

## Understanding Superstition

### Acts 17:16-22 & Acts 25:13-19

Acts 17:22

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said,  
Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are  
too superstitious.

---

In his written word, God uses the words "religion/religious" seven times, and "superstition/superstitious" twice. Many people, seeming to be religious, may in fact be superstitious, according to God's word. Let's look at Acts 17 and seek to understand what Paul was referring to with the words "too superstitious" in the opening of his speech on Mars' hill; first considering the following observations pertaining to the beginning of the passage leading up to this verse...

Acts 17:16a Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him...

Acts 17:16b ... when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts 17:17a Therefore disputed he... (or... Therefore disputed he...)

...in the synagogue with the Jews, and...

...with the devout persons, and...

...in the market daily with them that met with him.

- in the synagogue with the Jews (thus we can gather that the Jews themselves were included in the description of the city being "wholly given to idolatry", as Judah and Israel often were throughout their history<sup>1</sup>)
- with the devout persons (being devout is not good in and of itself: "persons" can be devout idolaters, as in Athens - or devout followers of God, as recounted of a man named Simeon<sup>2</sup>)
- in the market daily with them that met with him (some probably buying or selling idols there in the market: compare Acts 19:23-27 recounting craftsmen in Ephesus who made much gain selling idols to the people)

This went on for some time: Paul was disputing with them that met with him in the market daily, not just on one occasion or on one day only. The word "daily" implies several days at least. If Paul disputed with the Jews in the synagogue more than just once, it is *possible* that his disputing *could* have been going on for weeks, such as in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2) where Paul went into the synagogue on three separate sabbath days (which would have spanned 15 days if they were consecutive normal seventh-day-of-the-week sabbaths).

Eventually certain of the pagan and idolatrous Greek philosophers (Epicureans and Stoicks) caught wind of Paul's disputations against the idolatry so *wholly* pervasive in Athens, and in particular his preaching of *Jesus and the resurrection*. They called Paul a babbler. (Acts 17:18)

Comparing spiritual things with spiritual, consider the one other passage in the scriptures where the word superstitious (superstition, actually) is used. In Acts 25:19 Porcius Festus is in the middle of relating to King Agrippa about the very same thing – Paul preaching *Jesus and the resurrection* – and refers to certain questions the chief priests and the elders of the Jews had against Paul "of their own superstition..." Then, Agrippa gives Paul permission to speak, which he does (Acts 26), once again preaching *Jesus and the resurrection* to King Agrippa and all those in attendance: at which point Festus essentially echoes the Athenians (who called Paul a babbler), saying, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts 26:24)

---

<sup>1</sup> As just one reference, see Micah 5:12-13 – And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands.

<sup>2</sup> See Luke 2:25 – And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon: and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Let it not be lost upon us – that in these two occurrences, the words superstitious/superstition are God's words calling our attention to something important: the Athenian idolaters are called “too superstitious”, and the “chief priests and the **elders** of the Jews” (Acts 25:15) are referred to as being “of their own superstition.” (Acts 25:19) What superstition might that be? Consider Jesus’ words in response to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15:

The Scribes & Pharisees ask:

Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the **elders**? (Matthew 15:2)

Jesus replies:

...Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by **your tradition**? (Matthew 15:3)

...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by **your tradition**. (Matthew 15:6)

Notice ... Jesus *did not deny* that his disciples do transgress. In fact, he *admitted* to their accusation, asking, “why do ye also transgress?” It’s one thing to transgress the tradition of the elders (“their own superstition”), but it is quite another thing (categorically different) to transgress the commandment of God. The Jews had departed from the LORD many times in the past, as recounted throughout the scriptures, turning against the commandment of God and unto idols and images and groves. Is not the tradition of men (of scribes, of **elders** – by the which they make the commandment of God of none effect) another form of idolatry? And is it not idolatry which God would have us to understand as being the chief priests’ and **elders’** “own superstition” as they place their tradition over and above the word of God?<sup>3</sup>

Does this not sound *exactly* the same as what today is referred to as “church tradition(s)” – or, the tradition(s) of the “church fathers” (i.e., **elders**), which transgress the commandment of God, and which make the commandment of God of none effect? – by denying the words of scripture which say:

Except a man be born again... he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5)

I am the way... no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John 14:6)

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (John 3:7) (Ye – plural – all men)

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) (“all” includes Mary)

[but] whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)

For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23)

What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:31)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:32)

He that believeth on him is not condemned (John 3:18)

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness... (Romans 10:10)

...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10)

[for] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21)

I [Jesus] am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved (John 10:9)

He that entereth not by the door...but climbeth up some other way... (John 10:1)

... believeth not [that “I am the way” (John 14:6), and thus] is condemned already... (John 3:18)

...because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18)

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men... (Matthew 10:32)

...him also will I confess before my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 10:32)

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me... (John 11:25)

...though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11:25)

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (John 11:26)

**Believest thou this?** (John 11:26)

---

<sup>3</sup> In the Talmud, statements can be found relating to exactly what Jesus was calling “your tradition”, such as... “the words of the elders are weightier than the words of the prophets” ...which sounds very much like the weight placed on “church tradition” today by the modern-day Nicolaitans (rulers over the laity – i.e., pope, priests, theologians, scholars, text critics, etc.) who place the “tradition of church fathers” (the “tradition of the **elders**”) above the written word of God.

Any tradition that is elevated above the commandment of God – above God's word – is a superstition, because it is idolatry to elevate anything above the word of God: because it is directly tied to the Devil by, in essence, asking the Devil's own original subtle idolatrous question ...Yea, hath God said...? (Genesis 3:1) --- and then accepting the Devil's own answer above the word of God...

"ye shall not surely die"... "ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5,6)

"ye are not too superstitious"... "ye are very religious"

"Jesus is surely not the only way"... "ye can surely *climb up* some other way!"

by attending church/mass

by being baptized/sprinkled

by taking communion/eucharist

by confessing sins to a pastor/priest

by praying to some other mediator/mediatrix

by doing good works/sacraments/penance

Are you giving weight to the traditions – the superstitions – of a church or an "elder" (such as a creed, or sacraments, or the proclamations of pastor or pope) rather than to the word of God? Do you venerate such traditions/superstitions or things/people, and thus practice idolatry?

What does Jesus say of those that rule by the traditions of the **elders** (or church "fathers") – both then, and today? ...

