

Acts Chapter 16

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[0 : 00] We are in Acts chapter 16 and dealing with a subject that is absolutely bizarre. It has to do with the subject of demonism.

And this young girl that the Apostle Paul and Silas and others encountered as they were ministering to the minority female Jewish community there in Philippi.

And as they went out to this place of worship and prayer each time, probably in conjunction with their Sabbath day, they were confronted with this girl who was indwelt by a demon, or plural demons, we don't know.

And there are a few subjects that we know so little about as the demonic and demonic activity.

There is a great deal today that passes off in the occult as demonism, and really it isn't at all.

And I'm talking particularly in cases like of seances and things that are held where a medium is supposed to be endowed with supernatural powers and supposed to be able to make contact with the dead or the deceased and bring them up, if you will, so that a loved one can talk with them or communicate with them.

[1 : 26] Ninety-five percent of that is pure hokum. It is an elaborate scam where they have voices and speakers wired and hooked up behind screens, etc., and they simply prey on the vulnerability of people who are grieving over loved ones.

And this goes on all the time here in this country and in other countries as well. And the medium is nothing but part of a scam. And they get certain key information from the individual, much of which can even be obtained from an obituary in the newspaper.

And they put their string of facts together, and this individual is in deep grief over the loved one they lost, and they would give anything in the world to be able to communicate with them.

So all of this can be rigged up with questions and answers, etc., and the medium supposedly goes into a trance at this table and is able to communicate with the dead.

And here is the grieving one who lost this loved one, and they are greatly impressed over the powers of this medium who supposedly is contacting their deceased loved one.

[2 : 39] And they can ask certain questions and get certain answers, and the individual who is on the receiving end, the grieving one is so relieved and so grateful that they've heard some word from this loved one.

And, of course, the name of the game is follow the money. They shell out a lot of money to the medium for that kind of thing. And this goes on all over the place. It is a seance that is just phony from the get-go, but not all of them are phony.

And there are situations where demonic activity is really at play. The Scriptures make it clear that demon activity, as found particularly in the Old Testament and in the New, I'm thinking of Saul, the witch of Endor.

If you remember that incident, when the witch of Endor, and by the way, witchcraft was punishable by death in the Jewish community. And, of course, she was operating on the sly.

And when Saul, King Saul, in disguise, contacted the witch of Endor, so that she could bring up the spirit of Samuel, who was deceased.

[4 : 00] And Saul wanted to ask Samuel for advice. Remember that account? And the Scriptures go on to relate that this witch of Endor supposedly went into this trance and called up the spirit of Samuel.

But, lo and behold, Samuel actually came up. And the witch of Endor was absolutely terrified, because she didn't expect the real thing.

And all I can conclude is that God did this. And the witch of Endor was absolutely flabbergasted, because she knew the way this thing was supposed to be, but this really was Samuel.

And that never happened before. So she was absolutely terrified, because she knew that if this thing got out, then she could be punished with death. And you can read the account that is given there in Kings.

And it is a pretty hairy expression. So there is demonic activity. We don't know much about these demons. We know, or we think we know, that demons were made up, or are made up, of one-third of the population of the angelic sphere that sided with Lucifer when he rebelled against God.

[5 : 23] We read that he recruited one-third of the angels that God had created, and they supported him. It appears, and this is all conjecture, it appears that these demons, who of course are immaterial, non-physical, they are spirit beings, it appears that some of them at least are now incarcerated in a place of confinement.

I don't have any idea how God would go about confining spirit beings. When we think of confinement, we think of bars and walls and things like that. But spirits are different. They are not hindered by physical obstruction to confine them. But there appear to be a number of these beings that are held now. Jude talks about this, and 2 Peter talks about this, about being held in captivity.

But apparently not all of them are. We know that our Lord encountered a number of demons and cast demons out of individuals in the Gospels, as you read through them.

And the only thing I can conclude is that if demons operate and take orders from Satan himself as the head demon, or, you see, there's only one devil.

[6 : 49] There's only one Satan. There's only one Lucifer. But there are many, many demons. And if our theory is correct, these demons answer to the directives of their master, who is Satan himself, sometimes referred to as Beelzebul in the Gospels.

And he is able to orchestrate and to control and dispatch his demons however he will. Now, we don't know exactly how they possess an ability to indwell an individual.

