

(Matt. 8:28) - When the Lord reached the other side of the Sea of Galilee, He came *“INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE GERGSENES,”* also called *“the Gadarenes”* (Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26). There, He was met by two men *“POSSESSED WITH DEVILS.”* Both Mark and Luke mention only one man, but there is no contradiction to Matthew. They do not say that there was only one. It could be that they took notice of him alone, because he was the fiercest and had a legion of devils in him of which the lead one spoke to Christ. Mark and Luke also tell us the demon’s name - *“Legion.”* This could be indicative of the number of demons that were present. For example, a Roman legion numbered 6000 soldiers.

“COMING OUT OF THE TOMBS” - They lived among the dead. Their condition mirrors the spiritual condition of all people by nature as fallen in Adam and born spiritually dead and depraved. By nature, we are all spiritually dead, and we live among the dead (Rom. 5:12). This is why we must be born again by the Holy Spirit and given spiritual life and knowledge to be saved (John 3:3-7). Mark wrote that the man had *“an unclean spirit”* which reflects our natural defilement in sin and our need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb for salvation (1 John 1:7) and given life by the Spirit. We are all, by nature, under the influence of Satan and unclean spirits (2 Cor. 4:3-4). This is mainly seen in our natural ignorance of and aversion to the Gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus (John 3:19-20; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14). Unless the Lord comes to our rescue by establishing righteousness for our justification and by sending His life-giving Spirit to raise us from death unto life, we will live and die in that state.

Always remember that, for sinners saved, Christ has to satisfy the justice of God for us, and He has to conquer our demons, which is the spirit of Satan, of darkness, and unbelief (2 Cor. 4:3-6). For us to be completely saved, there has to be a legal work of righteousness accomplished by Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of all whom the Father chose and gave to Him before the world began. This legal work was fully completed by Christ in His obedience unto death for His people (Heb. 1:3; 10:14). Christ’s righteousness is imputed to all of God’s people for their justification, and this is the ground of all salvation by grace (Rom. 5:21). There also has to be a spiritual and inward work of regeneration and conversion in the new birth accomplished by Christ through the Holy Spirit for all whom God has justified. This is where the Spirit empowers the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation by imparting spiritual life, knowledge, a new heart, and a new will to all whom Christ redeemed (John 6:37-45; Rom. 8:10). This is where God gives His people the gifts of faith, repentance, and perseverance (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 John 2:20; 3:9). This is the fruit of all salvation by grace (Eph. 2:1-10).

Matthew wrote that the two men were *“EXCEEDING FIERCE, SO THAT NO MAN MIGHT PASS BY THAT WAY.”* Mark adds *“no man could bind him,”* and *“neither could any man tame him.”* These men were violently against to anyone who would try to help them. What a great illustration of the natural hatred that all people by nature have against the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ, the only message of truth that can deliver them from this evil (John 3:19-20). Luke tells us the man wore no clothes. In our natural state, we are naked before God, and the clothes that we attempt to wear are nothing more than filthy rags of self-righteous works (Isa. 64:6). Like Adam and Eve, in our natural state and without Christ, we are exposed to God’s wrath. But also, as in the case of Adam and Eve, if we are covered by God’s grace, we have Christ’s righteousness imputed to clothe us as was pictured in God slaying animals and making them coats of skin (Gen. 3:21).

(Matt. 8:29) - Like their evil leader, Satan, these demons knew well who Jesus of Nazareth was (and is). They knew that He was the *“SON OF GOD,”* Who is God manifest in the flesh. Mark tells us that when the man *“saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him”* (Mark 5:6).

This was not the worship of a true child and servant of God, a sinner saved by grace. It was the worship of an enemy who knew he could not overcome his conqueror. He knew that Christ had power to do with him as He will, but he still remained an enemy of Christ. Every devil and every unconverted person will someday bow before the Lord and confess that He is Lord of all (Php. 2:10-11; Rev. 5:13). Their submission will be out of fear of divine retribution. *“ART THOU COME HITHER TO TORMENT US BEFORE THE TIME?”* - These demons knew that there was an appointed time for their final defeat and judgment (Heb. 9:27). They knew that all judgment is committed to the Son and the standard of judgment is His righteousness (Acts 17:30-31). Let foolish people deny the glorious Person and finished work of Christ and live on earth as if there is no God (James 2:19) and as if there is no appointed day of judgment, but the demons know better.

(Matt. 8:30) - *“AND THERE WAS A GOOD WAY OFF FROM THEM AN HERD OF MANY SWINE FEEDING.”* Mark tells us that there were two thousand swine. Since the law of Moses prohibited eating swine because they were unclean, why would Jews be raising swine? This area was populated by Jews and Gentiles. The swine could have been owned by Gentiles. But the law of Moses did not forbid the Israelites keeping herds of swine. The Jews may have raised and sold them to Gentiles who had no qualms about eating pork.

(Matt. 8:31) - *“SO THE DEVILS BESOUUGHT HIM, SAYING, IF THOU CAST US OUT, SUFFER US TO GO AWAY INTO THE HERD OF SWINE.”* It is clear that these devils understood that when the Lord commanded them to leave the men they possessed, they had no choice. They had to obey the sovereign of the universe. So, they asked the Lord to allow them to enter the herd of swine. This was so appropriate as they were unclean spirits asking to abide within unclean animals. They probably thought that they could go on living in these unclean animals.

(Matt. 8:32) - The Lord said, *“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.”* Here we see again the Lord’s power over demons. They thought they could rest comfortably within the swine, but the Lord showed otherwise - that demons are set for destruction, and there is no place for them to hide from His wrath. The lesson for us is that all who are deceived by Satan so as to refuse to turn to Christ for salvation, righteousness, and life shall perish. There will be no place for them to hide from God’s just wrath against their sins. To stand before God at judgment without Christ is eternal damnation and death.

(Matt. 8:33-34) - Instead of standing in awe of Jesus and coming out to worship Him, in their ungodly fear, the people of the city came to Him, and *“THEY BESOUUGHT HIM THAT HE WOULD DEPART OUT OF THEIR COASTS.”* Unregenerate people fear what they do not understand, and they feared this man who had power over demons. The Lord did not beg them to let Him stay or to let Him into their hearts. He simply let them have what they wanted. He left them in their ignorance and unbelief. We know that He came to this side of the Sea of Galilee seeking His sheep. It was His sovereign purpose and intent to save His sheep from their sins. This is why He died for His sheep (John 10:11-27). God says that He will have mercy on whom He will, and He will be gracious to whom He will (Rom. 9:15-16). All His sheep will hear His voice in the Gospel and follow Him for all salvation.