

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: MIRACLES - Part 2 - Jesus Heals A Man With A Demon

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Jesus Heals A Man With A Demon



A miracle is an event (1) brought about by the power of God that is (2) a temporary (3) exception (4) to the ordinary course of nature (5) for the purpose of showing that God has acted in history.

—Professor Richard L. Purtill

Miracles point to the Kingdom of God and what it will one day be like, when sin and death are conquered and destroyed.

Miracles are typically *not* self-serving *but* Kingdom-serving!

***Peter:** “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, & signs through him, as you well know.”*

—Acts 2:22 (NLT)

As we turn to the Bible and specifically look at the life of Jesus, we see two types of miracles - healing miracles and nature miracles.

So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes.

—Mark 5:1 (NLT)





When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him.

—Mark 5:2-6 (NLT)

Due to his possession “by an evil spirit,” the man had probably been driven out of his home and community and found this place to live and roam, while ranting and raving.

Some of the classic symptoms of a person being demon-possessed include severe personality changes, anti-social behavior, remarkable spiritual insights, super-human strength, a sense of being personally tormented, which often then leads to self-destructive tendencies.

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies,

but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

—Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)

Satan can be behind demon possession in a non-believer's life, but the vast majority of the time he doesn't possess but oppress through his lies.

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors....

—C.S. Lewis

With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."

—Mark 5:7-8 (NLT)

How ironic that the tormentor pleads with Jesus to not be tormented.

Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man."

—Mark 5:9 (NLT)

The demons recognize they have no power over Jesus.

Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them." So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

—Mark 5:10-13 (NLT)

Several factors need to be considered in the death of the pigs:

- 1. As Lord of all, God has the right to use His creation any way He sees fit, including not only pigs but also people.**
- 2. Jesus didn't command the demons to go into the pigs - he only gave them permission, per their request.**
- 3. What Jesus was offering the people of Gerasene was much greater than any financial loss they might have suffered.**
- 4. Jesus needed tangible evidence for both the man and the disciples and people of the area that the demons had actually been exorcised from him.**

...let us not end on the note of the death of the pigs, but on the deliverance of the demoniac. Whereas he had been a slave, he was now delivered from demon possession. While he was once wild and uncontrollable, he was sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus. When once he was an instrument of Satanic opposition against the Messiah, now he is a witness to His power. Once naked, he is now clothed. Once a menace to society, now a messenger with words of deliverance and healing.

—Pastor Bob Deffinbaugh

The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

—Mark 5:14-17 (NLT)

Miracles don't necessarily convince folks into faith, because sometimes people are more concerned about what they perceive is best for themselves than even what God wants for them.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been." So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

—Mark 5:18-20 (NLT)

Jesus has a bigger purpose for this man, one that he can fulfill immediately by simply telling his story, and in the process the word about Jesus would begin to spread beyond the Jews to the Gentiles of this region.

This story shows that the announcement and appearance of the Kingdom of God certainly attracts some, but it causes real fear in others, as they are confronted with the reality and demands of what God wants for His people.

Jesus certainly had compassion on this man who had been possessed by the demons but was then miraculously freed, but Jesus' bigger purpose was to introduce the Kingdom of God into this man and this region.

This story also shows us that Satan is already defeated - neither he nor his demons can stand before Jesus, and, in fact, they must submit to his authority.

[Elisha] said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

—2 Kings 6:16 (ESV)

Next Week - Miracles, Part 3 (Mark 5:21-43) (read ahead)