It appears that the individual who is indwelt by demons has to offer some kind of cooperation or invitation to the demon to indwell him.

And this, of course, is always done for the purpose of obtaining power or influence or wealth or something like that. It is an individual trying to use the demon to his own end.

But the demon ends up using the individual to the demon's end. And no one, no mere human being is any match for demonic activity.

[8 : 02] This is nothing to fool with. It's nothing to dabble in. Let your curiosity be dissatisfied. I would not investigate it and would not recommend it. But we do know that this takes place and it seems to be very prominent, particularly in the New Testament, in connection with our Lord.

And I can only conjecture, but it would appear, it would appear that perhaps Satan, the head of the demons, was actually pulling out all of the stops in opposition to Christ in his earthly ministry to thwart him in any way, shape, or form that he could.

And he was throwing all available forces into the fray. And Christ, who was confronted by Satan himself, remember the 40 days in the wilderness, the temptation of Christ, he communicated with the devil and the devil tempted him on three different areas.

Remember, if you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread, which he could have done very easily, and bow down to me and all these kingdoms of the world will be given to you and I'll give them to you because they've been given to me.

And Satan had them to give. Because Adam and Eve relinquished their dominion over the earth and it fell under the rule of Satan.

[9 : 25] And it still is. And if you read 2 Corinthians 4, it's very, very enlightening. Paul said, If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds, the God of this world.

That is not the true God. That is not Jehovah God. The God of this world is none other than Satan himself. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world has blinded.

Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto them. So Satan is the prince and the power of the air. He is the one who is orchestrating events in this world right now.

We don't know exactly how he does it. We don't know exactly through whom or to whom he does it. But he is the head of a master conspiracy that is underway designed to thwart the plan and program of God any way, form that he can.

So I don't know whether he's operating in the UN or in Washington or in our churches or in our schools. He may be in all those places.

[10:42] He may be exercising influence in all those places. We do not know. But that's a distinct possibility. So that's what they are dealing with. This girl is indwelt, probably a teenage girl, indwelt with a demon.

And this demon is speaking through her. And we already talked a little bit about why Paul was irritated by this.

We're told in verse 18 of chapter 16 that it was greatly annoyed. And I suggested that when this girl following after them in verse 17 kept crying out, I think she was screaming.

I think she was screaming. But my suggestion is she was doing it in a sarcastic way. She was doing it in a demeaning, mocking way. She wasn't doing it to announce the goodness of what these men were doing in representing the Most High God.

But she was mocking them. And she said in a sarcastic voice, These men are bondservants of the Most High God who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation. Ha, ha, ha.

[11:50] That kind of thing. And finally it got to Paul and he cast this demon out in verse 18. Frankly, we have all kinds of questions.

We don't know why he didn't do it before. Because anybody who is possessed by a demon who encounters someone who has the ability and the power to cast out demons, one would think he would have done it the first time.

I don't know why. The text doesn't go into it. We know that when authority is exercised by one who is a greater authority than the demon, they actually have the ability to control.

Remember back, and we won't go there, but in Matthew 10, in Matthew 10, when the Lord called the original 12 apostles, one of whom was not Paul, Paul wasn't called until the Damascus Road experience.

But when Christ chose the 12 apostles, Peter, James, and John, etc., we are told in chapter 10 that Christ gave them authority to cast out demons, which seems to have been a rather common activity back then.

[13:10] Cast out demons, heal the sick, etc., and work miracles. Christ simply gave them like abilities, supernatural abilities, that he himself possessed.

It was part of the apostolic prerogative. And the apostle Paul was in every sense as much an apostle as were the original 12.

But he had a different focus. And as the 12 were raised up to go exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, because Christ said, don't go into the way of the Gentiles, that's non-Jews, don't go to Samaritans, confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Those are Jews, the 12 tribes. 12 apostles to the 12 tribes. But when Paul was raised up, don't think of him as an add-on to the 12.

In a sense he was, but in a greater sense he was not. Because Paul was not sent to the 12 tribes of Israel, Paul, as an exclusive apostle, was given a very distinct commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

[14:25] He's the only one who is referred to by that name, the apostle to the Gentiles. We know he never lost his burden for the Jew. He always went into the synagogue and proclaimed the gospel to the Jew.

But his primary calling was to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Yet, he seems to have been endowed with the same kind of apostolic supernatural powers that Christ gave to the 12.