... do not ye after their works ... Matthew 23:3

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders... Matthew 23:4

... woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Matthew 23:13

... woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! ... ye shall receive the greater damnation. Matthew 23:14

... woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Matthew 23:15

Jesus instead seeks to convert children of hell into children of God, to remove the heavy burdens of the elders' works from their shoulders:

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 18:3)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

May I ask... Are you bound with heavy burdens (sacraments, "good" works or penances, to balance out the bad and minimize time in "purgatory")? Are you being not-suffered, by church or pastor or priest or pope, to enter in? Are you even being told how to enter into the kingdom of heaven? Or are you, by following the traditions, the superstitions, of church or pastor or priest or pope, being made twice the child of hell than even they themselves are: they that are hindering you from entering in to the kingdom of heaven – hindering you from being saved from damnation?

Will you not instead heed today the word of the Lord? It is recorded in the holy scriptures for all to read and heed:

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:11-13)

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:10,23), ...and...

the wages of sin is death; (Romans 6:23)

...the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and **idolaters** [*the superstitious*], and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

[I]f thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Romans 10:9-11)

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

OR, do you prefer to be like some in Athens who mocked? Or like others that said (in essence) “not now” – “We will hear thee again of this matter.” (Acts 17:22) ?? **OR**... will you not instead be like “certain men” that “believed” (Acts 17:34)? “Believest thou this?” (John 11:26) If so, will you not take that final step and truly enter in? Instead of stopping just short of salvation (believing in your mind, but not receiving in your heart), will you not call upon the name of the Lord to be saved? Consider King Agrippa. Paul said to him, I know that thou believest. (Acts 26:27) Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am... (Acts 26:28-29)

Behold, today is the day of salvation. If you mock, or if you say “maybe another time”, or if you believe, but are “fearful” (Rev 21:8) of what others may think, you may not have another day. This may be the (only, or last) day in which you will not be hardened against calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation from hell. God’s word tells us that the devils believe, but they tremble in fear. You must not be *almost* persuaded: believing but not confessing, believing but not calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved; to be converted from a child of hell into a child of God. Like Paul, I would that ye were to become altogether “such as I am”, altogether persuaded: that you would call upon the name of the Lord today - even now - and receive the promise given in the scripture – eternal life, and the sure knowledge of it, according to that which is written. A simple prayer, prayed from the heart, by the mouth, calling upon Jesus Christ for salvation... and God’s word promises that you shall be immediately translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God and have everlasting life...

*Dear Jesus, I believe that you are the only begotten Son of God, that you suffered and died to pay the wages of sin, which is death, for all people, and that you rose again from the dead, to give eternal life to all that call upon you. I know that I am a sinner deserving of death, but I believe that you suffered and died for me, to take my sin upon yourself and carry it away, and that you have risen from the dead, and have offered to me the free gift of eternal life instead. Jesus, I want your free gift of salvation from the wages of sin that I deserve – that you suffered and died to save me from because of your love for me. I want to have eternal life and to dwell for ever with you. I accept and confess you as my Saviour and Lord. Thank you for your sure and certain promise of eternal life with you. Amen.*

If you prayed that prayer, truly meaning it in your heart, then according to the promise of what is written in the scriptures, you are now saved. You have eternal life even now, and you can now know for certain that when you die physically, you will go directly to heaven and forever be with the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, and that your body will be resurrected when Jesus calls all believers from the grave, to be reunited with your spirit and soul, and made immortal, and that you will be among them that will rule and reign with Jesus Christ for all eternity to come. As a Christian, you have a new life that has now begun. You have a new family to get to know. You need to join in fellowship and attendance with them in a church that believes the Bible – the English KJB – to be the very word of God, and that preaches it and follows it with compassion for other lost souls that need to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Appendix A – Too Superstitious? or Very Religious?**

(A case study pertaining to those who question God's word)

This appendix is for those who find themselves having a *critical mindset*, instead of a *believing heartset*. It was something not much unlike this appendix which awakened me to the recognition of my own critical mindset, and led me ultimately to reject that critical mindset and instead to embrace a believing heartset. Our desire should be to have the mind of Christ, not the mind of a text critic. If you're reading the writings of a text critic, you're reading the mind of the text critic. If you're reading the word of God, you're reading the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is given to us in his written word. In fact, the mind of Christ is his written word; and understanding his written word (the mind of Christ) is a matter of the heart...

**I** have given thee a wise and understanding heart. (1 Kings 3:12)

**[W]ho** hath given understanding to the heart? (Job 38:36)

**[T]he Almighty** giveth them understanding. (Job 32:8)

In this day and age wherein God has given his pure and holy written word in English (the KJB), man has also given corrupt words in a multiplicity of their own per(sonal) versions. Most (if not all) modern "bible" versions change God's words "too superstitious" to the text critics' words "very religious," which gives a connotation of commendation in opposition to the Bible's connotation of condemnation. Indeed, modern bible commentators, using modern "bible" versions, in near-unison proclaim that Paul was trying to be "winsome" to the Athenians, trying to avoid "offending" them. And thus the commentators feel that the words "too superstitious" should be toned down (i.e. "corrected" to agree with their textual criticism), to say what they think it should say ("very religious") based on their critical mindset.

And thus, just as in the garden of Eden ("ye shall not surely die... ye shall be as gods") the serpent's hissssss is heard, saying, "ye are not ~~too superstitioussss~~... ye are ~~very religioussss~~."

Please follow through this rather lengthy appendix, and see exactly wherefrom this modern version idea (wholly given to idolatry = very religious) emanates.

Setting aside the opinions (comments) of commentators, let us be more noble (in God's eyes) than they, and receive the word of God, with all readiness of mind, and search ... (of all things!) ... the scriptures (not commentaries), to see whether these things be so (Acts 17:11).

First notice that, in addition to toning down God's word(s) "too superstitious" to say "very religious" in Acts 17:22, modern versions must also tone down God's word "disputed" to a word such as "reasoned" in Acts 17:17 ... because ... "disputed" has a negative connotation corresponding to that of "too superstitious" whereas a word such as "reasoned" has a positive connotation corresponding to that of "very religious". Furthermore, some versions change the wording "wholly given to idolatry" in Acts 17:16 (referring to the *people* practicing idolatry) to "full of idols" (which refers the *idols* present in the city, and thus eliminates reference to the people themselves as being wholly given to the worship of those idols). Thus, those modern versions allow an exception – such as the Jews – so that they can also tone down the word "superstition" to "religion" pertaining to the Jews later in Acts 25:19. "Hath God said wholly? Yes the city may have been full of idols, but surely the city was not wholly given to *worshipping* them... surely the Jews were an *exception*." (And thus the questioning of God's word(s) continues from Eden to this very day and hour.) See Appendix C for an example of the modern version corruptions.

