events transpired anymore than the specifics of what happened exactly in the Garden of Eden, but it can and does lead us to Christian principles of truth. After an honest scrutiny of the traditional interpretation of literal demons (as popularized in the arts and entertainment industry to maintain the symbiosis of state-approved churches); it is then possible to understand a demonless world, which would have been more conducive to the Hebraic psyche and the mindset of Jesus, giving us the clues and cultural aspects that would have been present the day Jesus had this encounter.

If we look through the prism of history, we can see what appears to be similar, but is really quite a contrast between Hebraic theology, concerning our understanding of God and man, and that of Greek philosophy. The Old Testament Hebrew thinking was that man is flesh animated by God's breath (Spirit) who becomes a living soul (nephesh). Nephesh is not an attached part of man, but man himself; the Hebrews didn't believe they had a separate part of their being to connect to the spiritual realm – their very being is what had communion with God. On the other hand, the Greeks did not believe in this union of soul and body and thus related to two worlds in which soul and body belonged and thereby connected them to a spiritual realm where everything becomes spiritual and mystical; all their pantheon of gods had power to connect us to the earthly realm and they were connected to them because their soul or spirit could be impacted by their gods. From the Greek view comes the idea that the soul goes to heaven or hell, and opened the occult door for the idea of spiritism in which all sorts of so called paranormal activity can occur, such as séances, channeling, astral projection ad nauseum. Gnosticism, born out of Greek philosophy, thought they could do anything with their physical bodies and it wouldn't affect their spiritual souls.

This is the difference in understanding mankind, as God intended, going from the original Old Testament Hebrew to a Grecian culture interpreting passages of Scripture: Hebrew thinking said man is not body and soul, but a singular individual being, whereas Greek thinking said man is dualistic, comprised of body and soul. The truth is that the total being of man is affected by God, not just parts or components. We know that the Septuagint was written because Hebrew culture was eclipsed by the Grecian empire. The problem arose when the Greek empire came into power and their philosophy got infused into Hebraic theology and the mysticism of Greek philosophers were imposed upon Scripture. The Greek view then spiritualized evil spirits, demons, devils, satan etc, rather than the Hebrew teachings of the physical outworking of thoughts, disease, adversity towards others etc.

The modern judeo church has its roots in Platonic philosophy rather than Scripture and as a consequence has fallen away from original biblical concepts and thus becoming apostate. The problem with compartmentalizing who and what we are is that the dualistic model makes death the separation of the spiritual, which is immortal, from the physical (which is the part that dies). This is in contradistinction to the general principle: what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Hence the "real" person, which is spiritual, being that the body is only a shell to be discarded, does not really die; it's only a portal through which the soul/spirit passes between worlds or realms of existence. A

dualistic view of ultimate reality is therefore two levels of existence. This view has serious implications as to how we regard Christianity itself, thinking we have to shed the physical body to be with God, because our bodies are sinful, rather than the view that God actually redeems His physical Creation with death and resurrection. The latter is the same model that the 1st century ecclesia used to teach salvation and how to glorify God in this life, not questions of ultimate realities.

Our ancient Hebrew ancestors did not conceptualize Adam-man as dualistic beings. There is only a whole person animated to life by the breath or Spirit of God. We are either dead or alive. You can believe He who said, "Thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17) or you can believe the serpent who said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen 3:4).

Let us proceed to examine the madman of Gadera. The story is found in Mt. 8:23-28, Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39. There are differences in each gospel, but that does not mean there are contradictions, but rather supplemental information by inspired writers emphasizing purpose or motive. I'm sure the demon-believers are going to ask 'what about this?--- or what about that?' once I open the can of worms, but they should have considered the plethora of questions that arise from something that emanates from and runs concurrent with the many pagan and primitive religions that teach demonology, before a cursory gloss of reading a passage with a prejudice that it is literal.

The jews have played fast and loose for far too long playing this game to fool the world that they are Israel. The judeo-Christian will say the jews are in the Bible... end of story. However, we know that's just the beginning of the story and after much scholarship and patience we can prove their claims false. Likewise, the madman of Gadera story is replete with figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, colloquials and other literary devices. The New Testament uses the language of the day, reporting things as they appeared in the eyes of the first audience. It is far from scholarly for the Bible student to passively accept this story as a literal account of "real" demons (corresponding to folklore) inhabiting real swine and so we are compelled to test the logic of the concept. Surely God is not illogical.

If one is already predisposed to believe in a metaphysical demonology, it's been my observation that their resistance to engage in critical thinking is even greater than those who have no opinion. When a person sets out to investigate the validity of stories such as the demon(s) cast into the swine, that person becomes increasingly able to dissect the story and recognize it as something other than a literal rendering, but rather a story with deeper meanings that can only be understood in some other way. It must be understood in a way that more closely resembles how it may have been seen in the eyes of the original writers. I don't know why this subject is such an emotional powderkeg for some demon believers who would go so far as to say that if you don't believe evil spirits are under the influence of "Satan", you don't believe in God. What I don't believe in is the unbiblical interpretations of evil spirits that deny they come from the wicked imagination of man under the influence of pagan philosophies when there is plenty of biblical support for that thesis.

Where do we draw the line and accuse someone (biblically) of not believing in God? If we violate the First Commandment and have other gods before the one true God, can we still believe in God? I don't think so; that would be deity-mixing, like hyphenating Christian with judeo. So what constitutes small 'g' gods? Scripture calls them idols. They are the works of man's hand and imagination. Are such things under the influence of God or man? If they were under the influence of God, the First Commandment wouldn't make any sense. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" James 1:13. Let's remind ourselves that in the Old Testament, idols and evil spirits/demons are synonymous terms and therefore sets the pattern for subsequent thinking in the New Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures are rich in poetic devices called 'parallelisms', which expresses one idea in two or more different ways. Can we conclude then that believing in demons cancels a belief in the one true God of Scripture? You decide at your own peril of integrating other gods, demons or idols (having a life of their own) into the Word of God.

I have a book in my library titled 'Idioms in the Bible Explained' by George Lamsa. He is also the translator of the Lamsa Bible. He grew up in a remote and isolated area of Kurdistan which has maintained the Aramaic language almost unchanged since the time of Christ up until WWII. Our story has the term 'unclean spirit', which is also found in Acts 8:7, but instead of "Unclean spirits crying out" from the KJV, the Eastern Aramaic text reads, "Many who were mentally afflicted cried out." This is because, according to Lamsa, 'unclean spirits' is an Aramaic term used to describe lunatics. It's significant that Lamsa's extensive writings indicate that he failed to see in the teachings of Jesus or Paul any support for the popular conception of devils and demons, insisting that the Semitic and Aramaic terms used by them have been misunderstood by Western readers and misused in order to lend support for their conceptions of a personal Devil and demons.

