

We continue to follow along with the Apostle Matthew as he has written to a Jewish audience giving them details as to why Jesus Christ is indeed the long waited for Messiah, the Son of God. In his Gospel, Matthew has carefully described in great detail why Jesus can be trusted as the Son of God by giving evidence after evidence that matches all the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.

It was prophesied in the OT that the Messiah would perform miracles and that’s exactly what Jesus has been doing. We are in the middle of 10 miracles found in Matthew chapter 8 and 9 that chronicles Jesus’ power over disease and sickness and even nature itself. We’ve seen Jesus heal a leper, a paralyzed boy, a lady with a terrible fever and last week, Pastor Dale shared how Jesus even told the Sea of Galilee to HUSH!

By doing all of this, Jesus is showing those first century Jews that He has the credentials to be the Messiah and we see that the Scriptures are true in that Jesus has all the power and all the authority over every facet of life on this earth. And this morning we are going to see that Jesus has power over the Supernatural. Jesus is going to show His power over the demon world.

Matthew 8:28-34

28 And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. **29** And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” **30** Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. **31** And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.” **32** And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. **33** The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. **34** And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

Church, you do understand there are demons in this world. They are fallen angels. They are the helpers of Satan. They came with Lucifer (a fallen angel himself) from heaven. Literally 1/3 of the angels fell for Satan’s lie that it would be better to go with him to earth than to remain with God in heaven. Therefore God cast them out of heaven to this earth.

Now we know that demons are under the command of Satan today, just as they were in Jesus’ day and they wreak havoc on mankind. You see, demons have one goal... To Destroy Us! They hate God and they know they can’t touch Him, so they come after us! The Bible is clear that our battle is not with flesh and blood... our battle is with Satan and his minions.

Ephesians 6:12

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.

This morning we are going to see the influence that demons have over two men. **Now what we read earlier was from Matthew’s account**, but there are also companion accounts of this miracle in Mark 5 and Luke 8 and I’ll be drawing from those accounts as well, because they will give us a

full picture of what is happening.

Now you might note (if you have subheadings in your Bible) that in Matthew it says above verse 28 that “Jesus Heals Two Men With Demons,” yet if you read Mark’s account in chapter 5 and Luke’s account in chapter 8, they say, “Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon.” So which is it? Another Bible contradiction the skeptics shout!!! Wrong! Jesus only talks to one of the men, apparently the spokesman of the two and that is what Mark and Luke share, yet there were definitely two men who were demon-possessed, as Matthew shares. **Look again at verse 28 again.**

Matthew 8:28

28 And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way.

Now where is this taking place? Well, take a look at the map we’ve been using...



You’ll see Gergesa on the right side of the Sea of Galilee. This area is also known as the land of the Gerasenes or Gadarenes. It’s a very dry and deserted area. Take a look at the picture I’ve shown you before. Over my shoulder is this area: the Gadarenes, a.k.a the southern end of the Golan Heights.



You’ll see how dry and desolate and barren it is. This area is also known as the northern part of the Decapolis...an area occupied by 10 cities...hence the name Decapolis.

Now here’s the interesting thing about this area. This is Gentile territory. Jesus has left Galilee and gone to Gentile territory. Remember, He was healing all kinds of people in Galilee from His home base of Capernaum. See the map again...



People have been coming from all over the region of Galilee to be healed. Remember there are so many people that Jesus had to get into a boat to even have a moment's peace. In fact, you'll remember Jesus gives orders that His disciples are to get into boats and go to the other side. He was worn out and needed rest and while some might think it was rude that He leave all of these people who needed Him, we'll see that Jesus had other plans.

For now, let me ask you to turn to Mark 5. I want to show you how this plays out from Mark's perspective too (which is actually Peter's perspective...because we know that John Mark was commissioned by Peter to write the Gospel of Mark. Mark was not an apostle).

Now no sooner does the boat Jesus is in touch land...all of a sudden two demon possessed men are right on top of Him.