### **Overall Context** (the scriptures in general)

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it (Deut 4:2)

Every word of God is pure (Prov 30:5) Add thou not unto his words (Prov 30:6)

Stand...and speak...all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word (Jer 26:2)

In Acts 17:22, Paul stood, and spake, all the words which the Lord commanded him to speak. He did not add unto them, nor did he diminish ought from them. As Paul, so also the "King James Bible" translators: who did not diminish ought

from, or add unto, God's words. The "King James Bible" (via the Holy Ghost) provides the correct interpretation<sup>4</sup> of every passage, and of every word.

Bear in mind, very importantly, that God's word is not a thing of the past. It is "quick" (Hebrews 4:12), not dead); and it "is given" (2 Timothy 3:16) even today, seeing that "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1:25). Acts 17:22 is not only God's words spoken in Greek (through Paul) to the Athenian idolaters back then, but is also God's words speaking in English to the modern idolaters of today – some of whom are wholly given to idolatry, elevating modern "bible" versions above God's word (the KJB). The King's words, interpreted into other tongues (by the Holy Ghost who said "other tongues will I speak"), are still the King's words.<sup>5</sup> And God our King would not give a *winsome* commendation to today's idolaters, be they Buddhists, or Hindus, or Shintos, or even... Catholics (who bow before images), or... even... Bible-believing Christians (whose god is their belly, or their TV). Or to text critics (who venerate non-existent "original manuscripts" and produce modern "bible" versions worded to their own liking so that they can think of themselves as "very religious").

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of **any thing** that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: (Exodus 20:3-5)

Paul's words – which are the Holy Ghost's words – were, and still are, spoken in reference to idol worship, or idolatry, or in reality, sacrifice to devils (which includes TV, and the internet, seeing that the Devil is the prince of the power of the air, and - preaching to myself - time sitting at Jesus' feet is often sacrificed for time sitting in front of the TV or the computer screen). Consider the following, comparing spiritual things with spiritual...

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. (Acts 17:16)

What say I then? that the idol is **any thing**, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is **any thing**? But I say, the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye have fellowship with devils. (1 Cor 10:19-20, referring to Deut 32:17.)

The idol itself isn't "any thing," but it *is* the *likeness* of some thing. That which is offered in sacrifice to the idol isn't "any thing," but the time and money spent doing it *is* some thing. What is sacrificed to idols (whether it be bowing down to graven images in a "church," or staring at images on a computer screen [internet "surfing"]) is really being sacrificed to devils. Idolatry, which actually is sacrifice to (worship of) devils, is not spoken of kindly by the Holy Ghost through the apostle John in Revelation:

Revelation 9:20-21

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see nor hear, nor walk:

Jesus himself was tempted to worship the Devil:

Luke 4:7-8

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

---

<sup>4</sup> See the study "Understanding Interpretation" for God's definition of "interpretation" (which is not "translation.")

<sup>5</sup> There is no language barrier with God as there is with man. When modern man attempts to produce a modern version by "scholarly" translation from "the" Hebrew and/or Greek, he is met by a language barrier that he cannot ever surmount. Thus his modern version is corrupt "by definition." God, however, demonstrated the absence of any language barrier to him in Acts 2 when he gave his word simultaneously and perfectly in multiple tongues, each being the very words of God Almighty, and none being merely a really good translation of the Greek or Hebrew.

Would God the Almighty, the Holy Ghost, by the pen of Paul, *commend* idolaters – devil-worshippers – for being *very religious*? Would that really reflect the quick, powerful, sharp, soul/spirit-piercing/dividing word of God?

Notice that Paul called the Athenians “too superstitious”, not “devil-worshippers”. Likewise, should we encounter idolaters practicing things like (say) Hinduism (or Catholicism?), we should not come right out and call them devil-worshippers. But neither should we start by *commending* them for being “very religious”. Instead we should take our example from the actual words of scripture, Acts 17:22, and reveal to them that they are “too superstitious” – “in all things”, and then preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (*Jesus and the resurrection*), which is what we are commanded to do.

For those who might think the KJB translators are the ones who decided to use “too superstitious” instead of “very religious”, take a brief walk back in time before the KJB... to the year 1539, and peek into the “Great Bible”<sup>6</sup>, one in the line of purifications (Psalm 12:6-7) from the Gothic Bible initially given by the Holy Ghost’s interpretation in the time of the Acts of the Apostles, to the final settled English of the King James Bible:

#### Acts 17:16-29

Whyles Paule wayted for them at Athens, his spirite was moued in him whan he sawe the citie geuen to worshipping of images. Then disputed he in the Synagoge wyth the Jewes, & with the deuout persones, & in the market dayly with them y came unto hym by chaunce. Certayne Philosophers of the Epicures & Stoickes, disputed with hym.

And some there were that sayed: what wyl this babler saye; Others sayde: he seemeth to be a tydynges brynger of newe deuyls, because he preached unto them Iesus, and the resurreccion. And they tooke hym and brought hym into the strete of Alars, saiping: may we not knowe what this new doctryne wherof thou speakest, is; for thou bryngest straunge tydynges to our eares. We woulde knowe therfore, what these thynges meane. For all the Athenians and straungers whiche were there, gaue them selves to nothyng els, but eyther to tel or to heare some newe thyng.

Paul stode in the myddes of Alars streate, and sayd: ye men of Athens, I perceyue that in all thynges ye are to superstitious, ...

Considering what Paul said concerning idols in 1 Corinthians, think about how (in what manner) Paul’s spirit must have been stirred by what he saw in Athens, by considering how his spirit was stirred, and how he reacted, on another occasion when confronted by devilry:

#### Acts 13:9-10

9 Then Saul (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,  
10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil,

Or consider as a different example Peter, confronting the Jews:

#### Acts 3:14-15

9 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;  
10 And killed the Prince of life,

(Winsome?)

---

<sup>6</sup> This excerpt is reprinted from “*The first tome or volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the newe testamente*” of 1548, in which Erasmus used “*The Byble in Englyshe*”. The “Great Bible” (as it is called today) was compiled and purified from the Tyndale/Coverdale/Matthews bible(s), with anti-Catholic notes removed (that were in the “Matthews Bible”), and initially printed at the university of Paris. When the Catholic Inquisitor-General found out about it, he had most of the first 2500 copies burned. The printers fled to England, printing-plates in-hand, and re-printed it there in 1539. Persecutions and burnings at the stake quickly followed, as the common people read and heard the scriptures in their own English tongue, and spoke out against the **superstition (idolatry)** of the Catholic church which the English scriptures exposed (the English scriptures having bypassed the corruptions of the Catholic-minded critics). For a short time (1546-1547) private use of the English scriptures was outlawed, forbidding that anyone should read or own one, and all English bibles were to be openly burned (for it was dangerous to the Catholic “church” for the common man to read the scriptures in the tongue he knew, for he might be able to actually understand them and recognize the corruptions of the Catholic “church” traditions and practices, and ... **idolatries**).

