

## MIRACLES OF JESUS

### HEALING A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN - MARK 5:1-20

- A. Jesus and His disciples arrived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee (1), *They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.*
1. They arrived at the small town of Gersa, near the shore with a mountain rising directly above it, holding ancient caves.
  2. The area was inhabited mostly by Gentiles, a new ministry pursuit by Jesus.
- B. Jesus was confronted by a demon-possessed man (2-5)
1. A man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs to meet Jesus (2), *And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.*
    - a. The man had an *unclean spirit*.
      - 1) He was indwelt by an evil supernatural spirit.
      - 2) The best understanding is that this man was possessed by a fallen angel, or demon.
      - 3) Matthew 8:16, *That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.*
    - b. Issues concerning demons
      - 1) Satan and demons are working today, Ephesians 6:12, *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
      - 2) Demonic activity may be expected to increase as we approach the time of the return of Christ, 1 Timothy 4:1, *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.*
      - 3) We must be careful not to dabble in occult activity but resist evil, James 4:7, *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
      - 4) The power of Christ in believers is greater than the power of Satan and demons, 1 John 4:4, *Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*
      - 5) Demon possession is the direct influence of demons over a person.
        - a) The demon resides in the person and deranges both mind and body.
        - c) They are powerful, cruel and hate mankind.
  2. A description of the demon-possessed man
    - a. He was an outcast (3a), *He lived among the tombs.*
      - 1) He was separated from family and society since he lived in the tombs in the side of the mountain.
      - 2) He did not wear clothes according to Luke 8:27, *When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes...*
    - b. He was supernaturally powerful (3b-4), *And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him.*
      - 1) He was extremely strong so that he could not be bound by chains.
      - 2) The inability of anyone to restrain this man set the scene for Jesus to exhibit His divine authority.
    - c. He was uncontrollable (5), *Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.*
      - 1) *he was always crying*, it probably refers to the man who was conscious of his pitiful condition.
      - 2) *cutting himself*
        - a) That is deliberate self-destructive behavior.
        - b) It may have been a form of demon worship, 1 Kings 18:28, *And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.*
      - 3) John Grassmick, Such behavior shows that demon possession is not mere sickness or insanity but a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in man.

3. The demon-possessed man ran and fell down before Jesus (6-7)
    - a. The demons in the man acknowledged Jesus as God the Son (6-7a), *And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"*
      - 1) Under the control of the demons, the man fell down before Jesus.
        - a) They recognized Him as Jesus, Son of the Most High God.
          - 1] Isaiah 14:14, *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*
          - 2] *Most High God* was used in the Old Testament to refer to the superiority of the true God of Israel over all man-made Gods.
        - b) They acknowledged His authority over Him as they fell at His feet, Mark 1:23-24, *And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God."*
      - 2) *What have you to do with me...?*
        - a) The demons were afraid, James 2:19, *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*
        - b) They were fearful of why Jesus was there in their territory.
          - 1] Had He come to send them to their eternal judgment?
          - 2] They knew their destiny but they were not ready to go.
    - b. He asked that Jesus not torment him (7b), *I adjure you by God, do not torment me.*"
      - 1) *I adjure you.*
        - a) It may be understood, *I ask you to swear by the name of God.*
        - b) The demons were asking Jesus to make an oath.
      - 2) They knew Jesus had authority over their destiny.
        - a) Matthew 25:41, *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;*
        - b) Robert Jamieson, *The tormentor appealed for deliverance from torment.*
- C. Jesus interacted with the demon-possessed man (8-13)
1. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man (8), *For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"*
    - a. *For* indicates that Mark is explaining why the demon was begging Jesus to not torment him.
    - b. Jesus had commanded that the unclean spirit come out of the man.
  2. Jesus asked the demon a question (9), *And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."*
    - a. Jesus asked the name of the demon, probably, for the disciples' benefit.
    - b. The demon responded, *Legion.*
      - 1) A legion was a grouping of Roman soldiers, comprised of approximately 6,000 men.
      - 2) Many evil spirits possessed the man under the leadership of the one demon who was the spokesman.
  3. The demon made two requests (10-12)
    - a. He begged Jesus not to send them out of the country (10), *And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.*
      - 1) *Out of the country* is best understood by reading the parallel verse in Luke 8:31, *And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*
      - 2) The demons wanted to stay where they could inhabit humans and not be sent to the abyss, the place of torment.
        - a) Demons need bodies to occupy.
        - b) Otherwise, their only option was to depart early for eternal punishment.

