

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 16th January 2022 95 t Stracthro 627, 231, 314 Hymns Read: Acts 16:16-19 Text Acts 16:16-19

Series: Philippians (5) Title: Saved From The Spirit Of Divination

When Paul and his missionary team went to Europe and to the city of Philippi, it is was vital they went because God had called them. I say that because they faced much opposition to the gospel in Philippi.

When God's work advances, His truth is marching on, sinners are be saved from their sin, believers are strengthened by the word and a people set themselves to prayer, then there will be a rise in satanic activity.

When the Lord saved Lydia by his sovereign grace, and sometime after, the missionary team went to prayer again, a certain damsel met them.

Here was another working woman. They had met Lydia a businesswoman, a seller of purple, it was an honest and honourable business, which would have brought good money for herself.

However, the damsel before us, worked in an dishonourable business, which **brought her masters** as **verse 16** states **much gain**.

How much the damsel was paid we don't know, but what is clear the pockets of those who owned this woman were filled. That is because her occupation as **verse 16** confirms was **soothsaying** which means **fortune telling to tell the future**.

People came to hear this possessed damsel, and they where only told what they wanted to hear, a bright future, all positive, painless and prosperity related, Whatever you say to keep the money rolling in.

That is not the message of scripture. The Bible teaches there is a step between me and death, boast not thyself of tomorrow, all by natural birth are walking on the broad road that leads to eternal death, but all by spiritual birth are walking on the narrow which leads to eternal life.

When Paul met this damsel **possessed with a spirit of divination**, she was on the road to eternal damnation, however when she heard about the name of Jesus, a name that is exalted above all, a name that saves, this woman was placed on the road leading to eternal life.

A trophy of grace.

Let's look now at this damsel **Saved From The Spirit Of Divination**

I FIRST - THE DOMINATION OF THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION IN HER LIFE.

Notice the words in **verse 16** "...**a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination.**

If you have a margin in your Bible you will see the Greek meaning of the word **divination**, is **Python**, what is a Python it is a snake. Therefore, you can read these words, **a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of Python, divination.**

In Greek mythology, there was a large Python, a snake, worshipped as a god, that was especially connected with telling the future, hence the meaning of the word **soothsaying** or **fortune telling**. According to Greek mythology, Python lived at the foot of Mount Parnassus in Greece and was killed by Apollo another Greek god.

But doesn't it strike you that the evil spirit which had possessed this woman is described as a Python, and acted the same as a Python would do to its prey.

It's interesting to keep in mind, the wicked one who dominates sinners came in the form of a serpent a snake to Adam & Eve in Gen 3,

Notice some comparisons.

The Damsel was possessed with a spirit of divination. The word **possessed** means **to take hold of, to belong to, to take to ones self**. The idea is to take full control of, complete dominion over.

Remember, a Python is not a venomous snake, it does not bite to paralyse, it bites to take possession of and it will not let go of its grip.

Therefore, When the Python hunts its prey, what does it do when it catches its prey with its mouth, it possesses what it has bitten, taken hold of, and wraps itself around the animal, squeezing its prey, Crushing its bones, until death.

But the point is, the Python has taken hold of its prey, whatever is in its grip belongs to it, it has complete control over it, unless rescued by another.

The picture is clear, the devil has possessed this damsel, taken complete control of her life. She was completely ruled by the evil one. This woman was under the control, authority, of the demon.

We learn this by the very fact Paul said in **verse 18** ***"...come out of her and he came out..."***

Her life pictured one whose life is under the power of Satan, A slave to Satan, held captive in the kingdom of darkness, under his power.

Therefore, believer this was our spiritual state before Salvation.
As sinners by nature and practise, we were controlled
possessed with a spirit of Python, divination.

Sin had complete dominion over your life, you were a poor wretch!

Satan wants to keep sinners in darkness, he has blinded their understanding, he wants sinners to die in sin, to die without God.

But God delivers sinners, He is able to do so.

The Damsel was powerless against the spirit of divination.

Look at the words, ***a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination or Python.*** When a Python has taken possession of its prey by circling around, that prey, let's say some weaker animal, it helpless, it has no power against the strength and power of the Python.

It is said that when a python squeezes its prey, it equal to weight of 4 buses.

This damsel who she is possessed ***a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination or Python,*** controlled by the wicked one, has no power or might against the devil. She was powerless to deliver herself. She was under the devil's power.

See the gospel picture men and woman, unsaved this is you now, believer this was once our lost estate.

Since sinners are totally depraved, controlled by sin, then sinners are totally unable to deliver themselves from sin.

Man's sin has plunged him into hopeless bondage of sin. The Lord said in **John 8:34** "***whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.***", that is to say, sin is his master.

The very fact none are able to please God is due to their own sin. Therefore, sinners yield to temptation, and submit to its orders. All the members of the body are sold under sin.