Only he was using them as regards the Gentiles rather than the Jews. And that's exactly what he is doing here in verse 18. I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.

Well now, who is he to be saying to a demon, I command you? Well, who he is is an apostle.

One who is given supernatural powers. He didn't possess them on his own. He didn't train and go to school to learn these powers. They were given to him by Christ in the same way that he gave these powers to the 12.

[15:31] And when he said, I command you, he was simply exercising his authority. If I were to encounter someone whom I was convinced was indwelt by demons, and for me it would be very difficult to really diagnose that because sometimes there can be a very close similarity to demonic involvement and mental illness.

I think the two can be confused. I am convinced that cases of demon indwelling are not simply answered by saying, well, he's just mentally ill.

Demonic possession is a lot different than being mentally ill. There are legitimate cases of mental illness, and we know of schizophrenia and bipolar and all kinds of things like that, that are actual physiological, chemical disturbances or abnormalities in the brain.

That is not demon possession. Demon possession actually means being indwelt by a supernatural, demonic spirit.

and when Paul said, I command you, he was exercising that apostolic authority that Christ had given him. But I want you to note something that's very important here.

[16 : 58] When Paul said, I command you to come out of her, he referenced the real authority and saying, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ.

That's the real authority that lay behind the apostle. Paul isn't saying, I command you to come out because I say so. He was recognizing there was an authority above him. So, far be it from me to say, I command you, I don't have any apostolic powers, but we do still have the name and authority of Jesus Christ, and that is the name that is above all names, and this demon came out at that very moment.

Now, you may be sure of this, nobody saw the demon come out. Nobody could say, hey, look what's happening to that girl, something's coming out of her, and there it goes.

It isn't anything that can be seen. That which is spirit being has no physicality, has no frame, has no form, has no shape, it is immaterial, and that's even scarier when you realize you're dealing with something you can't see.

I don't understand spirit beings, but we've got numerous instances of them in the Old and in the New Testament. And by the way, you and I are all indwelt by a spirit.

[18 : 25] We all have a spirit. It is the human spirit. It is part of what makes you a human being. And when you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, it is that human spirit that is regenerated, that is made new in Christ.

It isn't your body. Your body isn't changed at all. But the change takes place on the inside. That's your human spirit. And when the time comes that you die, your human spirit leaves your body. Nobody sees it leave. It leaves your body and goes to be with the Lord, assuming that you are a believer. This is what Paul meant when he said absent from the body, what's absent from the body? The real you. The real personality. The real persona. The real thing that makes you you is not your outward body. We just use that to identify one person from another.

Nobody has ever seen the real you. And what's more, you have never seen the real you. When you stand and look at a mirror, you're looking at your physical form and your outward reflection of what is actually inside.

[19 : 39] Nobody's ever seen their own spirit, but you have one. It is regenerated at the point of salvation and at the point of death, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

So, what we are dealing with here is a non-physical entity. We are made up of spirit immaterialism and body materialism and the non-material and the material combined together to make you a whole person called a soul.

So, I take it that the soul is not another name for the spirit, although I must admit they seem to be used interchangeably at a few places in scripture, but I think there is a distinction between soul and spirit, because after all, the word of God is powerful, sharper than a two-edged spirit, is able to divide asunder soul and spirit.

That's remarkable. They're in Hebrews 4.12, I think, unless it moved. So, there is a distinction between soul and spirit, and if my understanding of this is correct, we do not have a soul, we are a soul, we have a body and a spirit, and they two together comprise the human soul.

Question, Roger? Yeah, do you have any inkling on whether drug abuse is a gateway for a spirit to get into a person called someone lily? That's a very good question.

[21 : 12] The possibility of the abuse of drugs being a gateway or an entree for demonic spirits to become involved in a person, I really can't give an authoritative answer on that because I'm just not an authority on it, but I would say that, I would say that anything that a person does that would lessen their inhibitions or that would lessen their resistance to an outside influence, they would be unnecessarily setting themselves up for some real difficulty.

And drugs, particularly things like LSD and things like that that are hallucinogenic, as well as even alcohol could weaken one's resistance to these kind of things.

And you see, when we talk about these illegal drugs, they are often referred to as mind-altering substances because that's exactly what they do.