An example of translational mischief is found in the Scofield Reference Bible, where it is self explanatory that the Old and New Testaments support each other in Mt. 8:16-17, "When the even [evening] was come, they brought unto Him [Jesus] many that were possessed with devils, and He cast out the spirits with His word and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah... saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness." What did Isaiah prophesy of the Messiah? "Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" Is. 53:4. In Mt. 8:16 there's a margin note for the term 'possessed by demons', which refers to Mt.22 and alludes to the apostate church whom Jesus said, "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity", just after their bragging rights to "Cast out devils", which has a most enlightening footnote from Scofield, setting the stage for demonology by stating, "Devils, lit. demons. To the reality and personality of demons the N.T. Scriptures [sic] bear abundant testimony. As to their origin nothing is clearly revealed; Demons are spirits; are Satan's emissaries --- capable of entering and controlling both men and beast." He says much more, but space does not permit further conjecture that Scofield attributes to demons. I think you get the idea.

Well, what do we know about C.I. Scofield? He was a contemptible modern day Judas; he was a womanizer and abandoned his wife and children, never sending them a dime; he cheated his mother-in-law of her life savings; he never earned his doctorate degree, but

used the D.D. after his name; he was bought and paid for by the Zionist millionaire Samuel Untermyer, who financed Scofield's adulterated Bible that would lead millions down the road to apostasy. The question in reference to this study is: why would the antichrist jews promulgate devils and demons if it were true? Who and what was Scofield protecting? Could it be the conspiracy against Christ that leads so many down the rabbit trails of false interpretations?

Wherever the validity of "Satan" or demons enters a discussion, those who believe in such things inevitably jump on the bandwagon of Jesus casting demons into the herd of swine as their trump card to refute any criticism or alternative explanation, because the text is read in such a way that follows the exegetical methodology that Scofield set in concrete for future generations of Christians to follow in lockstep; just as surely as churchianity professes that jews are God's chosen people. It's a terrible mess to untangle. But I think God conceals some things on purpose (Prov. 25:2) so that only a "royal priesthood" has the honor to search out the royal flush in order to glorify God, not demons. Scofield would not like the intricate briefing that this message has unraveled so far. And it gets better as we now immerse our attention in the texts itself.

Madness and superstition is probably as old as the human race [sic]. Among the Greeks, you were told to keep well away from crazy people in case the demons lept out from them and got you too. Madness was thought to be the work of the devil possessing victims and causing them to run wild, talk nonsense, blaspheming and cursing. The mentally ill had no mental hospitals and became outcasts and could only find lodging in places where most people did not go, like cemeteries and graveyards. 2000 years later we recognize the very same kind of disorder among the swelling ranks of the homeless and hungry.

The possible explanations for every detail in this story are numerous, but based on the premise that this story is not what it appears to be, I put my cards on the table for seeing it another way. Some may object and say the text is perfectly clear. I agree, if the words are intended to be clear, then the methods of interpretation should be consistent. The next time you hear a news report about the President flying to Afghanistan to give the troops a shot in the arm for their bravery, you will know he did not flap his arms to get there to vaccinate soldiers. If we hold to the mindset of a cold literal reading without any background information, then we might be robbing ourselves of a better explanation through idioms, metaphors, Hebraisms and colloquial. The story of the demons sent into the swine can be better seen through the perspective of the proper cultural, social and historical perspective from the period of that story, rather than superimposing the demonology of Scofield and his jewish handlers.

Let's launch our study in the book of Mark being that he was the first disciple to write this story and notice the other two gospels differ slightly in subtle ways so that by two or more witnesses shall a matter be established. In Mark 5:1-20 Jesus arrived at the country of the Gaderenes. There he is met "immediately" by a man with an unclean spirit, which has been explained as a mental illness, who was living among the tombs i.e. in a graveyard. He was so fierce that men had tried to bind him in shackles and chains, but he

always broke away from them. Likewise, God's people had so often been taken into captivity in fetters and chains (II Chron. 33:11, 36:6).

We need to ask: how many lunatics were there? In Matthew there were two and in Mark and Luke there was one. However, it was often a practice of ancient writers to minimize or maximize size or number in a story for effect. It could have been a colony of mentally ill persons, in which case the others would free the one chained with rocks or crude tools, instead of the madman being demonically possessed with supernatural strength. Or it's possible that even someone with a deranged mind may at times perform amazing feats of strength. It's likely that Mark was seeing the lunatics as a collective group much like the homeless today are loosely banded together for mutual survival. The phrase "man with the unclean spirit" may be a term referring to an entire group, not unlike the reference in Eph. 2:15 that identifies the body of believers as becoming "one new man." There is biblical support for the idea that "a man" can suggest a collective group unified in thought or action. How the lunatics broke the chains is now more plausible than the need for a karate demon.

No one could tame the maniac and he was constantly in the mountains and tombs, cutting himself and crying. Here again, we have an Old Testament parallel of Israel, "A people... which remain among the graves --- upon the mountains" (Is. 65:3-4, 7) where they sinned. People suffering from schizophrenia or bipolar disorders will often self inflict harm upon themselves and have radical mood swings. Why would a demon inflict damage upon the host that it is inhabiting? How do they get inside a person in the first place? The Bible provides no such answer to what has been called demon possession.

He sees Jesus from afar and runs to worship Him, crying out loudly, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God." This tells us that the reputation of Jesus was far and wide and that perhaps there was an advance team in the area letting people know that Jesus was on His way. Perhaps Jesus and His entourage were much different than the other so called healers who had passed through the area, that this man or men would worship Christ. This gives credence to the fact that the mentally insane still had the ability to process rational thought at times. The maniac(s) probably had some faith for the miracle to be performed; whereas some places Jesus did very little because of their unbelief (Mt. 13:58) and they weren't even considered mentally ill!

The madness or illness may have been a disease in the brain from the trichina parasite (trichinosis), commonly found in the infected muscles of pigs. The infected man would likely have been forced by poverty to eat this kind of food, although God's Law prohibits such unclean meats. No doubt it was in plentiful supply in Gadera.

"I adjure [implore, request] thee by God, that thou torment me not" Mark 5:7. Mt. 8:29 enhances this plea with, "To torment us before the time." The Scofield perception here is that it is not the mentally ill who are talking to Jesus, but rather the demons. However, the lunatic(s) recognized Jesus, perhaps from the contingent following Him and the lunatic(s) came to greet Him, which would dispel the notion that a demon possession was controlling the lunatic(s). Wouldn't it be rather naïve to think that demons would direct

the lunatic(s) to come and fall before the feet of the Messiah? It being simply a man with mental problems who was still able to act on his own volition.

