

1 By Reason of Insanity

2 Scripture

- Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” (Mark 3:20–21 NIV)
- And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” (Mark 3:22 NIV)

3 Scripture

- So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (Mark 3:23–25 NIV)
- And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. (Mark 3:26–27 NIV)

4 Scripture

- “I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” (Mark 3:28–29 NIV)
- He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.” (Mark 3:30 NIV)

5 Scripture

- Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. (Mark 3:31–33 NIV)
- Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:34–35 NIV)

6 The Plea of Insanity

- A lawyer once said, “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I ask that you find my client not guilty.”
 - Yes, my client had motive.
 - It’s established that his fingerprints are all over the crime scene.
 - And there’s no doubt that he pulled the trigger.
 - But that doesn't mean he should be convicted. Why not?

- Because my client is absolutely, positively, 100 percent certifiably insane.
- He is totally nuts. I rest my case.

7 **The Plea of Insanity**

- Many remember the acquittal of President Reagan's would-be-assassin, John Hinckley Jr. — whose lawyers used insanity defense.
- The basic theory behind the defense is this:
 - One who is insane lacks the "malice aforethought" or the intent required to perform a truly criminal act because the person is either incapable of discerning the difference between right and wrong, or incapable of restraint, even in the face of such knowledge.

8 **The Plea of Insanity**

- Actually, although the insanity defense gets a lot of publicity, it is relatively rare as a legal strategy.
- Yet it remains a popular and polarizing piece of legal lore.
- And why not? It raises some fascinating questions . . .

9 **The Plea of Insanity**

- Such as . . .
 - Can someone be held accountable for doing something bad if his or her mind is clouded with craziness?
 - And besides that, what is crazy anyway? Aren't we all just a little nuts?
 - What's the threshold for craziness that suddenly makes one incapable of being found culpable?
 - And what about subjectivity? One generation's "crazy" is another generation's eccentric.

10 **Insanity**

- And then there's the issue of genius.
- Isn't it true that sometimes our most enlightened and creative people look, think and act in much the same manner as our most unstable ones?

11 **Insanity**

- Such questions come rushing to mind in the third chapter of Mark's gospel as Jesus' popularity is growing.
- He's performing miracles—like cleansing lepers, restoring withered hands and saying strange things like,
 - "I am Lord of the Sabbath,"

- "Your sins are forgiven" and
- To His disciples, "I give you authority to cast out demons."

12 **Insanity**

- He was drawing an uncomfortable amount of attention to himself.
- So much so, that two groups—those who were closest to him and those most threatened by him—began asking the same question:
- Is this guy crazy?

13 **He is out of His Mind!**

- In verse 21, we see his loved ones staging a failed intervention, "They went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind.'"
- And, in verse 22, the religious establishment asserts, "He is possessed by Beelzebub."
- While we have the benefit of faith and perspective to understand that Jesus was not crazy, doing things that have never been done before certainly can raise the question.

14 **Crazy & Genius**

- But sometimes crazy and genius look a lot alike, don't they?
- Such is the case with Jesus. It's not that he's mad.
- No, it's just that His world (God's Kingdom), and He as its leader, are so otherworldly, that it surprises us and shakes our foundations.

15 **Shock Factor**

- Humanity had never seen such power on public display.
- It had never heard such values being taught.
- It had never witnessed such dynamic, charismatic and divine authority wrapped in so much weakness.

16 **No Impressive Appearance**

- He was a homeless, self-made rabbi from Nazareth, with "no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2).
- We might have called him mad, too.

17 **Eyes that See**

- Jesus, for his part, does not seem overly bothered by the accusations of insanity.

- Instead, Jesus takes the response of those concerned and uses it to illustrate a dividing line between saving faith and damning disbelief.
- Those who will be forgiven are those who can see that behind the jaw-dropping miracles and alarming message is the very Spirit of God.
- “I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” (Mark 3:28–29 NIV)

18 **The Kingdom at Work**

- A truth worth remembering is that the kingdom of God, the work of the Spirit, when on the move, will always disrupt and disturb a “sane” world.
- If “craziness” is persistently violating social norms with little regard for oneself, then the work of Jesus fits the description.

19 **Kingdoms at Odds**

- The world idolizes logic and reason, yet God's people live by faith, and put God's Word first.
- The world abuses the weak and looks down at the poor, yet God's people embrace the lowly as the greatest among us.
- The world says, "You are entitled to hate those that hurt you." Yet, we love our enemies, and pray for our persecutors.
- The world is full of people scrambling to stock up as much earthly treasure as they can before they die. We give generously in favor of treasure in heaven.

20 **Kingdoms at Odds**

- The world's motto is "Love yourself and try not to hurt your neighbor." Our motto is, "Love your neighbor, and, in doing so, be willing to sacrifice yourself."
- So, if Christians are called crazy from time to time, well, as Jesus might have put it, "Welcome to my world" (see John 15:18).
- “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” (John 15:18–19 NIV)

21 **Kingdoms at Odds**

- Here's the deal: If God is real, then, by definition, God is above and beyond any and all cultures, perspectives or political views.
- No one tribe, people group, or nation completely "gets" God.
- Therefore, in some way, as God breaks into our world through the Son, the Word and Spirit-filled people, God will, in some way, offend and jar the sensibilities of everyone at some time or another.

22 Kingdoms at Odds

- “Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.” (Luke 12:51-52 NIV)
- “They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Luke 12:53 NIV)

23 Kingdoms at War

- In the Epistle of James, the apostle admonishes the brothers that friendship with the world is hatred toward God. (James 4:4)
- He wasn't talking about having non-believers as friends, neighbors, or work associates, but being friendly toward the value system of the world—which the apostle calls adultery.
- If you look at the context, James was describing people who were fighting and quarreling with each other instead of asking God for their needs and wants.

24 James' Instruction

- So then, what was James' instruction?
- Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4:7–8 NIV)
- In other words, submit to God's Kingdom values and when you do, the devil will run away and God will come near.

25 The Motto of Scotland

- The motto of Scotland is “Nemo me impune lacessit.”
- It literally means, “No one provokes me with impunity.”
- In laymen terms it means, “if you step on my toes, I'll stomp on your head!”

- While this may be an acceptable slogan for a small country who is trying to keep its independence, it doesn't necessarily represent godly values that we need to have in our one-on-one, near-neighbor relationships as Christians.
- Instead, we are to act crazy and love our enemies, be kind to those who don't like us, don't repay evil with evil, but overcome evil by doing good.

26 **Rioting in Baltimore**

- All this week, we have been bombarded by scenes from Baltimore, Maryland of people rioting in the streets, looting, and burning down homes and businesses.
- While there may be justification for people's anger and frustration, many however gave in to their flesh and instead followed the spirit of this world.
- No doubt, it made perfectly good sense to them and a lot of other people who believe that the system is against them, but for us Christians we are to be and act separately.

27 **The Temple of God**

- For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." (2 Cor 6:16 NIV)
- "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:17–18 NIV)

28 **Conclusion**

- When you are around people who malign your values and think you're crazy for not following them, don't let it get to you.
- They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Eph 4:18 NIV)
- Therefore, let your craziness be known to all men.
- Do not repay evil with evil, but overcome evil with good and great will be your reward in heaven.

29 **The Lord's Supper**