

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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PART 24: THE DEMONIAK

THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN

The group arrived on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee after Jesus quieted the storm that threatened the fishing boat. This area is known as the Gadarenes in the New Testament with some of it making up modern day Golan Heights. This little sea measures 696 feet below the Mediterranean and the surrounding land rises to 9,232 feet with steep terrain in certain spots along the shore. There were a number of small cities in this region which are not named in the New Testament. The majority of the population in this area consisted of Gentiles.



Matthew records there were two demon possessed men that came to Jesus, whereas Mark and Luke state it was just one man. It's doesn't matter whether there was one man or two, it doesn't change the story, since both men chronicled a lot of details about this event.

Matthew 8:28

(28) And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

Mark 5:1-2

(1) And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

(2) And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Luke 8:26-27

(26) And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

(27) And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.



MARK'S DESCRIPTION

Mark described the demon possessed man as living outside the tombs which were caves in which the dead were placed. The authorities had tried to bind him with iron restraints but the demonic ripped them off and no man could reason with him. He refused to wear clothing and ran around naked. He traveled between the hills and the tombs, cutting himself with stones that caused him to bleed.

Mark 5:3-5

(3) Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

(4) Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

(5) And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

CASTING OUT DEVILS

Matthew, Mark and Luke differently describe the events of the demon removal.

Mark stated that when the man (the demons) saw Jesus, they ran up to Him and worshiped (gave Him reverence).

Mark 5:6

(6) But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

All three writers describe the demons acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God and stating they did not want to be tormented before the appointed time set by God.

Matthew 8:29

(29) And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Mark 5:7

(7) And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Luke 8:28

(28) When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

Jesus wanted to know the name of the demons and the name they offered to the God-man indicated they were numerous.¹

The demons did not want to be sent to a spirit prison and requested to be sent into a nearby herd of pigs.

Matthew 8:30-31

(30) And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

(31) So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

Mark 5:9-12

(9) And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

(10) And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

(11) Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

(12) And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Luke 8:30-32

(30) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

(31) And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

(32) And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

Every pig in the herd became possessed by demons as Legion rushed out of the man and swiftly moved to the pigs. Since Satan at this time was still the prince of this world, Jesus allowed them to enter the herd of swine.

John 12:31

¹ A Roman legion consisted of 4,000 to 6,000 men.

(31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

It is estimated that there were some 2,000 pigs in the herd, since this was not a herd owned by a person, but by people in the nearest city.

The demons had no intention of staying in the pigs and used their power to make the pigs to commit suicide. Those demons were freed the moment their hosts drowned in the Sea of Galilee and they roamed the countryside finding new people to possess. Those same demons are still active on the earth today; some 2,000 years later, they are still possessing people somewhere in the world because they never die.

When the men in charge of the swine herd saw how the pigs crazily ran off a cliff to their deaths in the water below, they became extremely afraid and fled to the nearby city. They had not been close enough to know what had taken place; all they knew was that the pigs had suddenly committed suicide.

Matthew 8:32-33

(32) And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

(33) And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

Mark 5:13

(13) And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Luke 8:33-34

(33) Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

(34) When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

FINANCIAL LOSS

It was decidedly odd that an entire herd of pigs would die in such a manner and the city leaders and townspeople were angry over the financial loss because it would take years to recover from this disaster.

Matthew 8:34

(34) And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

Mark 5:14-17

(14) And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

(15) And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

(16) And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

(17) And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

Luke 8:35-37

(35) Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

(36) They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

(37) Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

According to the law given to Moses, Jews do not eat pork because it is an unclean animal. The people in this region were Gentile heathens and Jesus as the Messiah meant nothing to them. They couldn't have cared less that the possessed man had been set free from demons. They only thought about their loss of money and angrily told Jesus to leave the area.

In retrospect, do you think they regretted their shortsighted stupidity?

THE FORMER DEMONIAK

The man set free from the demons was thankful and happy to have his mind restored. He understood that Jesus was the God-man, even if he had no concept of the Jewish Messiah. He loved Jesus and wanted to stay by His side for the rest of his life. He followed Jesus and the disciples back to the shore. Jesus told him to stay in his own land and testify of the great things God had done for him.

Mark 5:18-19

(18) And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

(19) Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

Luke 8:38-39

(38) Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

(39) Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

SUMMARY

During my time at seminary, the professors downplayed the miracles recorded in the four Gospels. The common teaching is the condescending attitude that Jesus was merely a child of His time and just as superstitious as the people. They did not believe that demons exist and therefore Christians have no cause to be concerned. They also believed that the miracles described in the New Testament were written to give more clout to the Christian faith. According to their doctrine, there are no miracles, nor is there a place for the Holy Spirit in churches.

Personally, I believe the biblical accounts about supernatural events are true and still valid for today since Jesus Christ had not changed over time.

Hebrews 13:8

(8) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

The Son of God made it clear that the works He did on earth are timeless, regardless of the century.

John 14:12-17

(12) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

(13) And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

(14) If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

(15) If ye love me, keep my commandments.

(16) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

(17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

You must make up your mind as a Christian. Was Jesus a liar or did He tell the truth?

Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? If the answer is yes, then act upon it and apply its words and promises to your life.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?