

~EPILEPSY (199)

[Greek, *e-pi-le-psi'a*, seizure , *se-le-ni-a'zo-mai*, be moonstruck]

- A chronic disease of the central nervous system manifested in convulsions or in impairment or loss of consciousness, and perhaps both. This disorder is linked with abnormal activity of the brain.
- A severely convulsive epileptic fit accompanied by unconsciousness is called **grand mal**, whereas the mild form, attacks of which are of very brief duration, is termed **petit mal**, these being two principal types of epilepsy. An epileptic is a person afflicted with epilepsy.
- On the day following the transfiguration, Jesus Christ healed an epileptic that his disciples had been unable to cure.
- And when they came toward the crowd, a man approached him, kneeling down to him and saying; (**Matthew 17:14**)
- Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is an **epileptic** and is ill, for he falls often into the fire and often into the water. (**Matthew 17:15**)
- And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him. (**Matthew 17:16**)
- In reply Jesus said; O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me. (**Matthew 17:17**)
- Then Jesus rebuked it, and **the demon came out of him**, and the boy was cured from that hour. (**Matthew 17:18**)
- Thereupon the disciples came up to Jesus privately and said; Why is it we could not expel it? (**Matthew 17:19**)
- He said to them; Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain; Transfer from here to there. And it will transfer, and nothing will be impossible for you. (**Matthew 17:20**)

- From his childhood this boy had a speechless and deaf spirit that, among other things, periodically threw him into convulsions, these were accompanied by foaming at the mouth. Jesus rebuked the demon, it came out, and the boy was thus healed.
- When, now, they came toward the other disciples, they noticed a great crowd about them and scribes disputing with them. (Mark 9:14)
- But as soon as all the crowd caught sight of him they were stunned, and, running up to him, they began to greet him. (Mark 9:15)
- And he asked them; What are you disputing with them? (Mark 9:16)
- And one of the crowd answered him; Teacher, I brought my son to you because he has a speechless spirit. (Mark 9:17)
- And wherever it seizes him it dashes him to the ground, and he foams and grinds his teeth and loses his strength. And I told your disciples to expel it, but they were not capable. (Mark 9:18)
- In response he said to them; O faithless generation, how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me. (Mark 9:19)
- So they brought him to him. But at the sight of him the spirit at once threw the child into convulsions, and after falling on the ground he kept rolling about, foaming. (Mark 9:20)
- And he asked his father; How long has this been happening to him? He said; From childhood on. (Mark 9:21)
- And time and again it would throw him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us. (Mark 9:22)
- Jesus said to him; That expression; If you can! Why, all things can be to one if one has faith. (Mark 9:23)
- Immediately crying out, the father of the young child was saying; I have faith! Help me out where I need faith! (Mark 9:24)

- Jesus, now noticing that a crowd was running together upon them, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it; You speechless and deaf spirit, I order you, get out of him and enter into him no more. (**Mark 9:25**)
- And after crying out and going through many convulsions it got out, and he became as dead, so that the greater number of them were saying; He is dead! (**Mark 9:26**)
- But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up, and he rose. (**Mark 9:27**)
- So after he entered into a house his disciples proceeded to ask him privately; Why could we not expel it? (**Mark 9:28**)
- And he said to them; This kind cannot get out by anything except by prayer. (**Mark 9:29**)
- On the succeeding day, when they got down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. (**Luke 9:37**)
- And, look! A man cried out from the crowd, saying; Teacher, I beg you to take a look at my son, because he is my only-begotten. (**Luke 9:38**)
- And, look! A spirit takes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it throws him into convulsions with foam, and it scarcely withdraws from him after bruising him. (**Luke 9:39**)
- And I begged your disciples to expel it, but they could not. (**Luke 9:40**)
- In response Jesus said; O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I continue with you and put up with you? Lead your son over here. (**Luke 9:41**)
- But even as he was approaching, the demon dashed him to the ground and violently convulsed him. However, Jesus rebuked the **unclean spirit** and healed the boy and delivered him to his father. (**Luke 9:42**)
- Well, they all began to be astounded at the majestic power of God. Now as they were all marveling at all the things he was doing, he said to his disciples. (**Luke 9:43**)

- Though demon activity was associated with epileptic symptoms in this particular case, **epilepsy** normally has natural causes, and the Scriptures do not imply that it is generally caused by demon possession. Rather;
- And the report about him went out into all Syria, and they brought him all those faring badly, distressed with various diseases and torments, demon-possessed and epileptic and paralyzed persons, and he cured them. (**Matthew 4:24**)
- Reports that people brought Jesus ailing ones including demon-possessed **and epileptic** persons, drawing a distinction between these two types of individuals cured by Christ.
- The **English** term **epilepsy** is derived from the **Greek** word *e-pi-le-psi'a*, meaning literally seizure. However, *e-pi-le-psi'a* is not used in the Bible. Rather, for this disorder;
- And the report about him went out into all Syria, and they brought him all those faring badly, distressed with various diseases and torments, demon-possessed and **epileptic** and paralyzed persons, and he cured them. (**Matthew 4:24**)
- Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is an **epileptic** and is ill, for he falls often into the fire and often into the water. (**Matthew 17:15**)
- Employed forms of the **Greek** word *se-le-ni-a'zo-mai*, meaning, literally, be moonstruck. Whereas the **King James Version** uses lunatick, certain modern translations employ **epileptic** at, **AS, NW, RS**
- And the report about him went out into all Syria, and they brought him all those faring badly, distressed with various diseases and torments, demon-possessed and **epileptic** and paralyzed persons, and he cured them. (**Matthew 4:24**)
- Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is an **epileptic** and is ill, for he falls often into the fire and often into the water. (**Matthew 17:15**)
- Interestingly, **The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia** states; The original meaning of the term *seleniazomai*, moon-struck, is connected with the popular belief, widespread and of strange

persistence, that the moon, in certain of its phases, is injurious to human beings, especially in the case of diseases of a periodic or remittent character.

- There are no data by which to determine whether, in the New Testament times, this particular word represented a living and active belief or had passed into the state of usage in which the original metaphor disappears, and the word simply indicates the fact signified without reference to the idea embodied in the etymology.
- We still use the word lunatic to signify a person mentally diseased, although we have long since ceased to believe in the moon's influence in such cases.[Edited by J. Orr, 1960, Vol. III, p. 1941]
- Matthew's use of forms of *se-le-ni-a'zo-mai* does not mean that he held any superstitious views associating such a disease with certain phases of the moon.
- Evidently, he was merely employing the Greek term that was then commonly used to denote an epileptic. Also, the symptoms Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe as present in the boy's case are certainly those associated with epilepsy.