Research on: Healing of the Man with the Unclean spirit

Luke 4:33-36

This healing takes place in the synagogue at Capernaum:

“*Capernaum*] is not mentioned in the Old Testament or the Apocrypha. It was situated on the western shore of the Lake, in “the land of Gennesaret” ([Matthew 14:34](http://biblehub.com/matthew/14-34.htm); [John 6:17](http://biblehub.com/john/6-17.htm); [John 6:24](http://biblehub.com/john/6-24.htm)), and was of sufficient size to be always called “a city” ([Matthew 9:1](http://biblehub.com/matthew/9-1.htm)). It was a customs station ([Matthew 9:9](http://biblehub.com/matthew/9-9.htm); [Luke 5:27](http://biblehub.com/luke/5-27.htm)), and the quarters of a detachment of Roman soldiers ([Matthew 8:9](http://biblehub.com/matthew/8-9.htm); [Luke 7:8](http://biblehub.com/luke/7-8.htm)). It was the scene of many striking incidents in the Gospel History besides that here recorded. It was at Capernaum that the Lord healed Simon’s wife’s mother ([Matthew 8:14](http://biblehub.com/matthew/8-14.htm)); wrought the miracle on the centurion’s servant ([Matthew 8:5](http://biblehub.com/matthew/8-5.htm)); cured the paralytic ([Matthew 9:1](http://biblehub.com/matthew/9-1.htm)); called Levi from the toll-house ([Matthew 9:9](http://biblehub.com/matthew/9-9.htm)); taught His Apostles the lesson of humility from the child set in their midst ([Mark 9:35-37](http://biblehub.com/context/mark/9-35.htm)), and delivered the wonderful discourse respecting the “Bread of Life” ([John 6:59](http://biblehub.com/john/6-59.htm))” (Cambridge Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

*the synagogue*] built for the Jews by the good centurion ([Luke 7:5](http://biblehub.com/luke/7-5.htm)).

33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

“**An unclean spirit.**—The phrase occurs in all the first three Gospels (not in St. John’s), but with special frequency in this. As in most Eastern cities, in both ancient and modern times, madness had an immunity from restraint, and the demoniacs seem to have mingled, if they chose, with the crowd of worshippers in the synagogue” (Ellicott’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“The devil is an unclean spirit, because he has lost all the purity of his nature, because he acts in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit of God, and by his suggestions defiles the spirits of men” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“**And** straightway **there** was in their **synagogue**, etc. This word "straightway" adds much force to the sentence. It marks the immediate effect of our Lord's preaching. **A man with an unclean spirit.** The words are literally, "a man in an unclean spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἀκάθαρτῳ); in his grasp, so to speak; possessed by him. There can be no reasonable doubt as to the personality of this unclean spirit (see [Mark 4:24](http://biblehub.com/mark/4-24.htm); [Mark 12:41](http://biblehub.com/mark/12-41.htm))” (Pulpit Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“Unclean” in Greek is *akathartos* and means “impure, not cleansed, unclean, that which must be abstained from according to the levitical law, in a ceremonial sense, in a moral sense: unclean in thought and life, foul” (Thayer 169).

“The ‘demons,’ ‘unclean spirits,’ or ‘evil spirits’ of the Synoptic Gospels are rarely associated with Satan, and their control of a person is normally not an indication of moral turpitude. Usually demonic possession is associated with physical or psychic illness. At times afflictions of some sort are indicated, such as dumbness, lameness, epilepsy, delirium, possession and illness” (*AB Luke i-ix*. 545).

34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

“Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? This man, with his evil spirit, would have been looked on as unclean, and would not have been admitted within the synagogue walls; he had probably crept in unseen. Something in the nearness to the holy Teacher we know compelled the demon to cry aloud” (Pulpit Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“Lit., what is there to us and to thee? i.e., what have we in common?” (Vincent’s Word Studies, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“I know thee who thou art - Evil spirits seem to have been acquainted at once with the Messiah. Besides, they had learned from his miracles that he was the Messiah, and had power over them.

“The Holy One of God - The Messiah” (Barnes’ Notes, www.biblehub.com).

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

“*Hold thy peace*] Literally, “*Be muzzled.* (Cambridge Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Hold thy peace.—Literally, be still, be gagged. The same verb is used in the calming of the winds and waves in [Mark 4:39](http://biblehub.com/mark/4-39.htm)” (Ellicott’s commentary, www.biblehub.com)

The unclean spirit doesn’t give up without a fight. This is mental warfare! God speaks and it is done!

“In all [Jesus’] words he speaks from the mouth of omnipotence. . . . The miracles of Jesus are part of the invading dominion of God which Jesus brings with his own person in proclamation and act. They are the dominion of God overcoming and expelling the sway of [so-called] demons and Satan” (*Theological Dictionary* 302).