- b. He begged Jesus to send them into the herd of pigs on the hillside (11-12), *Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."*
  - 1) They were on the east side of the Sea of Galilee which was inhabited by Gentiles.
  - 2) Such a herd would not be found on the west side because Jews considered pigs unclean.
  - 3) Possessing a pig is better than being cast into the abyss.
- 4. Jesus granted the demon's request (13), *So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.*
  - a. Jesus gave them permission to enter the pigs.
    - 1) They left the man and entered the herd of pigs which numbered about 2,000.
    - 2) The pigs immediately ran off the hill into the sea and drowned.
  - b. Why didn't Jesus destroy the demons instead of permitting them to destroy the pigs?
    - 1) It was a vivid picture of the worth of one man to Jesus.
    - 2) R. Kent Hughes, *A host of evil spirits leered upon Christ from behind the poor man's wild eyes. It was time for Jesus' power to be seen in a most unforgettable way.*
    - 3) Jesus' power was displayed which had an impact on those present and on those who would hear of what had taken place.
- D. Responses to the healing of the demon-possessed man (14-20)
  - 1. The herdsmen ran to tell others what they saw (14), *The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.*
    - a. What had the herdsmen told the people, the miracle of the man or the tragedy of the pigs, or both?
    - b. That must have been a sight, 2,000 pigs running off the cliff, one after the other, into the sea.
    - c. R. Kent Hughes, *The swine stampeded unexpectedly, due to the shock of demonization, blindly charging into the lake to rid themselves of their new guests. Thus the demons were disembodied and, some scholars think, confined to the Abyss to await final judgment.*
  - 2. Townspeople arrived and were frightened by the sight of the man (15), *And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.*
    - a. The townspeople arrived and saw the man clothed and in his right mind.
      - 1) He was sitting at the feet of Jesus.
      - 2) He was wearing clothes which were probably given to him by the disciples.
      - 3) He was *in his right mind*, literally, he was of sound mind, self-controlled.
    - b. The townspeople responded with fear.
      - 1) Is it less frightening to see a man, naked, breaking chains, screaming night and day, and cutting himself?
      - 2) Or, is it more frightening to see a man clothed and in his right mind?
      - 3) They were probably fearful of such power and if this Jesus had plans to change their lives, as well.
  - 3. The herdsmen described what happened to the man and the pigs (16), *And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.*
    - a. The transformation of the man was complete. A man who was uncontrollable became a man clothed and in his right mind.
    - b. The loss of 2,000 pigs would be an economic burden on any community.

4. The people responded with fear (17), *And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.*
  - a. The people begged Jesus to leave their region.
    - 1) Jesus' power was more than they could understand or control.
    - 2) They would rather Jesus leave than bow down and worship Him, John 3:19, *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*
    - 3) Thomas Constable, *Perhaps the people asked Jesus to leave their area because they reasoned that if He dealt so severely with evil He would eventually destroy them too.*
  - b. Jesus left the region.
    - 1) There is no record that He ever returned to this area.
    - 2) We will see that Jesus left a witness.
5. The healed man begged Jesus to stay with Him (18-20)
  - a. He wanted to follow Jesus (18), *As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.*
    - 1) Note the contrast between the healed man who wanted to stay with Jesus and the townspeople who wanted nothing to do with Jesus.
    - 2) Jesus attracts some but repels others.
    - 3) Those who personally experience the love of Jesus never want to leave His side.
  - b. Jesus ordered the man to go home (19), *And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*
    - 1) He was to share with others what the Lord had done for Him.
      - a) Effective evangelists have strong testimonies.
      - b) Let me tell you about the man Jesus and the 2,000 pigs.
    - 2) Jesus was leaving a witness in area that had rejected Him.
      - a) What a picture of the grace of God.
      - b) William Taylor, *The Savior was better to the people than they knew. They asked Him to depart, but He left a representative behind Him who would act the part of a missionary among them.*
  - c. The man obeyed Jesus (20), *And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.*
    - 1) The healed man obeyed and gave his testimony of Jesus in the region of the Decapolis, a league of 10 Greek cities on the east side of the lake.
    - 2) The people were astonished at his testimony
    - 3) It is easy to debate religion or doctrine but it is hard to deny a personal testimony with many witnesses and thousands of dead pigs.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. This is a true story of the power of Jesus, the mercy and grace of Jesus and our need for Jesus.
- B. A story relayed by William Taylor (1800's) illustrates the value of the spiritual over the physical. It is a conversation between a husband and wife concerning his desire to give to a special collection at church.

Wife: *It seems to me that we have lost a great deal by our religion.*

Husband: *I had a dreadful evil habit...to which I became more like a beast than a man, and I used to come and beat you, and now we have lost that, so that we live in peace and love.*

*I had a suit of rags which hardly sufficed to cover me, and you were so thinly clothed that you went shivering in the cold, and we have lost all that, for now we are as well dressed as the best.*

*I was in debt all round, and was ashamed to look men in the face, and we have lost all that, for now we have money in the savings bank.*

*And he would have gone on further, had not his wife burst into tears and cried, 'Stop, stop! May God forgive me. I was so ungrateful to speak as I did.'*

*Luke 18:29-30, And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."*