Or consider Jesus Christ himself – he had compassion on the common people, and the children, but regularly castigated the “wise and the prudent,” the scribes and Pharisees (which he would do likewise to today’s scholars and theologians and text critics that produce modern corrupt versions of his word):

Matt 23:13 ...woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!  
Matt 23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.  
Matt 23:28 ...ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.  
Matt 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers...  
John 8:44 **Ye are of your father the devil,**

Would not Paul have followed Jesus’ example, and confronted the “wise and prudent” Stoicks and Epicureans? (Would not the Stoicks and Epicureans be unto the Greeks somewhat like the Scribes and Pharisees were to the Jews?)

“Winsome” (Flattering) words? – Or, speech seasoned with salt?

God, through Paul, said:

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.  
1 Thess 2:5 For neither at any time used we flattering words...

The word “too superstitious” is spoken with grace (by not coming right out and saying “devil worshippers”) but seasoned with salt (unlike the flattering words “very religious”). It is portrayed by many modern-day commentators, probably the vast majority of them, that Paul started this speech *not* with the *salt-seasoned* warning “ye are too superstitious” *but rather* with the *flattering words* “you are very religious” (based on the vast majority using modern “bible” versions, or more likely reading each others’ commentaries).

Is it *truly* reasonable to think that Paul would have commended the Athenians (with flattering words) for being “very religious” in their idolatry - in their sacrificing to devils? *Would* Paul have tried to be *winsome*, by dulling the sharp, piercing sword of the Spirit with the deceit of “good words and fair speeches” (Romans 16:18)? Or, would he not rather have identified their false beliefs (with grace and truth: “ye are too superstitious”) and preached to them the gospel of Jesus Christ which is “piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow”?

1 Thess 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.



## Appendix B – “The Greek”

Since the modern version editors and commentators seem to have an affinity for going to “the Greek”, maybe to “the Greek” we should go? NO! ... *BUT, just as an exercise*, let’s see what *game* they are *playing* with God’s words.

For those who are wont to go to “the” Greek, and say, “that word in Greek is \_\_\_\_\_, which a-c-t-u-a-l-l-y means \_\_\_\_\_”, a problem is encountered here, in Acts 17:22. The word rendered in the Greek tongue is *deisidaimonesteros* [having root words for fear(*deisi*) and devil(*daimon*)]. Thus, Greek aficionados should say...

“that word in Greek is *deisidaimonesteros*, which a-c-t-u-a-l-l-y means *fearing-devil(s)-overly*.<sup>7</sup>

This Greek word is not commendatory for being “very religious”. It is a revelation by God (Psalm 45:1) that their idolatry is rooted in much-devil-fearing, which is perfectly rendered in English as “too superstitious”. In “the Greek”, the word *deisidaimonesteros* was interpreted by God into the English tongue as “too superstitious” long before the final purification of the KJB, as seen for example in the “Great Bible” excerpt above. The observances or rites or “worship” by these devil-fearing (i.e., superstitious) people *could* indeed be thought of as *religious*, but to do so would *allow* or could *imply* a complimentary/commendatory/flattering sense, in direct opposition to God’s word. *God’s* interpretation of this word into English is the un-complimentary/un-commendatory/un-flattering, gracious yet salt-seasoned, word “superstitious”, and in the superlative form of the word, it is “too superstitious”.

With “the Greek” word thus exposed, the real question still remains: why do the modern version editors and commentators choose to render the word “devil-fearing” in such a complimentary, flattering sense by choosing the word “religious”? For the answer to that question (“why?”), which is indeed the question pertaining to this appendix, we must go to their ultimate source, and that source is ...

Richard Chenevix Trench (1807-1886) “Synonyms of the New Testament” 1854. Copyright: Public Domain

... aka Trench’s Synonyms, which is the root source of all commentaries and modern “bible” versions for changing “too superstitious” to “very religious”. Trench’s express purpose was to propose “corrections” to the KJB in support of the production of a revised version. Trench became a member of the Westcott&Hort *Revised Version* committee of 1881, and his “Synonyms” were used in the translation of Westcott&Hort’s newly-created text-critical Greek to produce the *Revised Version*. This, together with the text-critical Greek of Nestle-Aland and of the United Bible Societies which followed, underlies all modern versions in a united front against the KJB, all in unison asking “Yea, hath God said...?”.

Appendix D shows the pertinent excerpt, from Trench’s Synonyms, which deals with five Greek words – all portrayed as having a related connotation of religious. In that excerpt, consider well how the words of pagan philosophers are called upon *extensively* to extract word meanings from their pagan contexts and import those pagan-context meanings into forthcoming modern “bible” versions. Consider how horrible a violation of God’s word this is: comparing spiritual things with pagan, in complete opposition to the very words of scripture which tell us to compare spiritual things with spiritual. The rendering of “too superstitious” as “very religious” is thus seen to actually be a satanic perversion of the scriptures.<sup>8</sup> Selah.

A closing question: How much longer (for those to whom this question pertains) to you wish to continue *using* a “bible” version that is littered with Satan’s synonyms? (Consider well: “using” modern “bible” versions *can* include subjecting oneself regularly to *hearing* them: sitting under preaching and teaching which “uses” them.)

---

<sup>7</sup> But since they want it to mean religious, they can’t say this. I once confronted a Greek aficionado (a Sunday School teacher) who on a regular basis would say “that word in Greek is \_\_\_\_\_, which a-c-t-u-a-l-l-y means \_\_\_\_\_”, but (unsurprisingly) refused to do so with this particular word: retreating instead to... (you guessed it)... *commentaries*. This person was likely wholly ignorant of the root source commentary from which “very religious” emanates, which is presented in Appendix D. When I replied that I put my trust in God’s word, and reject all commentaries that are contrary to it, the conversation abruptly ended. Apparently this person could make no further reply without admitting to elevating commentaries of men above the word of God – a form of idolatry.

<sup>8</sup> Thus, Trench’s Synonyms could be quite appropriately called... Satan’s Synonyms.

## Appendix C – Example Modern Version Corruptions

The following compares just a few of the verses from referenced passages in this study, using the NKJV as an example.