Mark 5:1-5

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. **2** And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. **3** He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, **4** 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. **5** Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

What a spectacle! Here are two guys who are so ostracized from society that they are living out in a cemetery (how spooky is that). The people have even tried to chain and shackle these guys, but they always breaks free! Mark describes how they "cry out." In the Greek that word means "to shriek" and "to cry out like a raven!" So strange and eerie! **And on top of all of that**...these guys are mutilating with stones. What an awful scene. But, there's one other thing I want you to know.

These men are naked! Luke's gospel records this in Luke 8:27.

Luke 8:27

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, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.

These men were naked and Satan is always wanting people to take their clothes off. Do understand that. Think about that this afternoon. Think about that as you pick out what you wear

from your closets. Satan wants you to wear as little as possible. Satan wants us to be naked and immodest.

Oh...this is such a pitiful scene. Isn't it amazing what Satan can do to a life? And who knows where all of this started with these two men? We know very little about them. Were they brothers? Were they husbands? Were they dads? Did they have children? What happened to them? How did they get into this condition? We don't know, but I'll tell you what I believe. I believe this probably happened to them SLOWLY and SUBTLY. Why? Because that's how Satan works.

Listen...Satan will take you farther than you ever want to go. He'll take you farther than you could possibly imagine. I dare say these two men had no intention of ending up in such a pitiful condition that they are running around naked in a cemetery, cutting themselves with stones...shrieking like birds...totally ostracized from society...chained and shackled physically and spiritually.

Hey, can I ask you a question: How far is Satan taking you right now? Is he taking you down a path of destruction? Listen, please hear me Satan will take you much farther than you could ever imagine. He'll lie to you and he'll try to deceive you and trick you into thinking his way is better. Well it's not! His sole goal is to destroy you! SLOWLY, SUBTLY and SURELY!

Again, I doubt these two men could have ever imagined all of this, but here they are...under the control and dominion of demons. And now the spokesman of the two is going to speak. Well, ACTUALLY the demons are going to speak through him. **Look back at Matthew 8:29**

Matthew 8:29

29 And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

Remember, when the Bible says "BEHOLD" in the New Testament it's another way of saying WOW...This is amazing! And it is amazing...because Demons are now speaking to Jesus through this tormented man. What an incredible sight! The demons have taken over this man's voice and of all things...they call him the "Son of God!" James tells us they know Him.

James 2:19

19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

Yes, the demons know Jesus!! Does that surprise you. It shouldn't. Why? Because they were once in His presence in heaven. Remember, they were around the throne of God in heaven and yet, they chose to leave and go with Satan to earth. **Of course they know Jesus**. But, of course, they don't REALLY know Him do they? They know about Him...but, they have no relationship with Him whatsoever...just like a lot of people today who say they know Jesus.

I had a man say something earlier this week that really struck me. We were talking about the percentage of people who attend church each Sunday in America who are really saved. He said to me: "If you really want to know if a person is truly a Christian one of the ways for finding out is by simply asking them: **"Has Jesus changed you?"**" He said, "Of course they will probably answer: 'Yes.'" But he then told me, Kevin...we must then say this to them: "Okay Good... But how has Jesus changed you this week?" Do you see the difference?

Listen church, some of you here today are lost. You don't have a relationship. You don't know Him any better than the demons. You believe in Him...but, you don't have a relationship with Him. You might claim Jesus changed you way back when...but, is He changing you now!

Listen if you REALLY know Jesus then He is constantly changing you. Has Jesus changed you this week? Last 2 weeks? Have you changed any in the last month? Listen, if He isn't changing you day by day and week by week...and month by month, you might not truly know him...and that would make you no better than the demons. Don't let that be you!

Look back at Mark chapter 5, because we're going to see something else that's astounding about how this man came before Jesus.

Mark 5:6

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him.