What we really need to look at here is the culture of those times in which traveling exorcists performed. We know of such a charlatan in Acts 19:13-14. Throughout Old and New Testament times there was the belief that by calling the name of a god over a sick person, demons could be exorcised (Acts 19:13). The name of the god was held to have some mystical power. The true worship of God also placed great importance on His power. It was both a declaration of His character and also a prophecy of His people's eternal future; therefore it was a means of real salvation. However, God evidently did not devise a system of worship for Israel which shied as far away as possible from using the language (koine Greek, of the common man) of contemporary beliefs. He revealed Himself in a way which showed His supremacy over those beliefs. Understanding this paves the way for a correct grasp of the New Testament language of demons and evil spirits. Christ spoke as if pagan exorcists had power (Mt. 12:27); it was only indirectly that He taught His superiority over them. There is much emphasis on the use of the name of Christ to cast out demons/heal diseases (Mk. 16:17; Acts 3:6; 4:10; 16:18; 19:13-16; James 5:14). This has some similarity with the way in which the pagans repeated the names of their gods to exorcise what they believed to be demons. We can therefore come to the conclusion that in the demonstration of His power as being greater than that of other 'gods' and so-called 'demons', God is very indirect about it, and does so through alluding closely to the style and language which those false systems used. If this is truly appreciated, it will be evident that just because the New Testament sometimes uses the style and language of the surrounding paganism, this is no proof that those pagan beliefs have any substance.

The conclusion is that the Bible sometimes uses language which is riddled with allusions to surrounding pagan beliefs, in order to demonstrate the supremacy of worshiping God Almighty. God was not just another god who took His place amongst the pantheon of deities the Canaanite people believed in. The God of Israel was the only true God. He was therefore in active antagonism towards the claims of the other gods; hence God continually alludes to them in His self-revelation through His word. But His style is evidently not to vitriolize, lambast or slander with invectives, those gods in so many words or rhetoric. This would be altogether too human for the Maker of Heaven and earth.

We should also notice the context of Acts 19 where Paul is addressing jewish charlatans and the permeation of jewish fables, such as evil spirits of the spooks and goblin variety that would be dispatched by the jewish exorcists with their magick wands and talismans (things made by the hands of craftsmen, see Acts 19:24-26). However, Paul moved upon the people with such a strong revelation of the truth, that the converted brought all their occultic books and teachings of demonology worth 50,000 pieces of silver AND BURNED THEM!!!!!! (Acts 19:18-19). "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."

Part 2

What then was the conversation between the Jew and the person being healed? Just to make things absolutely clear, verse 12 identifies the diseases as being the very same thing as the evil spirits and says the same thing about both: “departed from them”, “went out of them.” It doesn’t take too much smarts to realize that the person being subject to the Jewish exorcists, to paraphrase, said something like, “The healings of Jesus and Paul are well known, but you’re a complete idiot!” Isn’t that the result we would like to see with idiots like pseudo-Christian televangelist Bob Larson holding up a wooden prop (of the vampire genre) and shouting at shivering audience members, hoping to be healed of whatever ails them; or perhaps they’re just Jewish actors playing the part of being possessed by Hollywood demons.

Likewise, the stage is set in Mark 5:7 where the lunatic(s) are worried about being tormented ‘before the time’. We have to ask: before what time? Wasn’t the lunatic’s request a clear indication that there were real demons inhabiting these men and they were afraid of their ultimate destruction being foisted upon them ahead of schedule by Jesus? It may seem that way apart from understanding this encounter juxtaposed against an ancient practice of being entertained by lunatics. The practice of many was to have supper together and then the men who had gathered to dine would seek entertainment after supper. If we consider this typical, Aramaic, post-dinner entertainment, we are able to come to a better conclusion. The practice involved going to the cemetery after supper with friends and “tormenting” the lunatics who lived there.

Jesus was not adhering to a divine timeline that heeded their cries to not torment them before the time and therefore involved saving the demons until the Day of Judgment came. Jesus was simply thought by the insane men to be the same as any other man with followers and friends walking through the tombs. He appeared to be a great leader to the insane men of the cemetery and these poor lunatics likely had suffered torment at the hands of Jewish exorcists in the past. According to George Lamsa, the men would have been very familiar with the practice in the ancient Aramaic/ Hebrew culture, of pompous men coming to torment the lunatics in the cemetery for entertainment.

The time for tormenting graveside lunatics for entertainment was after dinner. These lunatics would have been familiar with the practice by groups of men who had dined together in the evening, and then when it was time, they would come out to the graveyard and torment the lunatics. Many of the men of renown in Jesus’ day were traveling exorcists who would go to the cemeteries and perform torturous exorcisms on the insane men and women who resided there. At any rate, it seems certain that for intellectual and elite men who came upon the lunatics in the cemetery, tormenting them would be quite a circus sideshow for them. These lunatics were not allowed to be part of the daily culture and society saw them as pariahs. Reprehensible treatment of these lunatics was common and accepted by society.

When Jesus passed by that way in the daytime with His followers, the lunatics recognized Him, either from some previous exposure to Him or by way of some recognition which is

not disclosed in the account we are given. The simplest answer to how the lunatics recognized Jesus is that He was traveling with a group of men in the same fashion a traveling exorcist or an upper society man who had hosted dinner guests would travel. We are given the story from the Gospel writers' perspective and not from the perspective of the lunatic in the cemetery. It is possible that one in the group with Jesus had gone ahead and tried to clear the way of these madmen, by announcing that they were about to pass by with their Master. The madmen then expected the approaching party of men to engage in the practice of tormenting the cemetery lunatic just as other groups of men had done in the past. This is why the "demoniac" asked if they were going to be tormented "before the time." The time for the torment of the lunatics was typically in the evening and Jesus was in the cemetery in the daytime. Notice the plea of the lunatic regarding the timing of the impending torment. Before what time? Before the evening entertainment.

Jesus further converses with him, the maniac (not the demon), commanding the unclean spirit to come out and asking its name. Why would Jesus ask a disease what its name is if it's not a real demon from another realm of reality? Here we can better understand why, in Mark 5:8, Jesus addresses Himself not to these supposed spirits, but to the man himself. "For He said unto him." Jesus doesn't say to the unclean spirit, "Come out of the man." Jesus is talking to the man. The demons/unclean spirits never actually say anything in the narrative; it's always the man himself who speaks.

