

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## THE BOWED LADY

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20TH OCTOBER 2020

In Luke's Gospel, chapter 13, vv 10 – 13, we have the account of Jesus' healing of a lady who was bowed over and unable at all to straighten her back. We aren't given any other information about this lady: her name or age, whether she was married etc; just that she couldn't stand up straight. If you are inquisitive, like me, you may have wondered what was medically wrong with her. I did a little research into this condition and found the following on the Internet: "Usually, the bent spine is caused by dysfunctioning extensor spinal muscles with a neurological cause. Neurological origin BSS may also result from damage to the basal ganglia nuclei that are a part of the cerebral cortex, which play a major role in bodily positioning". This is not exhaustive. Another article which I saw mentioned Parkinson's Disease as causing this too. Maybe this is the neurological cause referred to above. In our Bible passage the cause of the woman's disability is an evil spirit, and Jesus said that she had been bound like this for eighteen years by Satan. Many times, in the Gospels, we come across all sorts of maladies that are attributed to evil spirits. This leads us to the conclusion that all sickness and disability are part of Satan's malevolent influence in our world.

Western doctors today don't believe in evil spirits causing sickness etc. because such a belief is considered unscientific. After all, there's no chemical test for an evil spirit, neither are they amenable to detection via optical or electron microscopes; they don't show up on X-rays, CAT or NMR scans either. Yet the Bible says that they can cause disease and disability. I wonder how they fit in with the Germ Theory of disease, which has been shown to be true? Bacteria are visible via optical microscopes, while viruses require electron microscopes to be seen. Then there are mental illnesses. These are mysterious. In the Bible they are attributed to evil spirits; the best answer we have is pills, evidently.

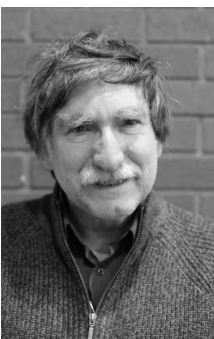
I confess that I have no idea how evil spirits fit in with all this, but because the Bible says they are real then they must affect people today just as they did then. The

world today is scientifically very superior to the world of Jesus' day; but spiritually it is still just as backward as ever it was. Hence the continuation of these problems despite the best that nuclear medicine and keyhole and laser surgery have to offer!

I do appreciate modern science and medicine, and they help us tremendously. But at the heart of things is our estrangement from God because of sin. That's why we fall prey to the evil spiritual powers that are clearly shown in the Bible. That's why modern science and medicine will never be able to restore what Adam lost for himself and us in Eden. There are those scientists who have what I think is a scary vision of the future: a time when our organic bodies will be fitted with robotic inserts, chips, and the like, which will enable us to communicate telepathically with computers, robots, and "smart" devices. They are researching artificial intelligence and its implications for us. What would the people of Jesus' day have made of all this?

That story in Luke 13 shows Jesus immediately diagnosing the cause of the woman's disability, and showing that He had the power to put her right – to heal her. Medical science tries to push back the boundaries of mortality, but however well-intentioned this is, ultimately, they will fail. Mere men cannot defeat the ancient sentence handed down in Eden: "Ye shall die!" God handed down that sentence, and God has given us the way out: "And now He has revealed this grace through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the gospel.." (2 Tim 1:10). Jesus is the solution to sickness, disability, and death. Of course, even Christians must fall victims to these things as our bodies are not yet redeemed; though I believe that in His mercy He still heals in answer to prayer – though not always, and in which case He gives the grace to endure in hope – the hope of suddenly standing in His presence in a resurrection body!

This is the glorious hope that we have. And because Jesus rose from death, we shall live also, because of faith in Him. Not for us the scientists' future night-mare world of cybernetic bodies, resembling the Borg of Star Trek fame! But rather having glorious "natural" spiritual bodies imbued with eternal life, power, and the Holy Spirit. This is the encouragement that Scripture gives us as we trust in Jesus, even as our present bodies are starting to fall apart!.



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