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! For with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

“ The first thing we find here is a divided sense of mentality, the unclean devil . . . We find that Jesus’ radical challenge to the human mind is such that this devil is absolutely removed from his mentality, shown never to have been a part of it. Normalcy, dignity of manhood, are restored. . . . No one had witnessed such authority before, where the word is followed by the deed. Just like creation where God said (in Genesis 1:3), ‘Let there be, and there was.’ There is no lapse between promise and fulfillment from God’s point of view. Breathing in the Holy Ghost is our way of imaging forth God’s authority on-earth-as-in-heaven, imaging forth that ‘Let there be Light.’

“ ‘Let there be health’ is our breathing in the divine fact that the Holy Ghost is inspiring us to feel. Our utilization of that fact is like our breathing out, giving out what we’ve taken in. It becomes ‘and there was’ light or health. Just as natural as that. Breathing, ‘let there be,’ and breathing out, ‘there was.’ ” (Crisler, *Gospels* 2.136-137).

“Once again Luke notes the amazement of the people. The astonishment this time is not only at his teaching and authority but at his power” *(EBC* 8.873*).*

Amazed is *thambos* in Greek and means “stupefaction, astonishment, to render immovable, dumbfounded” (Thayer 2285).

Authority is *exousia* in Greek and means “mastery, jurisdiction, the power of rule or government whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, a ruler, the sign of regal authority, a crown” (Thayer 1849).

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**From “Restoration to Wholeness, Anetta G. Schneider, April 7, 1973l, CSS.**

Mark's Gospel graphically records a complete healing of insanity.[1](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote-1) Jesus, on one occasion, approached a man possessed "with an unclean spirit." The man, perceiving "Jesus afar off,...ran and worshipped him."

Seeing the miserable plight of this sufferer, Jesus spoke to the error as one having authority over it: "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." What the insane man thought of as a legion of devils was destroyed, and the man himself was found "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind."

The concept behind the "unclean spirits" of the Bible assumes new names and phases in our modern world, but it represents, as of old, that which would claim a mind apart from God, resisting the healing power of the Christ. This fundamental error takes form in a wide range of beliefs, including insanity, obsessions, senility, mental retardation—all of which have been cured in the healing practice of Christian Science.

How are they cured? Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, goes to the base of the problem of mental disorder when she denies the belief of intelligent matter. She declares it impossible for matter or the brain to have the ability to originate or affect the native, God-given intelligence of man. To a world victimized by a fixed misconception that brain thinks, she explains that God, the one, harmonious Mind, is the source and substance of man's knowing, as well as of his being. The brain is only mindless matter within the skull. It is believed to be mind—indeed it is believed to be substance—only through delusion.

Mrs. Eddy makes clear there is no basic difference between insanity and other claims of sickness. "The only difference is," she writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,* "that insanity implies belief in a diseased brain, while physical ailments (so-called) arise from the belief that other portions of the body are deranged. Derangement, or *disarrangement,* is a word which conveys the true definition of all human belief in ill-health, or disturbed harmony."[2](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote-2)

Christian Science uplifts mankind by impelling the acknowledgment of Mind, God, as absolute and total. This Mind includes good only; its omnipresence and omniscience, seen as the truth of being, deny and destroy the evils associated with a disturbed mentality.

The Christian Science healer knows that this Science has a fixed Principle, the one God, and fixed rules for its demonstration. In proportion to his fidelity to this Principle and its rules he is able to prove with the certainty of Science that Christianity is today what Christ Jesus taught and demonstrated in the restoration of health and wholeness. The work of scientific healing requires a consistent certainty that man's true mentality is a reflection of the divine Mind, and that Truth realized has the power and authority to heal every bodily condition.

Mrs. Eddy gives these specific instructions for the healing of insanity: "The arguments to be used in curing insanity are the same as in other diseases; namely, the impossibility that matter, brain, can control or derange mind, can suffer or cause suffering; also the fact that truth and love will establish a healthy state, guide and govern mortal mind or the thought of the patient, and destroy all error, whether it is called dementia, hatred, or any other discord."[3](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote-3)

Today mental disorders, the ailments involved in so-called neuroses and psychoses, are supposed to be related to the functioning of the central nervous system. What is the response of Christian Science to this alleged fact? This Science maintains that the nervous system does not hold the control over life. It is a counterfeit of God's government of man and must yield to His rule of harmony.

**"Christian Science uplifts mankind by impelling the acknowledgment of Mind, God, as absolute and total."**

Dispelling the boastful sense of physical law, of mind in matter, Christian Science enthrones spiritual sense as the only true sense or intelligence of man. The material sense that claims glands are not functioning normally or nerves are agents of distress and disorder is refuted by the spiritual truth that divine Principle alone effects and governs all true functioning.