Josephus records that when the 1st century rabbis supposedly cast out demons (at evening dinner parties perhaps); they first had to ask for the name of the demon. Our Lord and Savior does not do this; He asks the man for his personal name. By the same token, He is going along with the man's belief that society had hammered into his psyche, that he had demons within him. However, the unclean spirit is referring to an unwanted adversarial physical aspect in a person's body or mind. Jesus was calling the man an unclean person.

The Greek word for 'spirit' often refers to the rational mind and thoughts. Jesus asked the man a question and it is the man who answers the question. The presumption that Jesus spoke to demons, leads many to speak directly to what they think are demons when they are dabbling in exorcism, which is, in essence, spiritism, which the Bible clearly condemns. Oh yes, these exorcists may think they are seeing or hearing things, but God is only accommodating their false beliefs with "strong delusion" (II Thes. 2:11). Jesus was merely confronting the mental illness and associated distorted beliefs and behaviors of these madmen. Jesus brought the words of life and truth to the situation and tapped into a willingness to receive healing by the men who worshipped Him at His coming for them. The lunatics' plea for Jesus not to hurt them (the lunatics) does not indicate fear coming from a demon who was afraid of God destroying them (the demons), but it represents the irrational thinking of persons suffering from mental illness.

We learn that his name is Legion, for there are many spirits (verse 9). Here's where the story really starts to get interesting and we can ask questions like: of all the names floating around, why Legion? Why not Tom, Dick or Harry? Well the gospel writer is giving us a major clue in how to interpret this story 2000 years later. The man's name, Legion, suggests he was under the ownership of Rome. The miracle occurred under

Roman occupation of this territory, meaning the house of Judah was living in a Roman dominated world; one of Daniel's prophetic beast empires. Legion's comment that 'we are many' is identical to the words of Ezekiel 33:24 about Israel, "Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land; but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance. Wherefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols [synonymous with demons] and shed blood; and shall ye possess the land?"

"What is your name?" is the same question asked of Jacob (Gen. 32:27). Today we (White people) wrestle with our divine identity; what is our name? The Romans were called swine by the Judeans in the 1st century because they were an oppressive regime intent on keeping the Judeans under Roman control. With an emerging police state in the American empire, the colloquial use of "pig" is often used to connote law enforcement officers. A uniform usually suggests authority, especially if those in uniform are equipped with weapons. You know, hate speech laws are nothing new. Had George Orwell not written '1984' in the genre of a futuristic science fiction novel, his expose' of the totalitarian politics of Jewish communism would never have been published.

We know thousands of Christians were persecuted and murdered in the 1st century under Roman rule. Our ancestors, the gospel writers, wrote in parables or figures of speech for the same principle that Jesus spoke in parables. It's because the message was not intended for everybody in the world, but rather for a target audience that would know the idiosyncrasies of the Word. Had Matthew, Mark and Luke written a literal account of what happened between the lunatics and the Roman garrison, there would have been retribution and no doubt a bounty on their heads. The modern analogy would be if I wrote a story about a vicious pack of coons and the criminal court found out I was really writing about violent gang-bangers, not raccoons. Casting demons into swine simply got one over on the politically correct filters of the time.

Ironically, Romans 13:3 says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." Ironic, because the Roman soldiers, most assuredly, did nothing when the Jewish exorcists came around to terrorize the lunatics, and got a good laugh at the expense of the mentally ill. Did the lunatics respond by saying "Legion", because there were thousands of demons or could it be that they were oppressed by thousands of Roman troops? I was startled to discover another option for understanding this story by way of interpreting the specifics of history. The 10th Roman Legion (Legio X Fretensis), under the rulership of Titus at that time was mainly stationed in the area near Galilee, Gadera and the Gergesenes. The 10th Legion marched under the banner of the boar and the heraldry must have been intended to humiliate the Judean population, who considered swine unclean.

The word 'name' can mean authority (see Strong's Gr. #3686, onoma). When Jesus asked the lunatic what his 'onoma' was, he was saying, 'my authority in these parts are these Roman swine'. We could possibly recognize a parallelism here with literal and figurative swine, as the Roman garrison contracted with the local community into farming pigs for their army's food supply. It should also be noted that hogs were commonly used in pagan temple sacrifices in the Greek and Roman empires. It's easy for most Christian Identity

followers of God's dietary laws to have disdain for pigs, because we are not to eat unclean meats. However, that contempt for pigs may be misplaced to some degree when we demonize the pig itself (sorry, couldn't help the pun). Remember each day of Creation, including the day that the pig was created, was looked upon by God and declared "good." Unclean animals are an abomination insofar as eating them are concerned. It is absurd to think that swine were the only thing unclean enough to be the repository of demons, if they were first contained in Israelites. Are the mentally ill now some kind of new unclean animal, an abomination to Christian cannibals? No, the unclean spirit was a sickness that Jesus came to heal.

Note that the sick man is paralleled with the demons. "He begged Him earnestly not to send them out of the country" (Mk. 5:10) parallels "he", the man, with "them", the demons. And the parallel record speaks as if it were the demons who did the begging: "They begged him not to order them to go into the abyss" (Luke 8:31). This is significant in that the record doesn't suggest that demons were manipulating the man to speak and be mad; rather they are made parallel with the man himself. This indicates, on the level of linguistics at least, that the language of demons is being used as a synonym for the mentally ill man. There's another example of this in Mark 3:11, "Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and shouted, You are the Son of God!". Who fell down on their knees and who shouted? The mentally disturbed people. But they are called "unclean spirits". James 2:19 likewise says, "The demons believe and tremble". This is surely an allusion to the trembling of those people whom Jesus cured, and 'belief' is appropriate to persons not supposed eternally damned agents of "Satan". Clearly enough, when we read of demons and spirits in this passage we are not reading of the actual existence of 'demons' as they are classically understood, but simply of the mentally ill man himself. Why would rebellious anti-God demons believe?

There near the mountains a large herd of swine is feeding, so all the demons beg Him, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." The Lord at once permits them and the demons enter the swine. The herd runs down a steep place into the sea and drowns (Mark 5:11-13). What's wrong with this word-picture? Well, it's got Scofield written all over it for one thing, if we are to digest it in one big superficial gulp. There are several avenues of interpretation for these verses i.e. either an account of Jesus performing a miracle of divine healing of the mentally ill or Jesus doing an exorcism that prior Jewish entertainers failed to accomplish. I am compelled to ask: since when did Jesus start taking orders from demons (malevolent unseen spirit beings)? Why would the Messiah even honor a demon's request? Does it not seem odd that Christ would comply with a request to not be left without a host to inhabit, yet allowing them to enter the swine and then have the swine perish, that the demons would then become free-agents anyway (as some demon believers think it impossible to destroy these entities, they can only be manipulated). Would the 'Alpha and Omega' not have foreseen what the outcome would be --- an act of futility. Unless one goes so far to say that the demons perished along with the swine in the sea, it is within typical demonological philosophy that the demons who entered the swine did not die and were liberated to search out another host; perhaps a school of fish and then caught and eaten at the dinner table and we're back to ground zero. Whatever. We can only use our imagination to adjudicate the disposition of these astral demons.