KJB	NKJV	Comment <sup>9</sup>
<p><u>Acts 17:16, 17, 22</u>  16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city <b>wholly</b> given to <b>idolatry</b>.</p> <p>17 Therefore <b>disputed</b> he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with <b>devout persons</b>, and in the market daily with them that <b>met with him</b>.</p> <p>22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are <b>too superstitious</b>.</p>	<p><u>Acts 17:16, 17, 22</u>  16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was <del>stirred</del> <u>provoked in within</u> him; when he saw <u>that</u> the city <del>wholly was</del> given over to <del>idolatry</del> <u>idols</u>.</p> <p>17 Therefore <del>disputed</del> he <u>reasoned</u> in the synagogue with the Jews; and with <del>devout persons</del> <u>the Gentile worshippers</u>, and in the market <u>place</u> daily with <del>them</del> <u>those</u> that <del>met with him</del> <u>happened to be there</u>.</p> <p>22 Then Paul stood in the midst of <del>Mars' hill</del> <u>the Areopagus</u>; and said, <del>Ye "m</del> <u>Men</u> of Athens, I perceive that in all things <del>ye you</del> <u>are too superstitious very religious</u>.</p>	<p><u>We are to seek understanding, not revision.</u></p> <p>Is the city now only <i>partly</i> given over? And no longer to idolatry (the act), but to idols (things). The NKJV diminishes the meaning.</p> <p>Paul reasoned in Thessalonica, but he disputed in Athens. There's a difference, and a ...reason... for it.</p> <p>Devout persons (Epicureans and Stoicks) have become Gentile worshippers in the Jews' synagogue?<sup>10</sup></p> <p>There's a difference between meeting with someone, versus just <i>happening</i> to be there.</p> <p>God: "ye shall surely die."  Satan: "ye shall <u>not</u> surely die...  ...ye shall be as gods"  God: "ye are too superstitious."  Satan: "ye are <u>not</u> too superstitious...  ...ye are <u>very religious</u>"</p>
<p><u>Acts 17:11</u>  11 These were more <b>noble</b> than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness <b>of mind</b>, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.</p>	<p><u>Acts 17:11</u>  These were more <del>noble</del> <u>fair-minded</u> than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness <del>of mind</del>, and searched the <del>s</del> <u>Scriptures</u> daily; <u>to find out</u> whether <del>those</del> <u>these</u> things were so.</p>	<p>Why did they not also change "noble" in Acts 26:25, to have Paul say, "I am not mad, most fair-minded Festus..." (Admittedly not the same Greek word as here. But then, it <u>is</u> the same Greek word as in 1 Cor 1:26, yet they didn't revise <u>that</u> one.)</p>
<p><u>Acts 25:19</u>  19 But had certain questions against him of their own <b>superstition</b>, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.</p>	<p><u>Acts 25:19</u>  19 <del>B</del> <u>but</u> had <del>certain some</del> questions against him <del>of about</del> their own <del>superstition religion</del>; and <del>of</del> <u>about one a certain</u> Jesus, <del>which</del> <u>who was dead had died</u>, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.</p>	<p>They can't allow for the Jews' religion to be called superstition. It would be offensive. It would be too ... sword-piercing. Thus, they dull the (s)word of God.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Theosophist (Luciferian) Madame Blavatsky, agreeing with B. F. Westcott of the Revised Version, boasted (stated with approval)... "That which for **nearly fifteen hundred years** was imposed on Christendom as **a book**, of which **every word** was written under the **direct** supervision of the **Holy Ghost**; of which not one syllable **nor a comma** could be changed without sacrilege, is **now** being retranslated, revised and **corrected** and **clipped** of whole verses, in some cases of entire chapters." H. P. Blavatsky; *Isis Unveiled* Volume II; The Theosophical Publishing House; London; 1923. (Reprint, 2006, Theosophy Trust, p.228)

<sup>10</sup> Notice how the deletion of **just one comma** by the NKJV in Acts 17:17 affects the meaning: it puts the devout persons (the Stoicks and Epicureans – or as the NKJV wants to approvingly call them, Gentile worshippers) in the synagogue with the Jews.

## Appendix D – Trench’s Synonyms (with Comments and Observations)

The following, from R. C. Trench’s *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1854), is from a section dealing with five supposedly-related Greek words. Trench was an Anglican priest who gave good-sounding “homilies” but who, as a text critic, hated God’s actual word (the KJB) and wanted to change it to his own liking. His works fed the Westcott/Hort Revised Version (RV) of 1881, which is a forerunner of all modern versions today. Trench was on the RV committee.

### 172 SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. XLVIII.

§ xlvi. θεοσεβής, εὐσεβής, εὐλαβής, θρησκός, δεισιδαίμων.

Θεοσεβής, an epithet three times applied to Job (i. 8; ii. 3), occurs only once in the N. T. (John ix. 31); and Θεοσέβεια no oftner (I Tim. ii. 10; Gen. xx. 11; cf. Job xxviii. 28). Εὐσεβής, rare in the Septuagint (Isai. xxiv. 16; xxvi. 7; x. xii. 8), but common in the Apocrypha (Ecclus. xi. 22; xii. 2, 4), with the words dependant on it, is of more frequent occurrence (I Tim. ii. 2; Acts x. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 9, and often). Before we proceed to consider the relation of these to the other words in this group, a subordinate distinction between themselves may fitly be noted; this, namely, that in Θεοσεβής is implied, by its very derivation, *piety toward God*, or *toward the gods*; while εὐσεβής, often as it means this, may also mean piety in the fulfillment of human relations, as toward parents or others (Euripides, *Elect.* 253, 254), the word according to its etymology only implying ‘worship’ (that is ‘worth-ship’) and reverence, *well* and *rightly* directed. It has in fact the same double meaning as the Latin ‘pietas,’ which is not merely ‘*justitia adversum Deos*,’ or ‘*scientia colendorum Deorum*’ (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* 41), but a double meaning, which deeply instructive as it is, yet proves occasionally embarrassing; so that on several occasions Augustine, when he has need of accuracy and precision in his language, pauses to observe that by ‘pietas’ he means what εὐσέβεια may mean, but Θεοσέβεια alone must mean, namely, *piety toward God* (‘*Dei pietatem, quam Graeci vel εὐσέβειαν, vel expressius et plenius Θεοσέβειαν, vocant*,’ Ep. clxvii. 3; *De Trin.* xiv. 1; *Civ. Dei*, x. 1; *Enchir.* 1). At the same time εὐσέβεια, explained in the *Platonic Definitions* (412 c) as δικαιοσύνη περὶ Θεού, by the Stoics as ἐπιστήμη θεῶν θεραπείας (Diogenes Laertius vii. i. 64, 119),

#### Comments and Observations

These five Greek words are:

theosebes (Strong’s #2318) [KJB: **Worshipper of God**]

eusebes (Strong’s #2152) [KJB: **devout, godly**]

eulabes (Strong’s #2126) [KJB: **devout**]

threskos (Strong’s #2357) [KJB: **religious**]

deisidaimon (Strong’s #1174) [KJB: **superstitious**]

[with *esteros* word ending, *too* superstitious]

Deisidaimon(esteros), the word pertaining to the subject of this study – Acts 17:22 – begins near the bottom of page 177. The entire section is printed here so that the basis underlying Trench’s synonyms can be more fully recognized.