The practitioner of Christian Science recognizes that the mental ability and capacity of his patient have never actually been lost. Man's true mentality, subject to no impairment, is the expression of divine Spirit and can at any moment be spiritually discerned and brought to light. Therefore the scientific healer divorces his thought from all material theories—whether of disease or health. He must himself be spiritually right-minded, so opening the way for the patient's thought to clear itself and thus alter the action of the body.

As thought changes from matter to Spirit, from the fallible to the infallible, from a mere belief or false concept to a right idea, divine Truth replaces mortal error, and healing occurs necessarily. On this basis Mrs. Eddy's statement about the healing of insanity can be proved in practice: "However obstinate the case, it yields more readily than do most diseases to the salutary action of truth, which counteracts error."3

I am a firsthand witness to the healing of insanity through Christian Science. A young woman I knew well was in as severe a state as the man in the Bible. Consumed by a material sense of self in which the true spiritual sense of ego was forfeited, she suffered a mental collapse and lost all control of her thinking. Mentally and physically there was little left of this woman when Christian Science found her. Medical aid had been employed to no avail.

Slowly and gently the practitioner led her, by audible explanation, spiritual reasoning, and silent, prayerful treatment, into the understanding of God as the only Mind and intelligence—her own Mind, in which she lived and had her true being. After several months the accumulation of falsehoods she had consented to and lived with were dissolved, and through Christian Science treatment she had restored to her the lost sense of her perfection in Mind. She returned to the college course, interrupted by her mental breakdown, completed it successfully, and was happily married.

The theology of Christian Science rests on the Scriptural fact that God is Mind and God is infinite. Not only in times of mental distress or malfunction do we have prayerful work to do. The fundamental facts of being must be worked out by all of us in our present experience if we would find our way out of the human sense of life into the divine. Everyone who would heal himself or another must stand on the absolute truth of Christian Science —omnipresent God and perfect man, expressing unlimited intelligence—as the basis of thought. As the fallible traits of the so-called human mind are replaced by the serene attributes of immortal Mind, thought must become spiritualized.

Spiritualized thought on the part of the practitioner is needed also in handling cases of retardation. His work is to wipe out the whole erroneous belief of a material birth and supplant it vigorously with the facts of spiritual being. Each one's life reflects the divine Life, without start or ending, unfolding forever from the inexhaustible source. Jesus told Nicodemus that he "must be born again"[4](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote-4) —that he must change from the mortal to the immortal concept of life. Human belief must change to the acknowledgment of God as the only Father-Mother.

Those in the human roles of parents and of children need to accept God's parenthood as the controlling fact in their lives. Each one should progressively wipe out for himself the whole false sense of heredity—the physical transmission of peculiarities of constitution and temperament. The healing of a retarded child demands particularly of those close to him the constant recognition that God's law permits no such thing as mental retardation. Man lives forever under the mandate of God, immortal Mind, the Parent of all.

How great is this truth that brings out daily renewal—wiping out the mesmeric belief that man is a destructible mortal, the victim of birth defects or the creature of any circumstance of human birth! This truth known brings ceaseless reconstruction and restoration and provides a change of thought and body. It brings the conception of one's true selfhood, born of the Spirit—the right idea in place of the wrong concept of being born in the flesh.

This new birth, initiated in the instruction and example of the Way-shower and explained in Christian Science, is the answer to all the ills of troubled minds and bodies. "Be ye transformed," Paul writes, "by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."[5](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote-5) God's will for man is good. It includes, forever and for each one, the perfect functioning of intelligence and life.

1  See Mark 5:1-15;[↑](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnotelink-1%22%20%5Co%20%22Return%20to%20text)   2  Science and Health, [p. 421](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=that+insanity+implies+belief+in+a+diseased+brain%2C+while+physical+ailments+%28so-called%29+arise+from+the+belief+that+other+portions+of+the+body+are+deranged.+Derangement%2C+or+disarrangement%2C+is+a+word+which+conveys+the+true+definition+of+all+human+belief+in+ill-health%2C+or+disturbed+harmony.&book=tfccs.main.sh):[↑](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnotelink-2%22%20%5Co%20%22Return%20to%20text)   3  p. 414;[↑](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnotelink-3%22%20%5Co%20%22Return%20to%20text)   4  J[ohn 3:7](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=must+be+born+again&book=tfccs.main.hb.kj);[↑](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnotelink-4%22%20%5Co%20%22Return%20to%20text)   5  [Rom. 12:2](http://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=by+the+renewing+of+your+mind%2C+that+ye+may+prove+what+is+that+good%2C+and+acceptable%2C+and+perfect%2C+will+of+God.&book=tfccs.main.hb.kj).[↑](http://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1973/4/75-14/restoration-to-wholeness%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnotelink-5%22%20%5Co%20%22Return%20to%20text)

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