

15. Jesus Met a Demon-Possessed Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children come to a clear understanding of the fact that Jesus is the Christ. The disciples came to understand that fact as they saw Jesus perform various signs that showed He is God. The previous evening, Jesus had shown His control over a very severe storm. In this topic, and the next, we are going to see one of the signs Jesus gave to the disciples to help them understand that He is truly God, as Jesus showed He had control over the demons.

By the time Jesus and the disciples arrived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee after the storm, it was the next day. Mark 5:1-5 says, “Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.” We see that the place to which Jesus and the disciples came was the area where the Gadarenes lived.

There was a small town near the Sea of Galilee called Gergesa. It was under the government of the city of Gadara, which was located about six miles from the Sea of Galilee. As a result, these people were called by two different names – the Gadarenes or the Gerasenes. Jesus and the disciples were immediately met by two men. Matthew 8:28 says, “When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.” Here, we see that the two men were very dangerous. Mark only mentions one of the men because he was probably much fiercer than the other.

We see that these men lived in the tombs. These were small caves where the bodies of the dead were buried. Matthew mentions the fact that these men were so dangerous, no one would even go near that place for fear of these men. The man mentioned in Mark was especially dangerous and fierce, because no one was able to bind him even with chains. We see that this man had tremendous strength. In order to try and control this man, the people of the area had often bound him with shackles and chains. The word translated “shackles” were chains or cords that were used to tie the feet to each other so that such individuals could only take short steps. The chains were made of heavy metal and were designed to prevent prisoners from escaping.

We see that these shackles and chains did not protect the people of the area from this man. We see that the demons gave this man so much strength, he was able to pull apart the chains and break the shackles. In fact, it was impossible for anyone to control this man. That would explain why none of the people that lived in this area would even go near the tombs where these men lived. The people were controlled by fear, because they did not know what these men might try to do.

However, this man was also a danger to himself as well as to other people. At any time of the day

or night, he might begin crying or screaming. He also cut himself on the stones in an effort to try and destroy himself. This reminds us of the goal of Satan. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” Here, we see that the goal of Satan is to kill and destroy life. In contrast, we see that Jesus came to give life. That was what Jesus did for this man that day.

Mark 5:6-7 says, “When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’” Here, we see that this man was a great distance from where Jesus got out of the boat. The man saw Jesus and the disciples getting out of the boat and immediately started running to the place where Jesus was. However, the man did something that was very surprising considering the fact that the people were afraid of him because he was so fierce.

When this man got to Jesus, we see that he worshiped Jesus. The word translated “worshiped” means “*to fall on the knees in respect and reverence.*” The man was desperate for help and realized that Jesus is the Son of God. His greatest desire was to be set free from the control of the demons that were trying to destroy him. Then, the man cried out with a loud voice, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” Here, we see that the demons in this man were forced to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God. The demons do know who Jesus is. However, James 2:19 says, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” The demons know and believe that Jesus is the Son of God but that causes them to tremble, because they know that their judgment is coming. These demons recognized that Jesus had the power to send them to immediate eternal judgment if He chose to do so.

We see that the voice that spoke through the man was the voice of one of the demons who had a great fear that Jesus would send all of the demons in the man to immediate judgment. Demons know that their judgment is coming because of their rebellion against God. Matthew 8:29 says, “And suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’” This verse shows that the demons know that their future judgment is certain. The word translated “implore” means “*to ask to take an oath.*” Here, we see that the request of the demons was to be allowed to wait for their judgment until the time of the final judgment, and so, the demon asked Jesus to promise not to send them to that judgment immediately.

Jesus then asked the demon that was speaking to Him to give his name. Mark 5:8-10 says, “For He said to him, ‘Come out of the man, unclean spirit!’ Then He asked him, ‘What *is* your name?’ And he answered, saying, ‘My name *is* Legion; for we are many.’ Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.” Here, we see that Jesus had already told the demons to leave the man. That is why the demon requested Jesus to promise that Jesus would not send them to immediate judgment when they came out of the man. As long as they were in the man, they could speak through the voice of the man to communicate their request to Jesus.

However, the demons had no power to reject the request of Jesus, because Matthew 28:18 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Then, 1 John 4:4 also says, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” That is why we do not need to fear demons. Christ put the Holy Spirit in us at the moment of salvation, which means Christ has overcome Satan, and all of his demons, so that we do not need to fear them. These demons knew that they had to leave the man, but they wanted to postpone their eternal judgment as long as possible.

Jesus had an important reason for asking the demon his name. Jesus wanted us to understand that more than one demon can take possession of the body of a person that is not a Christian. The demon answered the question by saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” Here, we see that there were many demons living in this man. That was why his torment was so great. A legion in the Roman army included six thousand men, if the legion was at full strength. This meant that the man was being tormented by an extremely large number of demons who had taken possession of his body. That is why the demon who was speaking said “we are many”.

We see that the demon kept requesting that Jesus would not send them out of the country. The word translated “send” means “*to order one to depart or to send one away to an appointed place.*” That is why the demon requested not to be sent out of that country. He knew that if they were sent to their appointed place, they would be sent to immediate judgment. Revelation 20:10 describes the final judgment of Satan when that verse says, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” The demons know that is where they will go at the final judgment, but their request not to be sent out of the country meant that they wanted to postpone that time until the time of the final judgment.

That is also the final judgment of all those who reject Christ, because Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Then, Revelation 21:8 adds, “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Here, we see that all people who fail to repent of their sin of unbelief, and place their faith in Christ, will also share in that eternal judgment. There, they will be eternally separated from God.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why the demons wanted to postpone their eternal judgment until the time of the final judgment. They know how terrible that eternal judgment will be. That is why we also want to help our children learn to explain clearly to others how to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain the Gospel.