Amazing...the man possessed by demons fell down before Jesus. Do you know what the Greek word is that describes this "Fell down?" In the Greek the word is **Proskyneo**. Take a look:

Proskyneo:

1. to kiss the hand in token of reverence
2. to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence

Folks, this is what the wise men did when they came to see Jesus. It's what the leper did when he begged Jesus to heal him of his leprosy. It's what we will do in heaven when we come into the presence of Jesus and now...inexplicably, this demon possessed man is bowing before Jesus.

Do you realize what this means? Those demons realized they were in the presence of God. They realized they were powerless and so they bowed down...just like they will bow down before they are thrown into the Lake of Fire/Hell. Listen, Satan and his demons are very strong and very powerful, but they are impotent in the presence of Jesus. And now Luke is going to tell us the name of the demon inside the man.

Luke 8:30

30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him.

Do you know what a Legion is? It's the largest unit of the Roman army. It's 5,000 men. Now think of that. Is it possible this man could have had 5,000 demons inside of him? **Well, we don't know that for sure.** But, with the name Legion...it's certainly possible. Now watch how the Demon asks Jesus permission...

Luke 8:31

31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

Matthew adds in verse 29 "Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Let me explain what this means. Did you know there are demons in a place called the Abyss or the Pit? This is a place that God created for the devil and his angles and is ultimately the place we all know as the Lake of

Fire or Hell. Ultimately, this Pit or Abyss is the final destination for Satan and all of his demons and they know it. In fact, when Jesus returns to set up His millennial kingdom for 1000 years on earth, Satan will be chained in this pit for 1000 years.

Revelation 20:1-3

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. **2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

The Apostle Peter tells us this about Satan and his demons in 2 Peter 2:4...

2 Peter 2:4

4 God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

Listen carefully, the demons inside these men didn't want to be sent to the Pit, to the Abyss... They still wanted to roam around on the earth. And so they asked permission to (OF ALL THINGS) to go into some pigs that were nearby.

Look back at our text in Matthew 8, verse 30.

Matthew 8:30-32

30 Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. **31** And the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs." **32** And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters.

Mark's Gospel in Mark 5:13, tells us there were 2,000 pigs. 2,000! That's a huge herd of pigs...but you know...it would take that many pigs for all those demons to go into and **Jesus said one word: "Go"** and off they went into those pigs and because of their uncontrolled evil, those demons caused those pigs to run right over a cliff and drown in the Sea of Galilee. Remember I showed you a picture of this area earlier. See it.



Many, many cliffs over my shoulder. Now, I know what some of you are thinking? "Why in the world did Jesus grant the demons' request? Why didn't He send them to the Abyss...the PIT" Well, it's really pretty simple. Those people standing watching all of this unfold had to have evidence that the demons actually came out of the men. They needed to see with their own eyes that Jesus had power over those demons! And so that's why Jesus

allowed them to go into the pigs. **Now church family, let me say a few other things about demons and demon possession.**

I know you've probably seen movies or heard about people casting out demons and talking to demons. But, let me tell you what the Bible says. The teaching portions of the New Testament, which is Romans through Jude never instruct Christians to attempt to cast out demons. You only see this in the 4 Gospels and the Book of Acts. AND you only see JESUS and the Apostles truly casting out demons. Why? Because they had to show the people that they had been given the same authority from God as Jesus. These were signs of Apostolic power. We are not Apostles. We are never instructed to cast out demons. Instead, we are told to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6). We are told to resist the devil (James 4:7), be watchful for the devil's schemes (1 Peter 5:8), and not give him room in our lives (Ephesians 4:27). That's it!

So you ask, "Well how do we get rid of demons inside of a person today?" We don't. The Holy Spirit does. When a person hears the Gospel and chooses to receive Christ, the demons are purged from a person's soul. The Holy Spirit does the exorcism. We don't have any command from Scripture to be casting out demons....