They affect your thinking capacity. They affect your reasoning and logic powers. They do alter your mood. And this is precisely the reason, I don't want to get too far afield here, but this is precisely the reason that so many people use alcohol and drugs.

It is an escapism. There are two basic reasons. One is for the thrill or the feeling or the buzz that is involved that they get from it, that they call a high.

[22 : 55] It makes them feel euphoric and floating and this and that, you know. And many do it because they've been introduced to it by someone else who's doing it.

And then the other is a lot of alcohol and a lot of drugs are consumed simply as a tool of escaping. mentally escaping the real world they're living in because they associate the real world with pain and discomfort, emotional pain. Somebody may be grieving over a severe loss.

We all know of people who lose their mate and turn to drink. They try to drown their sorrows in alcohol. And that's a very common thing because they don't like living with the pain of grieving, so they take something to numb it.

And it has a numbing effect. It does alter your mood. It makes you feel differently. And there is a real mood altering effect. But when it wears off, you're right back where you started from and you're actually worse off because of what you went through in trying to avoid that pain.

[24 : 05] this is a very, very complex subject and I certainly don't feel competent to address it. Dick? On what Roger said, I don't know if it's a symptom or the cause.

The spirit could be already there causing the drug abuse or the alcohol abuse instead of having the drug fall in the death.

Yeah, absolutely. It's really hard to know because we are dealing with an area that is virtually unknown to us and yet at the same time, it's a little embarrassing because what we're dealing with is what's inside of every one of us.

And in 1 Corinthians 2, I believe it is, Paul said, this is an amazing thing. I put a string of these things together and it really started making a lot of sense.

Paul said, what man knows the things of a man? except the spirit of man which is in him. And your spirit is your secret place that nobody else has access to but you.

[25 : 17] You know what you are thinking in your human spirit, but nobody else does. And nobody else can look into your spirit and see what's really there.

That is your private place from everyone else. So, no one knows the things of a man, the facts, the memories, the feelings, the thoughts, no one knows those except the man himself.

And we are all very private persons in our persona. We all have this inner place. Frank? what we are talking about this morning in this paper that is out front there.

We are talking about this building where the soup kitchen is located. It was used for drugs and prostitution and crime. And then in 2011, a Catholic priest had a formal blessing of this building which was more in the realm of ecsticism.

Wow. Well, it's something you could read. Interesting. That's in today's Springfield paper. That's the freebie paper. Yes. Yeah. Okay. Well, that's worth looking into.

[26 : 31] So, yeah. We fight evil spirits every individual every day, don't we? I mean, isn't that why God gave us the armor? Didn't he say that we would Yeah, against the fiery darts of the wicked.

Yeah. I think you're right. And I think it would absolutely scare us right down to our toenails if we knew what was really involved, what was really going on in the unseen world.

You see, we are so locked into the physical that we think this is all there is. And this is where much of the scientific community is coming from. They are called naturalists or physicalists or empiricists because much of the people in the scientific community, completely discount the existence of any entity that is not measurable in a scientific laboratory.

Well, you can't measure, weigh, evaluate, detect, define, or anything that which is not physical.

Science, real science, is limited to dealing with what can be observed in the laboratory.

And you can't do that with the spirit being. So this leads many of them to deny that it even exists.

But the scriptures make it very clear that there is demonic activity and that it do exist.

[27 : 55] Boy, food is here already. I didn't realize I had gone on that long. Yes, Roger? Well, we don't know.

the possibility of this girl who was indwelt having been on some kind of hallucinogenic drug or some kind of mind-altering drug. I don't know.

That too would be pure conjecture. I guess that's a possibility. But I just want to emphasize the fact that real demonic activity has reality to it.

There is a lot of fluff and stuff out there that passes off for the supernatural that isn't. It's just somebody rigged up something. But there is a legitimacy to it and it is something that we understand very, very little.

Matter of fact, we don't even have the real scoop on our physical body, much less our immaterial self. So, and that is subject to scientific investigation in the laboratory.

[29 : 13] I mean, you can take a human body and provide an autopsy and you can lay out slides and everything of all your organs and your vessels and your whole being.

And we've been doing that for a long time and we still don't understand what we're looking at in many instances, even with the physical. So how much more with the immaterial and the spiritual? Well, we'll continue this.

We've got to get Paul and Silas in prison so we can get them broken out. So that will be upcoming. Okay?