Moreover sin is likened to a monarch ruling over his subjects, **Rom 5:21** “**as sin hath reigned unto death**”, Therefore, sin occupies the throne of the human heart. Sin has taken control of the person which acts under it’s influence.

The Lord also said in **John 8:44** “**ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.**” This is the powerlessness of sinful man, he cannot break the bonds which the evil one has him chained.

Fallen sinners are helpless and hopeless in themselves, they cannot turn from sin to holiness, and cannot take one step toward Christ in the flesh.

Nothing can break the power of sin in a life, but the Word of Christ Himself. He has power and authority to break the chains of sin, cancel the debt of sin, and set the prisoner free. For whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

Believer what we could never do, Christ was able to do and did, in Christ is full salvation.

II SECOND THE DECEPTION OF THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION IN HER LIFE.

In taking possession of this damsel, the devil controlled every member of her body, such as her mind, eyes, tongue, walk, speech, she was a servant of sin, her members were surrendered to serve Satan.

Satan worked through her life. she was his puppet, his slave, and prisoner.

Notice in **verse 17-18** “*the same followed Paul, and us and cried, saying, these men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us, the way of salvation. v18* “*and this did she many days, but Paul being grieved....*”

The word **grieved** means **to be distressed or disturbed**, Paul was grieved, distressed why because for many days, this damsel followed them, and as they went around Philippi so did she, and the possessed woman was speaking the truth of the gospel to promote her own business and the cause of the devil.

Everything in **verse 17** that his woman said was true, but there where certain truths left out to deceive others. There was nothing that Paul could disagree with, but what she left out.

Around Philippi, others listened to the damsel's words, She made herself and the missionary team appear to be equals, as if there was no real difference.

Paul and the team preached Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. There is no other Saviour, there is no other redeemer to deliver man, therefore listen to **Isa 45:22** “***Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.***”

And so when Paul heard this woman say these words, it distressed him because as she followed them, stayed close to them, others looking and listening, could see no distinction, no difference.

The devil kept the blinded sinners of Philippi to see the work of this woman as good, so the people at Philippi would conclude just as she speaks the truth about Paul and the message he preaches, so she is right about her soothsaying, telling the future, speaking to the dead. Surely if she is right about Paul then she is right about telling our future.

In only telling some of the truth was to teach a lie. Paul was grieved.

That is the same today, because there are cults that go around the doors or give out leaflets about their religion to deceive the souls of men and woman.

What they put into their material is mostly general to find neutral ground. They use words such as Salvation, Faith, Christ, they use expressions such as what does the Bible say? The Bible answers questions? They make statements that Christ is a prophet, sent into the world by the father. All this we agree with it.

what they are trying to do is show that there is no difference between them and True Bible Christianity.

But when we think of **1 John 4:1** "***Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.***"

The only way to do this is to test any spiritual teaching, or movement by the word of God. **Isaiah 8:20** "***To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.***" the infallible word of God is the standard.

You will find that false cults, religions, independent movements, teach Christ as one of many ways to heaven, whereas Jesus said Himself in **John 14:6** "***I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***"

Some claim Christ to be the son of God, which is right, but they also then say, Jesus is not God, yet Jesus said Himself in **John 10:30** ***I am my Father are one.*** or in **John 8** when the Jews when to stone Christ He maketh Himself to be God.

False cults say they will go to heaven, paradise, but when you say that great when did you trust in Christ, when you where born

again receiving new life from God, they reject such, I don't need to be born again, I don't need new life, that's not our message, but Jesus said in **John 3:3** "**Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"

You see the devil Himself knows scripture, even better than any of us. He quoted scripture when he tempted Christ in the wilderness, trying to show what he was saying what agreeable. Notice **Matt 4:6** "**...If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.**" The devil quoted from **Psalm 91:11-12**.

Paul said **2 Corinthians 11:13-14** **such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.**" The greatest deceiver of all even presents himself as messenger of truth.

Paul was grieved to know this woman working for the devil, promoting her evil business, by taking truths in the gospel, she lived in darkness but spoke of gospel light.

when people came to her she told them lies. It was deceptive and others would be deceived by it.

However, Christ came to give fulness of life. The devil is a liar from the beginning. Jesus is the light of the world, all who follow His will not walk in darkness, ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

III THIRD - THE DELIVERANCE FROM THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION IN HER LIFE.

V18 "**Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.**"

The second Jesus Christ comes into a life, Satan knows that he must go out. Immediately her sin was forgiven. At the name of Jesus, she was set free to live in joy and benefits of Christ's death.

Believer, Aren't you glad that day when He spoke to you and you obeyed the command to come and be saved from the guilt and power of sin.

Nothing so changes a person like Jesus Christ. Nothing conquers evil in society like Jesus Christ. The power of Satan and his demons may be strong, but Christ is stronger.

Only Christ can overcome any evil. Read the gospels and see lives controlled by the devil but then transformed by Christ.

Christ delivers from darkness to light, from sin's burden to salvation's blessing, from Satan's control to Christ's gospel freedom.

Hallelujah what a Saviour.