By the way, if you are a Christian, you can't be demon possessed...because you are possessed and occupied and sealed by the Holy Spirit and sealed to the Day of Redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14). But, you can allow yourself to be influenced by demons. More on that in a moment.

But, you say, "But, Pastor Kevin...The Catholic Church and their priests say they can cast out demons." Yes, I know that and they indeed have all kinds of incantations and rites they offer for doing so. And THAT'S TRUE, **And it might look like** that's actually taking place...but the demons are simply playing games with those people. **And Jesus warned** against this...according to Jesus doing that will do more harm than good.

Luke 11:24-26

24 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' **25** And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. **26** Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first."

Listen to me, any attempt to cast out a demon from someone **apart from salvation is absolutely** futile. A person is incapable of sweeping and putting "in order" their own hearts or anyone else's, because only God can regenerate us and create in us a new heart.

Well, what happened after the pigs drowned into the Sea of Galilee? Well, it's really sad.

Matthew 8:33-34

33 The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. **34** And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

They begged Jesus to leave. Why? Because they wanted prosperity over Jesus. They lost a lot of income when those pigs hit that water! They wanted their pigs!!! They didn't want to change. And

so, they begged Jesus to leave. And folks that's our culture today. That's America today. We are so much like the people of Gergesa! We are begging Jesus to leave.

- **We don't want Him in our schools or universities.** Mention the name of Jesus in a public university today and you'll be mocked and called a fool!
 - **We don't want Him in our government.** If you think the Obama Administration values the teachings of Jesus, you are deluded. They don't want Jesus in our lives...but, they want men in our wives' and little girl's bathrooms.
 - **We don't want Him in our courts.** The Federal Courts and the Supreme Court are run by people have no concern whatsoever for Biblical principles. Just look at the recent Supreme Court rulings.
 - **We don't want Jesus in our music.** So many Christians listen to God dishonoring music and so many of our children have white ear buds stuck in their ears pumping music laced with lyrics of sexual perversion and language that should never be repeated. **You know what we're saying: Give us our pigs! I know it's hitting close to home...**
 - **We don't want Jesus in our entertainment!** And so we pay big bucks for TV packages and movie and concert tickets for things to tickle our fancies that are anti-God and anti-biblically and we're saying, "Give us our pigs."
 - **And here's perhaps the saddest truth of all. We don't want Him in our homes.** Oh, I know we say we do. But, let's be honest, we have "Christian homes" that are so tied up in chasing money, popularity, success, education accolades and athletic success that we simply don't have time for Jesus! Sorry Jesus, we can't seem to find time to talk about you at the dinner table...because we never eat dinner together! Sorry Jesus...we don't have time to read the Bible and pray together as a family...because we're never home. Because we're out chasing PIGS!
 - **So, Jesus just leave...** Give us the swine of our pleasures and our selfish, lustful desires. Just give us our pigs!!
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Church family, hear my heart, there is an alternative...we can be like the two men that Jesus set free. Mark tells us:

Mark 5:14-15

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. **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.

Mark 5:17-20

17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. **18** As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. **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." **20** And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

Jesus left the man there in the Decapolis to be His witness. And isn't that what we're to do? Didn't Jesus say: "Go and be witnesses to the ends of the earth."

Church, I'll say this in closing...perhaps the most beautiful part of this entire account is something that we might miss. Jesus left that region. He got back into the boat and left. Listen, He had come

all that way for how many people? Just two. Just those two men. He left the crowded seashore of Capernaum where more people were begging to be healed and came across a stormy sea for just two men. Amazing isn't it?

Oh...you talk about love! Talk about the mercy and grace of Jesus! It's right here on display in the lives of just two men. Jesus came all that way for just two souls.

Now listen...Jesus is here this morning...and His Spirit is calling. He is here today for you! You! Do you sense Him calling? Oh let's not be like the people of the city of Gergesa and prefer our pigs over Jesus, but instead, let's be like these two men...saved...set free...and chained no more...proclaiming to an entire region how much the Lord has done for us!