Isn't it odd that Jesus would be responsible for the death of 2000 swine and having demons still running loose anyway? This gets rather macabre in light of a recent news story from South Korea. It seems these Asian strangers, whom the US government has made unholy alliances with, have a different mentality towards animal life than do we White civilized people of the West. In order to solve a 'hoof and mouth' disease problem in pigs, their solution was not to shoot or gas or vaccinate them, but to bury alive over a million animals in a huge open pit and backfilling with dirt. These gooks lined the massive holes with plastic, herded the pigs in, piling on top of each other, and bulldozed dirt on top of the whole living mass. But the struggling and torment of the pigs was so atrocious that the ones deep down at the bottom were kicking so hard to get out that they ripped the plastic liners. There was so much blood seeping into the ground from their fight to escape the torment that the local human water supply was pumping up blood into the population's homes with a whopping case of putrefied water contamination! The oriental mindset would not hesitate to bury American capitalist pigs, which would be all of us White Christians, in the same fashion. That's how their minds work. What demon believer is now going to accuse Jesus of the same kind of mentality? Life is cheap to the racial alien.

Why didn't Jesus just reject their request and destroy the demons within the madmen without any fanfare? Or are we to believe that an exorcism spiritually handcuffed the demons and sends them off to a spiritual jail? Another technicality: if the demons possessed the lunatics without permission from Jesus, why would they need permission to enter a herd of swine? The truth is Jesus had encounters with many people who had suffered from various physical and mental illnesses and each was unique. The mentally ill believed in the superstitions of their day to explain their suffering. But the Lord did not correct them regarding this before he healed them. The reality is that you can't reason with someone who is delusional. But once healed, the truth would become self-evident.

Jesus wisely choose His course of actions for the fruit that would come later. The madman was surely intended to reflect on these more subtle results and see that whatever he had once believed in was immaterial and irrelevant compared to the power of God's Spirit. Jesus went along with his request (not demons), which was thoroughly rooted in people's misunderstanding of things in that day. This was in keeping with the kind of healing styles people were accustomed to at that time and that is how the gospel writers recorded it.

But even after 2000 years, the putative explanation of this story is that somehow demons who are opposed to God have rights to enter an innocent creature such as a pig. I understand a pig is an unclean animal and unfit for eating, but that does not make the pig spiritually unclean inherently. When God created animals, even the unclean ones, He called it good (Gen. 1:25). Pigs are only abominable in the sense of man physically eating them or used in pagan sacrifices (as would be any animal). Pigs did not willingly choose to be unclean; God created them to be garbage eaters; they did not raise their stubby arms to volunteer for pagan ceremonies and thus qualify for the best candidate to be possessed by demons.

Let's say, hypothetically, that demonic forces exist and have the ability to enter the spirit of man and animals at will. There then exists a force or power that is like God. I am only

aware of one supernatural entity capable of breathing life or divine spirit into His people and that is God Almighty. If there is a “Satan” with his minions of demons who can inhabit God’s Creation, then it would be logical for Jesus, when meeting these other Godlike beings, to utterly destroy them, as God has so utterly destroyed other things throughout Scripture. This poses an interesting question as to whether Sodom and Gomorrah were rife with demons or just a bunch of damn sodomites. If it was the former, then how could the queers be any more guilty than the lunatics? Here we have a hint of the scapegoat for sin. What says we can’t destroy evil spirits or demons, if it means something other than what the occult or Scofield suggest? If an evil spirit is more closely related to our own carnal nature and sin, then don’t you recall that we are to crucify the flesh --- destroy it. Why would anybody want to prevent a Christian from doing that? Maybe to keep us in the bondage of sin?

A true God does not display mercy to another who is acting as a god when He has the opportunity to destroy them. It is only the gods of ancient mythology who were said to show such mercy to lesser gods that rose up in challenge to the supreme God. The concept of the Supreme God allowing the rebellious lesser gods to continue to exist and to continue to inflict harm on the servants of the supreme God is not a biblical concept, but is a concept that was born in the confused thinking of pagan mythology. This confused thinking has eked its way into the most popular religions of today. Islam, Christianity, and Judaism all accept the notion that the One God, who is sovereign over all, allows lesser gods, demons and so called evil spirits to go about their business unheeded. Hinduism is a religion of tolerance for other gods. Christianity is intolerant of gods, idols and anything that supplants the sovereignty of God.

We must also consider and not ignore God’s Law as it pertains to this demon story if it’s to be believed. According to the Law, is it acceptable to destroy another man’s property unprovoked? If you accept the premise that Jesus destroyed a herd of swine, which was someone else’s property, and destroyed a body of water from the carcasses of 2000 swine, then you have to believe that He mercilessly drowned animals that were behaving the way they were created to behave, depriving the owners of the swine their livelihood and polluting the ecology. He would not only have broken Roman law, but God’s Law, the Law He came to fulfill, by being obligated to make restitution to the owner of the destroyed property. One is hard pressed to believe that Jesus loved his neighbor as Himself if He in fact destroyed the environment and livestock that belonged to someone else. If Jesus exercised the power to kill 2000 swine because He wanted to make a profound declaration about the spirit world of demons, then one is left pondering what other radical abuse of power would this new celebrity exorcist attempt to do?

Jesus had already been tempted with power after 40 days of fasting and humbly rejected each temptation. So, our common literal rendering of this story paints a grotesque picture of Jesus wielding limitless power that would be counterproductive to His cause and mission. He would hardly be seen as a godly, sinless and loving son of God if this tale were true per Scofield and the host of demon believers. Even in the biblical sacrificial system, the slaughter of animals was always done in the most humane way possible. A

cruel and tortuous death by drowning is more akin to the sadistic Jewish “kosher” killing of animals.

Many say this type of “possession” is the result of the sin in a person’s life that opens their spirit to be inhabited by demonic forces. If this is the case, that sin must precipitate the inhabitation by demons for a host, then what sin did the swine commit to open themselves to the forces of demonic possession? The fact is, sin in one’s life does not foster mental stability, but often causes the reverse effect and mental stability decreases. James 1:8 tells us, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” The madmen of Gadera leaned into their own understanding of why they were crazy and like so many people in a world gone mad, failed to trust the Lord with all their heart (Prov. 3:5) for everything that falls under the category of supernatural. It is noteworthy to understand that all other Jewish exorcisms and magical healers had tried to tame the lunatics, but the miraculous was not manifested until Jesus came with grace and mercy.