At the very beginning of this section (section xlvi, or 48) a subtlety could go easily unnoticed by the casual uninformed reader. The first word, theosebes, a Greek word, is said to be an “epithet three times applied to Job.” But Job was written in Hebrew. So right away, this reveals that Trench is referring to a Greek version of the Old Testament: specifically the so-called LXX, aka the Septuagint. This is in essence the Catholic manuscript relic called “Vaticanus B” which was discovered in the Vatican in the 1400’s. (Trench may also have been looking into another Catholic manuscript relic referred to as “Sinaiticus Aleph” which was discovered in a garbage can near St. Catherine’s monastery in the Sinai peninsula in the mid-1800’s.) These dead excavated Catholic manuscripts resurrected the corruptions tracing back to the fountainhead of bible corruption, Origen Adamantius, circa early 200’s AD.

Trench does indeed reference the Septuagint, and its interspersed Apocryphal books, in the very next sentence – falsely implying that the Apocrypha and Septuagint are two different entities, when in fact the Apocrypha are merely a subset of the Septuagint by virtue (or lack thereof) of their actual interspersation therein. (This is one reason, of many, why it is a false claim to say Jesus used the Septuagint: Jesus simply would not have used a “bible” of his day that included apocryphal additions, which directly violate Deuteronomy 4:2 et.al.)

Circled in **Red** is each reference to the mostly (if not entirely) pagan sources Trench uses to define a Bible word.

If I counted correctly:

- 15 pagan Greeks (25 references to them)
- Plus “the whole circle of the profane literature of Greece” (uncountable)
- 26 mostly/entirely pagan others (35 references to them)
- Plus “our homilies [that] will supply many more” (uncountable)

and not therefore every reverencing of the gods, but a reverencing of them *aright* (εὖ), is the standing word to express this piety, both in itself (Xenophon *Agas.* iii. 5; xi. 1), and as it is the right mean between ἀθεότης and δεισιδαιμονία (Plutarch *De Super.* 14); ἀσέβεια and δεισιδαιμονία (Philo, *Quod Deus Imm.* 3); Josephus in like manner opposes it to εἰδωλολατρεία. The εὐσεβής is set over against the ἀνόσιος (Xenophon *Apol.* 19); he is himself φιλόθεος (Lucian *De Calum.* 14); σώφρων περὶ τοὺς θεούς (Xenophon *Mem.* iv. 3, 2). For some further beautiful remarks on εὐσέβεια in the Greek sense of the word see Nagelsbach *Nachhomerische Theologie*, p. 191. Christian εὐσέβεια is well described by Eusebius (*Praep. Evang.* i. p. 3) as ἡ πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁμολογούμενον τε καὶ ὄντα Θεὸν ἀνάνευσις, καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὸτον ζωή.

What would have needed to be said on εὐλαβής, has been for the most part anticipated already (see § 10); yet something further may be added here. I observed there how εὐλάβεια passed over from signifying caution and carefulness in respect of human things to the same in respect of divine; (the German 'Andacht' had much the same history (see Grimm *Worterbuch*, s. v.)). The only places in the N. T. where εὐλαβής occurs are Luke ii. 25; Acts ii. 5; viii. 2; cf. Mic. vii. 2. We have uniformly translated it 'devout'; nor could this translation be bettered. It is the Latin 'religiosus,' but not our 'religious.' On all these occasions it expresses Jewish, and as one might say, Old Testament piety. On the first it is applied to Simeon; on the second, to those Jews who came from distant parts to keep the commanded feasts at Jerusalem; and, on the third, the ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς, who carry Stephen to his burial, are in all likelihood not *Christian* brethren, but devout Jews, who avowedly this courageous act of theirs, as by their great lamentation over the slaughtered saint, that they separated themselves in spirit from this deed of blood, and thus, if it might be, from all

the judgments which it would bring down on the city of those murderers. Whether it was further given them to believe on the Crucified, who had such witnesses as Stephen, we are not told; we may well presume that it was.

If we keep in mind that, in that mingled fear and love which together constitute the piety of man toward God, the Old Testament it placed its emphasis on the fear, the New places it on the love (though there was love in the fear of God's saints then, as there must be fear in their love now), it will at once be evident how fitly εὐλαβής was chosen to set forth their piety under the Old Covenant, who, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, "were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke i. 6), and leaving nothing willingly undone which pertained to the circle of their prescribed duties. For this sense of accurately and scrupulously performing, that which is prescribed, with the consciousness of the danger of slipping into a careless negligent performance of God's service, and of the need therefore of anxiously watching against the adding to or diminishing from or in any other way altering, that which has been by Him commanded, lies ever in the words εὐλαβής, εὐλάβεια, when used in their religious signification.<sup>1</sup> Compare Pott, *Edm. Forsch.* vol. v. p. 369.

Plutarch on more occasions than one exalts the εὐλάβεια of the Romans in the handling of divine things, as contrasted with the comparative carelessness of the Greeks. Thus, after other instances in proof (*Coriol.* 25), he goes on: 'Of late times also they did renew and begin a sacrifice thirty times one after another; because they thought still there fell out one fault or other in the same; so holy

<sup>1</sup> Cicero's well-known words deducing 'religio' from 'relegere' may be here fitly quoted (*De Nat. Deor.* ii. 28): 'Qui omnia quæ ad cultum decorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent, et tanquam *relegerent*, sunt dicere *religiosi*.'



and devout were they to the gods' (τοιούτῃ μὲν εὐλάβεια πρὸς τὸ θεῖον Ῥωμαίων). Elsewhere, he portrays AEmilius Paulus (c. 3) as eminent for his εὐλάβεια. The passage is long, and I only quote a portion of it, availing myself again of Sir Thomas North's hearty translation, which, though somewhat loose, is in essentials correct: 'When he did anything belonging to his office of priesthood, he did it with great experience, judgment, and diligence; leaving all other thoughts, and without omitting any ancient ceremony, or adding to any new; contending oftentimes with his companions in things which seemed light and of small moment; declaring to them that though we do presume the gods are easy to be pacified, and that they readily pardon all faults and scrape committed by negligence, yet if it were no more but for respect of the commonwealth's sake they should not slightly or carelessly dissemble or pass over faults committed in those matters' (p. 206). Compare Aulus Gellius i. 28: 'Veteres Romani in constituendis religionibus atque in diis immortalibus animadvertendis *castissimi cautissimique*.' Euripides in one passage contemplates εὐλάβεια as a person and a divine one, χρησιμωτότη θεῶς (Phoen. 94).

