

LEGION AND HIS DEMONS, Part I (Mk. 5:1-20)

It has been an eventful trip on the short journey across to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The storm that hit them was like nothing they had experienced before. ... Life with Jesus tended to be like that, though. ... Since commencing His ministry He has had His disciples travelling through the countryside meeting all kinds of people they otherwise never would have met. They have watched Him casting out demons, healing the sick, speaking to large multitudes ... and not to mention *that* storm!

He is out of the Jewish region of Galilee now and on the eastern shore in the Gentile country of the Gadarenes (also, Gerasenes, near the modern town of Kersa). What happened here was unique. On other occasions He cast out demons, but nothing like on this scale. There were literally two thousand (v.13) in this one man! We could not imagine what this must have been like!

Some people mock this whole idea of demons. The unsaved pour scorn on it while at the same time they believe in UFOs, out-of-body experiences, reincarnation, various forms of witchcraft and the occult, sorcery, tarot cards, etc. Sadly, some Christians sneer at the subject of demonism also, despite the fact Scripture presents it so clearly. ... Why was it so particularly prevalent in Jesus' time though? I think the reason is quite obvious ... Satan unleashed the whole population of Hell against the Saviour. Since Satan himself cannot be everywhere, - he is not omnipresent like God, - he discharged the major number of his forces to hinder and halt the Saviour. He could not do it, of course ... but it did not stop him trying!

Now, why are we told a story about a demon-possessed man, especially at almost the beginning of the Gospel? ... You would have thought, - for publication purposes, - Mark would have been better emphasising the more positive aspects of Jesus' ministry. Remember, though, how Mark introduced his Gospel, [1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God](#). At the other end of the Gospels, John concluded, [Jn. 20:30 many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name](#). ... So, the purpose of the Gospels is evangelistic. They are telling us the 'good news' about Jesus' power to save. It is not simply His power to heal the human body ... but fundamentally the Gospels are about Jesus' power to save lost souls who otherwise would end up in Hell. ... And, if Jesus Christ is to save lost souls He must demonstrate first of all He has the power to conquer Satan. Otherwise Jesus would never establish His Kingdom. ... Does He have that power? Well, that is what He is about to display.

God said to Satan in Gen. 3:15 I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel, and ... that was 'the battle of all battles' which was to take place. And indeed, the apostle John explained that it did, **I Jn. 3:8** For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. And Christ manifested that authority, **Jn. 12:31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out ... **16:11** the prince of this world is judged. Paul followed this up by writing, **Rom. 16:20** And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

So Christ has full and complete *domination* over Satan. That is how it has always been, of course. ... In the Book of Job, the devil could not have harmed a hair on Job's head if God had not allowed it (Job 1:12). ... That is how it has always been. Satan has never had 'a free hand'. He has always been under God's authority ... He cannot take a breath without God giving it to him! ... When God asked him what he had been doing and where he was doing it, Satan was compelled to give an account of himself, **7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it ... and that is what he continues to do for as a roaring lion, [he] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).** ... He is not caged, and that is why Peter tells his readers in the same verse to be sober and to be vigilant because the devil remains our very active and present adversary.

If he was caged or imprisoned, how easier the Christian life would be! We wouldn't have to spend time watching out for his wickedness! When God's Word would be presented, it would be received gratefully. There would be no persecution of God's people. There would be no corruption of His Word. The Gospel would extend into every country and into every household. There would be nothing to keep back its proclamation ... That is what would happen if Satan was imprisoned.

Do you believe we shall ever see times such as that?! ... I believe we shall for it is what Christ often spoke about, and looked forward to. ... Ah, but what about the devil? He won't sit back and let it happen! ... You're right, neither he would ... if he got it his way ... but he is not going to *get* it his way for here is how Isaiah prophesied, **Is. 24:21** And it shall come to pass in that day [*i.e. the day when the Lord returns*], that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are on high*, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. **22** And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. **23** Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. ... Do you believe that will happen? ... That is what Satan and all those who belong to him are facing, - it is a bleak eternal future for them! ...

And going beyond that ... there is a lake of everlasting fire prepared for him (**Mt. 25:41** Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels) and it won't be complete until he is in it! That is what John saw in the Book of Revelation, **20:3** And [v.1 an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand] cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled [cf. v.2 bound him a thousand years]: and after that he must be loosed a little season. ... **7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, **8** And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. **9** And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them [Zech. 14]. **10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are* [cf. v. 19], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ... That is what is waiting for the devil!