It was only upon an encounter with Jesus Christ that the freedom from suffering from mental illness would become a reality. In that encounter Jesus would bring the words of life, while others could only bring the fraud of non-existent demons. Christ was able to reveal His divinity and divine purpose by the fruit of His Spirit. You see, healing is not predicated on ridding the body of supernatural entities independent of God. Our body is the temple of God and He dwells in His people.

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? --- Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” II Cor. 6:16-17. Nobody has ever touched an invisible unclean spirit or demon, but we are touched by the immorality of the world. “And be ye not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” Romans 12:2. The will of God is that truth shall make us free from the idols of our heart. If we have the demonology of the Greek philosophers and Scofield in our heart, then we have not given God our individual trust. After all, aren’t the demon believers telling us, “Trust me, Satan and demons are real!”?

Well, the problem is that at the crossroads of reality and imagination, our heart can either make a righteous turn or an unrighteous turn. Jesus confronts the illness of the man, who is called a devil in the world, and He speaks an unimpeachable truth to the man, which inspires him to turn and follow the Way of God. This is how healing happens: the renewing of the mind, even a mind cluttered with the conformities of the world, by submitting to the Master, the sick receives the long sought after healing. It may not be instantaneous as is typically thought, but it is the beginning of a process whereby man submits to the truth, which changes his life and the wholeness of his body, mind and spirit, that becomes the dwellingplace of our Lord.

For some, it is easier and simpler to think of this episode as a power over demonic spirits dwelling within man being exorcised into a bunch of pigs. However, by carefully studying this story and eliminating the popular notions of cultural mystique and discovering new biblical truths, we can get much closer to God’s will for our own mental

and emotional well being. In Ps. 31:10 David might as well be lamenting for White Christian America today as our nation wallows in worldliness: “For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.” Will a belief in demons save us? I don’t think so. Based on the premise that this story is not what it appears to be, I present some alternatives for seeing it another way.

Mark 5:11-13 has taken quite a bit of time to scrutinize only because it is so pivotal as to whether or not the demon version of the story stands or falls. Let us now review the remaining verses and come to some conclusions that do no harm to Scripture, but may inflict a blow against the trump card of evil spirits. The keepers of the swine flee and tell what had happened in the city and the country. The people there come out to see what had happened. They see Jesus and the formerly-possessed man clothed and in his right mind. Then those who saw it explain to them what happened. After hearing this, they plead with Jesus to depart from their region. Perhaps they were paranoid about retribution from the Romans or losing their cottage industry of raising pigs. When the Lord gets in the boat, the former madman begs him to allow him to come along, but Jesus refuses and tells him, “Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and had compassion on you.” And so he did just that and the men that heard the story marveled.

Obviously there were eyewitnesses, but what did they “see” exactly? It will now behoove us to understand the geography of the two locations mentioned in the gospel accounts: the Gaderenes and Gergesenes. Both may be correct as they are referencing a proximate region, but the interesting thing is that the nearest body of water or “sea” was 30 miles for the former and 6 miles for the latter. Either way, it is highly unlikely that 2000 pigs could stampede that distance (a minimum of 6 miles) and going down the base of a steep slope that eyewitness could “see.” There’s no indication that Jesus made a favorable impact on the people in town for the magnitude of what He did. Indeed, they approached Jesus and bid Him to leave the area with the apprehension that there could be more conversions and the possibility of insurrection i.e. upsetting the apple cart of the status quo.

Part 3

Perhaps it was something other than their pork industry allegedly being decimated, wherein Jesus and His entourage would have been prosecuted for malicious mischief and the destruction of property. Maybe they feared the loss of their economic livelihood with something symbolic of swine. Perhaps the swine were not swine at all and the gospel writers were referring to an idiomatic group of people, much in the same manner of hyperbole that some people refer to police officers as “pigs” in our day and age. Of course, this area of Palestine and most of the Mediterranean area was under Roman occupation and thus a police state. No doubt, these Roman soldiers of the 10th Regiment, who went under the banner of the boar, were no friends of a colony of mentally disturbed people and acted like bullies.

The followers of Christ accompanying Him on this trip were more than likely to have regarded the lunatics as having some sort of mental condition, although described by the culture of the day as having demons. It's doubtful they understood the science of the condition and like any culture throughout history would be attributed to folklore and mythology. They called the sickness "demons", but without the superstitious connotation. The entire showcase for demonology has become a scapegoat for mankind labeling something unusual or have not yet been able to explain, such as: physical deformities, falling stars, rising tides, tornadoes and things that go bump in the night.

Is it possible the phrase, "He drove them into the sea" means something other than a herd of animals running wildly for miles until they race into the nearest sea? Could it be connected to the oppressive control of an occupational military and a sudden retreat? Is it possible the gospel writer was recalling the destruction of Pharaoh's army while writing about a Roman regiment set to flight by a band of lunatics? "Then sang Moses --- I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" Ex. 15:1. To be 'driven into the sea' is to say that one side has suffered defeat or decided to make a hasty retreat. The modern neurotic Jew in the pseudo-state of IsraelIE often cries about being driven into the sea, which would be a euphemism for being obliterated.

The lunatics in the cemetery who received the healing words of Christ took their gift of healing and change in life very seriously and stated their desire to prove it. In Acts 19:19 we read about a dramatic destruction of the occultic pagan books valued at 50,000 pieces of silver by converts who believed they needed to demonstrate a clean break from their previous religion. By the same token, the madmen of Gadera were only abused by charlatans prior to Jesus healing them and were passionate about their intent to live a changed lifestyle through bold and concrete action, begging Jesus if they could go and attack a herd of swine, which the Lord allows. This most likely would have a drastic impact on the local economy.

According to Lamsa, the Eastern version of this story uses the Aramaic word 'al', which does not mean 'to enter and inhabit' as comes off in the English translations implying demons entered into the swine (thanks to Scofield & Company), but rather means 'to attack'. The Aramaic word 'al' means attack and it also means enter. For example, men enter into each other when they wrestle or fight. It doesn't mean they are absorbed into the interior of a person's physical body. Consider this: it is possible that the gospel writers were telling about crazy men who turned to God and then wanted to attack what they poetically called 'a herd of swine' to prove their new found faith. 'Driven into the sea' lends support for the perspective of a military conflict. If one can imagine demonic monsters, then why not picture a band of just-healed lunatics who wildly went after these hostile Roman soldiers who probably had never encountered such an unusual and vehemently impassioned opposition, especially if they recognized them from the graveyard colony of madmen. This is the ideal model fitting the metaphorical idea of 'devils going into swine', understood as lunatics attacking soldiers.