But if in εὐλαβής we have the anxious and scrupulous worshipper, who makes a conscience of changing anything, of omitting anything, being above all things fearful to offend, we have in θρησκός (Jam. i. 2), which still more nearly corresponds to the Latin 'religiosus,' the zealous and diligent performer of the divine offices, of the outward service of God. The word indeed nowhere else occurs in the whole circle of the profane literature of Greece, but working back from θρησκεία, we are in no difficulty about its exact meaning. Θρησκεία (= 'cultus,' or perhaps more strictly, 'cultus exterior') is predominantly the ceremonial service of religion, of her whom Lord Brooke has so grandly named 'mother of form and fear,'—the external framework or body, of which εὐσέβεια is the informing soul.

The suggestion of Plutarch (*Alex.* 2), deriving *θρησκος* from Orpheus the *Thracian*, who brought in the celebration of religious mysteries, is etymologically worthless; but points, and no doubt truly, to the celebration of divine offices as the fundamental notion of the word.

How delicate and fine then is St. James's choice of *θρησκος* and *θρησκεία*, (i. 26, 27). 'If any man,' he would say, seem to himself to be *θρησκος*, a diligent observer of the offices of religion, if any man would render a pure and undefiled *θρησκεία* to God, let him know that this consists not in outward lustrations or ceremonial observances; nay, that there is a better *θρησκεία* than thousands of rams and rivers of oil, namely, to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with his God' (Mic. vi. 7, 8); or, according to his own words, "to visit the widows and orphans in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (cf. Matt. xxiii. 23). St. James is not herein affirming, as we sometimes hear, these offices to be the sum total, nor yet the great essentials, of true religion, but declares them to be the body, the *θρησκεία*, of which godliness, or the love of God, is the informing soul. His intention is somewhat obscured to the English reader from the fact that 'religious' and 'religion,' by which we have rendered *θρησκος* and *θρησκεία*, possessed a meaning once which they now possess no longer, and in that meaning are here employed. The Apostle claims for the new dispensation a superiority over the old, in that its very *θρησκεία* consists in acts of mercy, of love, of holiness, in that it has light for its garment, its very robe being righteousness; herein how much nobler than that old, whose *θρησκεία* was at best merely ceremonial and formal, whatever inner truth it might embody. These observations are made by Coleridge (*Lids to Reflection*, 1825, p. 15), who at the same time complains of our rendering of *θρησκος* and *θρησκεία* as erroneous. But it is not so much erroneous as obsolete; an explanation indeed which he has himself

Here is a subtle scheme of the Devil – the claim that we poor English readers don't have the fulness of God's word because it is obscured to us by the language barrier in translation. IN OTHER WORDS, the King James Bible is good, but it's just a translation and thus has the same inadequacies that encumber ANY translation. Thus, modern version editors... aren't really trying to "correct" God's words... they're just trying to offer a "better" translation... As we can see, that "better" translation requires wallowing (with Trench) in the trenches and the quagmire of pagan contexts to extract pagan meanings to replace God's words... a task performed by one (Trench) who is a spiritually dead un-believing text critic, and who is thus not even able to understand the deep things of God.

suggested, though he was not aware of any such use of 'religion' at the time when our Version was made as would bear our Translators out. Milton offers more than one. Some heathen idolatries he characterizes as being

'adorned  
With gay religions full of pomp and gold.'  
*Paradise Lost*, b. i.

And our Homilies will supply many more: thus, in that *Against Peril of Idolatry*: 'Images used for no religion or superstition rather, we mean of none worshipped, nor in danger to be worshipped of any, may be suffered.' A very instructive passage on the merely external character of θρησκεία, which same external character I am confident our Translators saw in 'religion,' occurs in Philo (*Good Det. Pot. Ins.* 7). Having repelled such as would fain be counted among the εὐσεβεῖς on the score of diverse washings, or costly offerings to the temple, he proceeds: πεπλανηται γὰρ καὶ οὗτος τῆς πρὸς εὐσεβείαν ὁδοῦ, θρησκείαν ἀντὶ ὀσιότητος ἡγούμενος. The readiness with which θρησκεία declined into the meaning of superstition, service of false gods (Wisd. xiv. 18, 27; Col. ii. 18), of itself indicates that it had more to do with the form than with the essence, of piety. Thus Gregory Nazianzene (*Car.* ii. 34, 150, 151):

θρησκείαν οἶδα καὶ τὸ δαίμονων σέβας,  
'Ἡ δ' εὐσέβεια προσκύνησις Τριάδος

Δεισιδαίμων, the concluding word of this group, and δεισιδαίμονία as well, had at first an honourable use; was =θεοσεβής (Xenophon *Cyrop.* iii. 3, 26) It is quite possible that 'superstition' and 'superstitious' had the same. There seem traces of such a use of 'superstitious' by Plautus (*Cercul.* 27; *Amphit.* I. 169); although, as no one has yet solved the riddle of this word, it is impossible absolutely to say whether this be so or not. In

<sup>1</sup> Pott (*Etym. Forsch.* vol. ii. p. 921) resumed the latest investigations on the derivation of 'superstition.' For the German 'Aberglaube' (= 'Ueberglaube') see Herzog, *Real-Encyc.* s. v.

Here begins the sophistry to make out "deisidaimon" to mean "religious".

Perhaps the "riddle of this word" (deisidaimon) comes from delving into pagan sources, rather than believing and studying the actual word of God and comparing spiritual things with spiritual (and not with pagan)?



Cicero's time it had certainly left its better meaning behind (*De Nat. Deor.* 28; *Divin.* ii. 72); and compare Seneca: 'Religio Deos colit, superstitio violat.' The philosophers first gave an unfavourable significance to δεισιδαιμονία. Ast indeed affirms that it first occurs in an ill sense in a passage of Polybius (vi. 36. 7); but Jebb (*Characters of Theophrastus*, p. 264) quotes a passage from Aristotle (*Pol.* v. 11), showing that this meaning was not unknown to him. So soon as ever the philosophers began to account fear not as a right, but as a disturbing element in piety, one therefore to be carefully eliminated from the true idea of it (see Plutarch, *De Aud. Poet.* 12; and Wyttenbach, *Animadv. in Plutarchum*, vol. i. p. 997), it was almost inevitable that they should lay hold of the word which by its very etymology implied and involved fear (δεισιδαιμονία, from δέσσω), and should employ it to denote that which they disallowed and condemned, namely, the 'timor inanis Deorum' (Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* 41): in which phrase the emphasis must not be laid on 'inanis,' but on 'timor'; cf. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei.* vi. 9): 'Varro religiosum a superstitioso ea distinctione discernit, ut a superstitioso dicat timeri Deos; a religioso autem vereri ut parentes; non ut hostes timeri.' Baxter does not place the emphasis exactly where these have done; but his definition of superstition is also a good one (*Cathol. Theol.* Preface): 'A conceit that God is well pleased by over-doing in external things and observances and laws of men's own making.'