And that is the ultimate power Christ has ... and no wonder the demons in this Gadarene cemetery were afraid of Him, for they know about what He will finally do to them! They know how it will all end up! And that is why they were petrified when Jesus disembarked from that boat and walked towards them. He was entering the demon's kingdom in that graveyard and He was about to do what He had spoken of in Mk. 3:27, No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house ... and that is what Jesus had come to do here with these demons, - He came to *bind* them! He was entering the "strong man's house", - the devil's territory, - and Jesus was about to wreak havoc and "spoil the devil's goods" ... and He burst into this demonic kingdom where demons ruled, and He bound them one by one, - all two thousand of them! So that is what is going to happen! That is what He has the power to do!

What a place to land! ... At the entrance to a graveyard ... but it wasn't the dead who came to meet Jesus, it was this demon-possessed man called Legion. Of course, there *will* be a day when the dead come to meet Him, **I Thess. 4:16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first ... but it wasn't the dead who came out of the graves in this cemetery, it was this madman called Legion, **2** And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, **3** Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs ... The demon-possessed man who lived among the corpses came running at Jesus! He would have frightened you and me ... I'm certain the disciples made sure to keep behind the Lord! This man was crazy, - he would have violently lashed out at you! ... He was uncontrollably aggressive, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. He was characterised by his supernatural strength, **4** 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. ... He possessed a demonic strength!

Had Jesus made an error of judgment pulling onto the beach at that particular shoreline? No, Jesus came all the way from the other side of the Sea of Galilee to meet this man who was possessed with all those demons! Yes, the man was deranged, demented, insane, mad, dangerous, out-of-control ... a *monster* ... but, he was the man the Saviour made time for to come and meet.

Let's not forget that behind the scenes this was a poor and wretched soul who was being tortured (affects the body) and tormented (affects the mind) by demons. There would have been a time when he was like everyone else, just an ordinary man ... but something happened, - and we are not told what, - but his life was ruined ... and it seemed as if it would be ruined forever. As far as everyone was concerned, he was beyond the pale, and there was absolutely no hope for him whatsoever. ... **5** And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones ... He was a poor lost soul, for whom no one had time or sympathy. ... His family would not have visited him. ... Matthew says he *did* have company but it was another man like himself, **Mt. 8:28** And when he [*Jesus*] 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. ... What a life! No matter how hard we try to describe it, it is unimaginable! If anything could be defined as being a living Hell ... that is what this man's life was like, - he was sleepless, restless, wreckless, lost, wandering, and naked (Lk. 8:27). The devil had stripped him bare, - inside and outside. ... He wasn't as God intended man to be ... In the Garden of Eden, God had said, **Gen. 1:26** Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **27** So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. **28** And God blessed them ... But the devil had robbed this man and had conquered him with thousands of demons. We could not imagine it!

There is one thing about him, though ... you knew what he was. From the outset, it was clear. Satan often comes masquerading as an angel of light, and his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness (II Cor. 11:14) ... but most definitely not here! Sometimes the devil puts a suit on and sits in a church meeting, or he might even stand in a pulpit ... but not this man. You knew what he was!

There, from among the tombs, he spied a boat pulling ashore, and off he went in his demented state, - shrieking and screaming, - to frighten the next set of unsuspecting individuals ...

However, the demons got more than they bargained for when they confronted Jesus. Notice the opening word of verse six, **6** *But* when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him ... The devil is clever, and we must never underestimate him, but he doesn't know everything, and he cannot be everywhere. He is not like God ... He would like to be, but he's not and he never will be. ... And here, the demons were caught unawares. None of the two thousand of them knew Jesus was coming, and they were no match for Him. They were afraid! ... Two thousand of them, and only one Jesus ... and yet *they* were afraid!

Even when they saw Jesus from a distance, - there was nothing wrong with their eyesight because they knew immediately Who it was and the man ran up to Him. The demons couldn't hide, - they hated Jesus, but they couldn't stay away ... Why did they *not* go and hide? Why didn't they disappear? Why didn't they leave the man and run away off into the hills until Jesus was gone? ... What makes the demons terrified of and captivated by Jesus? James tells us, **2:19** *the devils also believe, and tremble.* ... *Anything* about Jesus paralyses them with fear ...

Preaching faithfully God's Word frightens them, **Mk. 1:21** *And they [Jesus and His disciples] went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he [Jesus] entered into the synagogue, and taught. ²² And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴ Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. ... Preaching the Gospel scares them, because that is what Jesus was doing in the synagogue (cf. 1:1,14). They hate to hear about God and what He is capable of and what He is doing for they cannot match Him. They hate to hear that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the price for the sinner so he/she can be freed from the grip of Satan and be set at liberty.*

They would have hated seeing the people of Galilee listen to Jesus, and being healed. So, preaching God's Word faithfully, - and preaching Christ, - scares them, - it horrifies them. Preaching about the cross, and the blood of Christ being shed victoriously on the cross throws them into a panic.