I can see these soldiers being in shock and awe and in a panic to get the hell out of Dodge. Perhaps these soldiers were literally chased into the sea, but I suspect that this frenetic chase was so embarrassing to the Roman authorities that their PR department covered it up, lest other subjects of the empire be crazy enough to chase the occupiers out of their country. The healed madmen were in effect cutting off the Roman demand for pork, which their countrymen had fallen into being the main supplier. Do you think Jesus knew something about the economics of supply and demand? Here we can understand how all things work together for good to them that love God (Romans 8:28) without one demon having anything to do with it. So we have to ask ourselves, “What is good about believing in demons?”

When we take a fresh look at this particular story we can realize a far superior multitude of good that came out of it. First, the madmen were free of their mental illness; second, they were free of an oppressive Roman occupation; third, they were free of a pork industry in their homeland; fourth, they were free of demonological idolatry; fifth, they were free of ostracism and being social outcasts; and sixth, they were free to worship their Lord and Savior as the one and only source of power. “The truth shall make you free’ could not be a sweeter music to the ears of those healed and chosen by Jesus Christ Himself.

Some of the minor inconsistencies between Matthew, Mark and Luke do not detract us from the overall import of this predestined lesson. The traditional Hellenistic interpretation of this event has caused us to rethink the elements and arrive at a different conclusion which is consistent with the Hebraic authority of Scripture. So, in keeping with the theme of this treatise that there are no “demons”, notwithstanding centuries of superstition promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church, Judaism and pagan occultism, we can be assured that our study of these lunatics is a legitimate explanation of Jesus performing a supernatural miracle of healing, rather than a contest between supernatural forces, which prompted the passion and love of the healed to launch an all-out offensive against the Roman troops that represented adversaries to the God of Israel. This explanation interprets the story through a properly placed cultural, social, and historical perspective from that period of time, without superimposing the superficial mysticism of Scofield, the occult or pagan myth.

It is true that many in Jesus’ day had adopted the idea that there were spirit beings that could transfer themselves inside the body of a person much in the same way that the movie ‘The Exorcist’ and a fleet of Hollywood promotions accommodate and feed the demon genre for religions that lean towards that understanding today. However, the idea of demons was not typical of the Aramaic/Hebrew people and they understood the expression ‘to have a demon’ meant the person had some mental and/or anger problems which developed into a form of manic behavior having its roots deeply imbedded in the heart and mind of man, just as many of us today can observe the deviant ways in which a person can conduct their lives.

It’s not that we can blame evil spirits directing their lives, but rather the spirit (attitude) or lack thereof (amoral) in the way a person conducts their lives is evil. God got pretty fed

up with this kind of mindset. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” Gen. 6:5. Man is the one who is accountable, not demons or evil spirits.

When the leaders of the day accused Jesus of having a demon, they were saying He was politically incorrect in His theology. They were not referring to Jesus being possessed by a satanic minion, but rather that He was teaching a false doctrine. Even Jesus called Judas a devil saying, “One of you is a devil” (John 6:70), which was a metaphor for someone who is opposed to righteousness and acting without a sound mind. Do you really think our Lord would have “Satan” himself sitting at the Passover table with the other disciples? In the course of Jesus’ three year ministry, He taught a preponderance of spiritual truths in opposition to the ‘traditions of the elders’ i.e. the Pharisees who inaugurated 1st century Judaism. A Jew steeped in performing, adhering to, and teaching all of the tenets of the man-made Talmud, was convinced that they were completely true. They adhered to the idea of devils/demons being people opposed to their teachings as well as spirit beings from another realm of reality.

If you think you’re knowledgeable about Jews and Judaism, but have never read Johann Andreas Eisenmenger’s monumental book ‘The Traditions of the Jews’, then you only know the tip of the iceberg. I don’t have space to give full credentials to this great White Christian author who dedicated his life to exposing Jewry, but all other exposes owe a debt of gratitude for his lifetime of impeccable research. If you’re a demon believer, indulge me for a moment as I quote a tidbit from his 800+ page work published in 1700. “Having proved that there were Traditions among the Jews, ever since the time of Moses, and examined how and by whom they were preserved and propagated, it is necessary to inquire, in what manner their Bulk increased, which was by ingrafting the Tenets of the Heathen Philosophers into the Body of their own Divinity, by making a Hedge to the Law, and by collecting all the various Opinions and Sayings of their Teachers...after the captivity of Babylon, the Jews being dispersed throughout all of the World, and subject to the Kings of Persia, Syria and Egypt, studied the different Systems of the Heathen Philosophers and borrowed many Things from them, as from Pythagoras the Pre-existence of the Souls, and their Transmigration after Death; from Plato the doctrine of the Demons, their Origins, Stations and Employments” (pages 21, 22). The copy in my library is a facsimile where I took the liberty to change the Old English use of ‘f’ into ‘s’, to make it more readable. Capitalization was as in the original.

When Jesus taught differently (and with more divine authority) than the Jews and people began to free themselves from the shackles of Jewish fables and to follow His teachings, the rabbinical leaders labeled His doctrines as heresy and said He had a demon. Jewish fables are Jewish mythologies; “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Tim. 3:5); at the time of Christ, when Jewish exorcists did not fear God, having a corrupt mind, they had little regard for healing anybody and were predators over those who were easily persuaded of fanciful myths. Although ‘demon’ was referring to something that was disagreeable in a person’s mind or body, the mystically-minded believed it to be a spirit being from another realm of reality. It was thought by some that the spirit demon would then move a person to behave in ways that seemed contrary to the

norms of the religious establishment. Just because there were certain Pharisaic sects, apocalyptic philosophers and occultic societies in the 1st century who thought demons exist, does not alter the teachings found in the Hebrew Scriptures that give no credence to such an idea.

The difference between those who believed in demons and those who didn't was found in whether a person had adopted a Greek worldview or a Hebraic worldview. The latter was the worldview that was modeled by those in Jesus' camp. The metaphors are easily understood by considering the unchanging nature of God and that if demons did not exist in the Old Testament then they certainly do not exist in the New Testament. Those who believe that a demon is the cause of something like Alzheimer's or a mental illness, as was the case in the cemetery where Jesus visited, could be said to have a demon themselves because they are believing something which is opposed to the truth. The more dogmatic one becomes in their advocacy for demons, the more delusional their minds become for believing a lie. They may in fact "see" or visualize monsters from a lifetime of post-hypnotic suggestion via Jewish/Catholic propaganda. We have to be honest with ourselves and question whether these fanciful images are fact or fiction. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" II Thes. 2:11. Could a hallucination be more clearly and simply explained than that? I don't think so.