But even after they had thus turned δεισιδαιμονία to ignobler uses, defined it as does Theophrastus δειλία περὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον, and Plutarch *De Superst.* 6, more vaguely, παλупάξεια κακὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὑπονοοῦσα, it did not at once and altogether forfeit its higher signification. It remained indeed a middle term to the last, receiving its inclination to good or bad from the intention of the user. Thus we not only find δεισιδαίμων (Xenophon, *Ages.* xi. 8;

Cyr. iii. 3. 58) and δεισιδαιμονία (Polybius vi. 56. 7; Josephus, *Antt.* x. 3. 2) in a good sense; but St. Paul himself employed it in no ill meaning in his ever memorable discourse upon Mars' Hill. He there addresses the Athenians, "I perceive that in all things ye are ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστεροὺς" (Acts xvii. 22) which is scarcely "too superstitious," as we have rendered it, or 'allzu abergläubisch,' as Luther; but rather 'religiosiores,' as Beza, 'schr gottesfürchtig,' as De Wette, has given it. For indeed it was not St. Paul's habit to affront, and by affronting to alienate his hearers, least of all at the outset of a discourse intended to win them to the truth. Deeper reasons, too, than those of a mere calculating prudence, would have hindered him from expressing himself thus; none was less disposed than he to ove look or deny the religious element in heathenism, however overlaid or obscured by falsehood or error this might be. Led by such considerations as these, some interpreter (Chrysostom for instance, make δεισιδαιμονεστεροὺς=εὐλαβεστεροὺς, taking it altogether as praise. Yet neither must we run into an extreme on this side. St. Paul selects with finest tact and skill, and at the same time with most perfect truth, a word which almost imperceptibly shaded off from praise to blame. Bengel (in loc.): 'δεισιδαίμων, verhum per se μέσον, ideoque ambiguitatem habet elementem, et exordio huic aptissimam.' In it he gave to his Athenian hearers the honour which was confessedly their due as zealous worshippers of the superior powers, so far as their knowledge reached, being θεοσεβέστατοι, as Sophocles (*Oedip. Col.* 256), εὐσεβέστατοι πάντων τῶν ἑλλήνων, as Josephus, calls them; their land θεοφιλεστάτη, as AEschylus (*Eumen.* 867) names it; compare the beautiful chorus in *The Clouds* of Aristophanes, 299-313. But for all this, the apostle does not squander on them the words of very highest honour of all, reserving these for the true worshippers of the true God. And as it is thus in the one passage where δει-

Can you hear Satan in the garden hissssing "yea, hath God said...too superstitiousssss? Scarcely... rather, surely it should be...very religiousssss."

Notice the presumption ("outset of his discourse") by which Paul's daily disputing leading up to this discourse is completely ignored. The "outset" of his discourse was not an "outset" at all; but rather a culmination – a summary – of many days-worth of disputings (against idolatry and superstition) with the Jews, the devout persons, and them that met with Paul in the market.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. (Romans 1:22)

σιδαίμων, so a so in the one where δεισιδαιμονία, occurs (Acts xxv. 19). Festus may speak there with a certain covert slight of the δεισιδαιμονία, or overstrained way of worshipping God ('Gottesverehrung' De Wette translates it), which, as he conceived, was common to St. Paul and his Jewish accusers; but he would scarcely have called it a 'superstition' in Agrippa's face, for it was the same to which Agrippa himself was addicted (Acts xxvi. 3, 27), whom certainly he was very far from intending to insult.

xlix. κενός, μάταιος.

THESE words nowhere in the N. T. occur together; but on several occasions in the Septuagint, as for instance at Job xx. 18; Isai. xxxvii. 7; cf. xlix. 4; Hos. xii. 1; in Clement of Rome, 1 Ep. § 6; and not unfrequently in classical Greek as in Sophocles (*Elek.* 324); in Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 1. 2 and in Plutarch (*Ach. Colot.* 17). We deal with them here solely in their ethical use, for seeing that μάταιος knows, at least in Scripture, no other use, it is only as ethical employed that kayos can be brought into comparison with it, or the words made the subject of discrimination.

The first, κενός, is 'empty,' 'leer,' 'gehaltlose,' 'inanis'; the second, μάταιος, 'vain,' 'idle' ('idle'), 'erfolglose,' 'vanus.' In the first is characterized the hollowness, in the second the aimlessness, or, if we may use the word, the resultlessness, connected as it is with μάτην, of that to which this epithet is given. Thus κεναὶ ἐλπίδες (Aeschylus, *Pers.* 804; cf. Joh vii. 6; Eccles. xxxi. 1, where they are joined with ψευδεῖς) are empty hopes, such as are built on no solid foundation; and in the N. T. κενὰ λόγῳ (Ephes. v. 6; c. Deut. xxxii. 47; Exod. v. 9) are words which have no ner substance and kernel of truth, hollow sophistries an apologies for sin; κόπος κενός, labour which yields no return (1 Cor. xv. 58); κα κενόφρωνία

**Pagan Greeks (et.al.) Reference Summary**

Ecclesiasticus (an Apocryphal book)

Euripedes

Cicero (x4)

Augustine (x2)

Plato

the Stoics

Diogenes Laertius

Xenophon (x5)

Plutarch (x5)

Philo (x2)

Josephus (x3)

Lucian

Nagelsbach

Eusebius

Andacht (a German)

Grimm

Pott (x2)

Sir Thomas North

Aulus Gellius

the whole circle of the profane literature of Greece

Lord Brooke

Orpheus the Thracian

Coleridge

Milton

our Homilies

Wisdom (an Apocryphal book)

Gregory Nazianzene

Plautus

Herzog

Seneca

the philosophers (x2)

Polybius (x2)

Jebb

Aristotle

Wytttenbach

Baxter

Theophrastus

Luther

Beza

DeWette (x2)

Chrysostom

Bengel

Sophocles

AEschylus

Aristophanes

**Talk about comparing spiritual things with carnal !!!**