Connected with that ... Can a Christian be demon-possessed? No, **II Cor. 6:15** *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. How can God and the devil be dwelling in the same place, - in the body of the Christian, - together?! It is impossible! In fact, the devil is afraid of you because you have something he never will have ... and that is Jesus Christ living in your heart ... Jesus Christ **Col. 1:13** *Who hath delivered us from the power of**

darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son. That is how we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Rom. 8:37). John writes, **I Jn. 2:13** ye have overcome the wicked one ... **4:4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

I do believe in demon-possession, for the Bible teaches it, ... and I also believe we shall see more of it as the return of Christ draws nearer ... but demons cannot possess Christians. A Christian can get into a state where he leaves himself open to demonic attack, but if he is truly saved he will run into the cleft of the rock, - Jesus Christ, - and he will be safe ... James says that if you resist the devil, he will flee from you (James 4:7). But the devil will never possess a truly born-again believer, because he can't! God says to His children, **Is. 43:1** I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. You are not your own, for I have bought you with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20) ... He has put His indelible mark on you, **Eph. 1:13** ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, **14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory ... You are *God's* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

The point is, when Jesus arrived on the scene these demons were absolutely dominated! They panic in His presence and they are constrained by His glory ... That is His power and authority ... and that petrifies them! They did not know how to cope ... And in their fear they *must* bow before the Lord! They don't bow to *worship* Him for they are strangers to God's grace ... neither do they bow in repentance for demons cannot repent ... but they have got to bow in sheer terror!

The word for 'worship' is προσκυνέω, and it also means 'submission to one who is greater'. No one could restrain this man (v.4), but Jesus. No amount of chains or shackles, - for he broke them all - ... and yet he knelt at the feet of Jesus ... for he had to. He could not stand before God. The man goes down because the demons go down ... What power Jesus commands! ... Look at the demons, though. Their spokesman whimpers, even with a loud voice (v.7), **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 - ...** they are beaten, and they know it! They are all subdued at the feet of Jesus. They have fallen before the sovereign Lord, King Jesus ... The wiles of the devil has collapsed. The principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and the spiritual wickedness in high places are on their knees. No match for the Saviour! ... One word from Him and they will immediately be in the place prepared for them, - the lake of fire!

Consider how the devil and the demons must have been at the cross. They knew Calvary sounded their death knell. The Jewish leaders thought they were rid of Jesus, but Satan and his devils knew He was bruising their head (Gen. 3:15). They knew He was inflicting them with an injury from which they would never recover.

Something you see here also is the devil's theology. He knows God is sovereign ... and these demons knew it. They know He is omnipotent, all powerful. ... They don't have to be told for they know it. How do they know it? They have known it for thousands of years, please turn to Rev. 12, **7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, **8** And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... That is how they know ... He has dealt with them before!

Look again at what they said to Him though, **Mk. 5:7** 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. ... What do you want with me, Jesus?! In God's Name, go away off somewhere else! ... Why were they so frightened? They were so frightened because they knew they were within a breath of being cast into Hell as their final destiny ... and seeing Jesus reminded them off it. ... They know their eschatology as well, for they know that when Jesus comes they will be cast into the bottomless pit ... but they weren't expecting it to happen just so soon. They knew how the Old Testament prophets prophesied His death, and then His resurrection, His enthronement in Heaven, and then His return to this earth ... and then, - at that time, - they knew the final judgment would come upon them.

That is what is they meant in the parallel passage in Matthew, **Mt. 8:29** 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? ... It's not time yet. They knew Isaiah 53, and how Jesus had to be offered as a sacrifice for sinners, and die ... and how He would rise again ... But their eschatology led them to believe this incident in the Gadarene graveyard was before the time. ... Too soon! Too early!

Let's not rush through this. Let's leave our study there, and we shall come back to it. ... What is this teaching us? It is teaching us there is a real enemy, one who is committed to the demise of the Church, Christ's Redeemed ... one who reviles and abhors the Name of God. The Gospel of Mark is teaching us of the battle that is raging, and the closer we approach the return of our Saviour the more the enemy will realise he needs to work harder and more treacherously and subtly for his time is short. ...

More than anything else though, it teaches us our confidence must be completely in God and in Jesus Christ His Son ... and we have the company of the Holy Spirit to keep us in His will.

There is more we shall be studying concerning Christ's meeting with this man, but ultimately we shall see how this meeting changed Legion's life. That is what a true encounter with Jesus does, - it changes your life. It takes you out of the old haunts, and away from the old company. Praise God for your salvation, and for how He came and found you 'among the dead', **Eph. 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air ... **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ... Let's pray.