The story of tradition and lore about demons cast into swine is not about any such thing in Light of harmonizing Scripture. Through a fair and studious assessment of this story with the application of context and linguistics, we can observe the profound divinity of Jesus Christ being the only agent capable of healing and the restoration of mental health to not only the graveyard colony of lunatics, but also the whole of Israel whom suffer today, not being perfectly joined together in the same mind (I Cor. 1:10) and thus --- unstable (James 1:8).

What shall we do (Acts 2:37)? Peter reiterates the calling of Christ to Israel: repent. Christianity has survived for 2000 years because sinners have been brought to their right minds. The ebb and flow from sanity to insanity, generation after generation, is always predicated on our racial cohesion to focus on our Kinsman Redeemer. "Who changeth the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator?" Romans 1:25. What purpose does it serve to attribute the supernatural to anyone or anything other than God? Who changed the truth? It can only be those who are opposed to the absolute power of the Everlasting Almighty and arbitrarily delegate it to other supposed supernatural entities. Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth" Mt. 28:18. Only Jesus can heal.

The idea of his work being the expulsion of some unseen demonic force only lessens the true miracle of the Word made flesh and how He has the omnipotence to change a life, change a society or to change the world and bring a sound mind back from the disjointed thoughts that alienate us from His divine presence. The story was never intended to teach about casting out spirit beings from another realm of reality into a bunch of pigs. What does that prove? That life is a never-ending battle between two dimensions? The battle is within us without any external influence. It is up to us whether we prepare ourselves as a

bridegroom to have God dwell in our heart and mind. There is nothing to prevent us from repentance --- nothing.

The Bible says, ‘Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit [attitude] before a fall’ Prov. 16:18. I would venture to guess that the slippery slope towards mental deterioration has something to do with how we respect (or the lack thereof) our inheritance of the breath of life; in other words, how we serve the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit that animates our quality of life. “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” I Cor. 19-20.

We are faced with two propositions in this story: it is either healing or exorcism. The jews performed exorcisms for fun and profit with the spirit of pride. Jesus healed physical infirmities and mental diseases with a humble spirit. Jesus said, “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do” John 14:12. Jesus will not be impressed with exorcists who proudly boast, “Lord, Lord, have we not -- cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?” Mt. 7:22. What else can the Lord be talking about than demon believers and their work of iniquity or lawlessness? God has no law protecting the existence of a Mr. “Satan” and an army of lesser devils/demons. Please show me where that protective law might be. If a person is exorcized of demons, does that demand that they go about advertising the existence of demons. I hear a dog and pony show with clapping hands.

A person healed in the name of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is convicted of their sins and proceeds to destroy their carnal or flesh nature. “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” Romans 8:13. A case can be made that the madmen of Gadera were symbolic of Judah in captivity, suffering for their sins, who despite initially opposing Christ, running up to Jesus just as he had run upon other people in aggressive fits earlier, could still repent, be healed of their sins and be His witnesses to the world. This fits in with God’s plan for the ages, wherein Israel’s inheritance would not rely on violence to remedy the divine judgment, but rather repentance and a change of heart and mind. The point is, Israel was bound by the chains of Rome, because of her sins, for which they had the responsibility to repent of, rather than a spectacle of being taken over by powerful demons against their will, only to be loosened from their soul and bound by the arm of the flesh i.e. the magical mystery exorcism of hocus pocus.

When the sick man asks that the unclean spirits not be sent “out of the country” (Mark 5:10), there is a momentary hesitation or doubt that he can be healed. But he later repents and asks for them to be sent into the herd of swine, as the gospel writer records it. This recalls a prophecy about the restoration of Judah in Zech. 13:2, “And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and I also will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.” Here again we have a double witness in the form of a literary parallelism, that an idol and an unclean spirit are synonymous.

The metaphor of a herd of swine for a Roman regiment recalls the Egyptians, likewise being destroyed from a powerful empire. The healing of the madmen is termed “great things” (Mark 5:19) as was Israel’s exodus from Egypt and the destruction of her pursuers called “great things” (Ps. 106:21). This great story in the New Testament happened as an essentially significant incident showing the power Jesus had, to bring truth to people. There are some who look at this story with their long held beliefs, not realizing that some inconsistencies would discredit the ministry of Jesus.

If we are to believe that Jesus rejected all the requests of the “Devil” in the temptation in the wilderness story, it just isn’t logical to now suggest that our Lord willingly submits to the request of demons who are agents of the “Devil.” It is only in ancient, pagan god mythology, where we see the greater god of many gods being manipulated by a lesser god. Jesus cannot be manipulated by anyone or anything lest He be guilty of obeying another God and not doing the will of the Father. Jesus was about His Father’s business, not the business of being a marionette for a Scofield freak show, assuring the continued entertainment of esoteric creatures from Dante’s ‘Inferno’.

The understanding Jesus had of calling someone a devil, demon or unclean/evil spirit was that the person was metaphorically, not metaphysically, said to be opposed to righteousness or not having their right mind for rational thought. In the 1st century they did not have medical terms to describe irrational mental and emotional behavior; instead they simply used the idiomatic expressions of the time and culture. Broadly speaking, a devil/demon (sometimes used interchangeably) was a mental or physical illness or a false religious leader, false beliefs or even false ideas about God. It ultimately stemmed from false accusations or downright lies, the opposite of truth. Those places that had an unbelief in Christ, He did not many mighty works there (Mt.13:58).

The madmen of Gadera had moments of rational thought, because some illnesses may waver in and out of reality just as the mentally ill today have moments of sanity, to know right from wrong. Are the healings of every single sickness that Jesus performed such a threat to the theology of demons, that the health of our people cannot be reconciled without this element lurking somewhere in the shadows? Faced with the scriptural facts that we are hard pressed to find the demons of legend and the dark arts occupying the same realm of reality that God has given to the mind of man, I hope and pray that the preceding study has provided a more plausible understanding for not only this story, but similarly related stories for the edification of the Christian body politic.

“I thank God that our Lord Jesus Christ rescues me! So I am obedient to God’s standard with my mind, but I am obedient to sin’s standards with my corrupt nature” Romans 7:25 (GWT). The world’s greatest healer freed those who were healed from a belief in supernatural demons who behaved like lesser gods. And guess what? There was never a relapse, because it was a false belief to begin with. “The truth shall make you free.”

Pastor Mark Downey