

Exegeting the Demons and the Swine

Authority, Economics, and the
Decapolis Commission in Mark 5.

Decapolis

Western Shore (Jewish Territory) → Eastern Shore (The Gentile Decapolis)

THE STORM WAS THE **FIRST ACT** OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THE STORM



Jesus crossed the water at night, calming a deadly storm that nearly sank the boat, with a singular destination in mind. He did not land here by accident; He aimed for it.

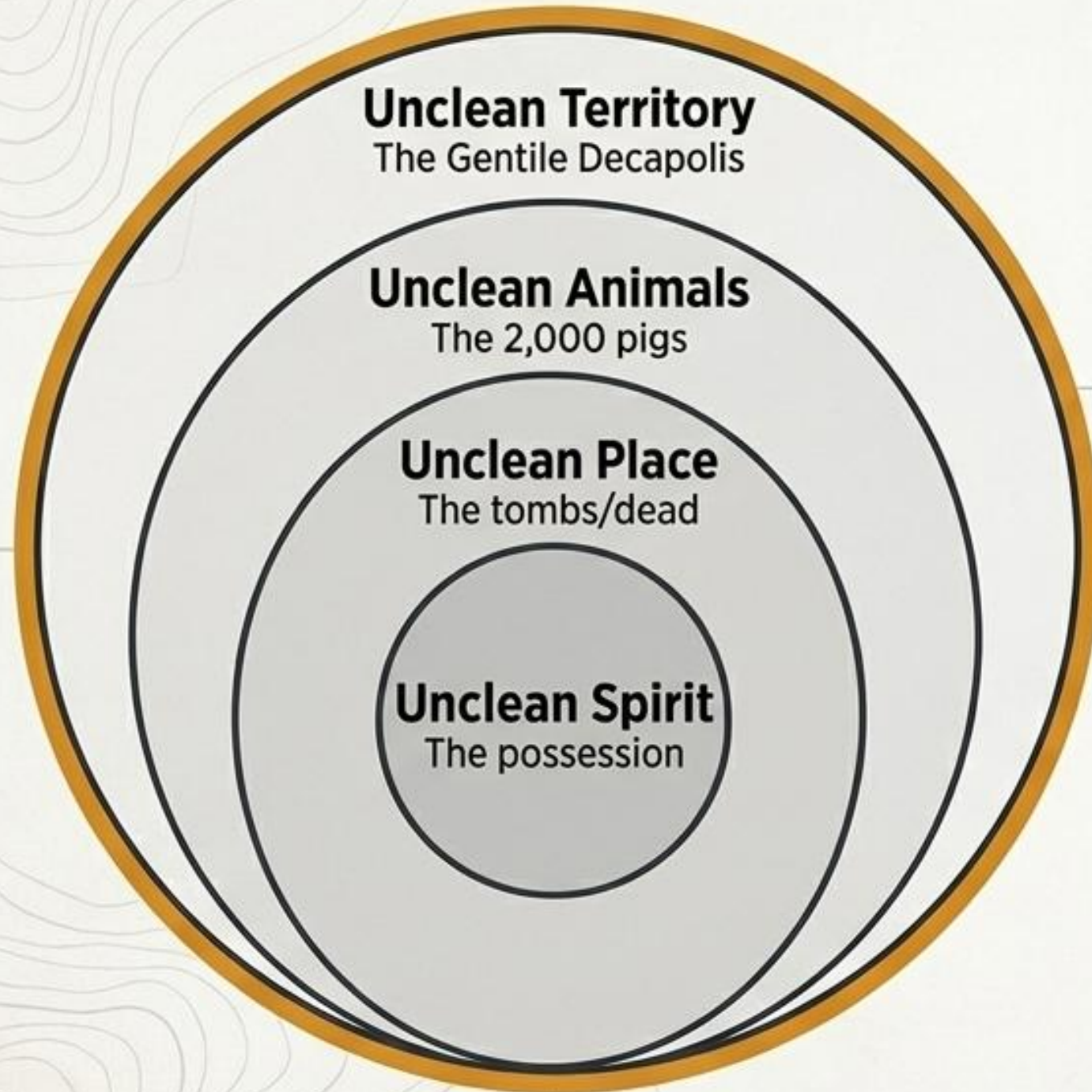


THE TARGET



Waiting on the eastern beach in Gentile territory was a man whose neighbors had given up on reaching him, settling instead to contain him among the dead. The chaos of the weather and the chaos of the man were both met by the exact same absolute authority.

STEPPING DIRECTLY INTO ISAIAH'S PROPHECY



“A rebellious people who sit among the **graves**, and spend the night in the **tombs**, who eat **swine’s flesh...**” — Isaiah 65:4

Mark’s readers would have recognized this immediately. Jesus stepped precisely into the ultimate Old Testament picture of the “far country” and human rebellion.

THE DEMONS POSSESSED ABSOLUTE THEOLOGICAL CLARITY

“
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.
[My name is Legion].
”

■ Hupsistos

The standard vocabulary Gentiles used for the supreme deity. The demons correctly identified Jesus, whereas hours earlier in the boat, the disciples had asked, “Who can this be?”

■ Basanizo

Examination under pressure; harsh interrogation before an appointed time. A prisoner pleading with a judge who has arrived ahead of the eschatological schedule.

■ Legion

A Latin military loan-word indicating a disciplined, commanded, occupying force of up to 6,000 soldiers, not a chaotic mob.

Demonic Power Stops at the Shoreline of Christ's Permission

Request 1:
Territorial



"Do not send us out
of the country."
(Mark 5:10)

Request 2:
Eschatological



"Do not command us
to go into the abyss."
(Luke 8:31)

Request 3:
Physical



"Send us into the swine."
(Mark 5:12)

**Christ's
Permission**

Core Insight: Evil is never portrayed as an equal, opposing force to God. A legion of spirits strong enough to snap iron chains without effort must file a petition to touch a pig. They cannot act without Jesus setting the terms.

THE DROWNING WAS A VISIBLE RECEIPT OF DELIVERANCE

THE WORD

Jesus Permits (Epitrepo)

Jesus does not command the destruction; He turns the matter over. He grants the space, He does not force the action.

THE OCCUPATION

Demons Enter

The true character of the occupying force is revealed. Whatever evil touches, it ruins. They ruined the man slowly over years; they ruined 2,000 animals in seconds.

THE EVENT

Instant Ruin

The herd violently stampedes into the sea.

Without this, the herdsmen would have only seen a calm man, easily dismissed as a 'good morning.' The destruction of an entire economic operation provided a public, undeniable receipt that the deliverance was real.

THE TOWN PRICED THEIR LIVESTOCK HIGHER THAN A HUMAN SOUL

The Cost

2,000 PIGS LOST

Complete economic devastation
for the local herdsmen

The Gain

1 MAN RESTORED

Sitting, clothed, and in his right
mind (sane, self-possessed)

The reaction of the town is devastating. They were terrified of the **cure**, not the disease. They preferred familiar, manageable, chained-up chaos to the disruptive cost of divine power, and so they begged Jesus to leave.

THREE PETITIONS AND THE BRILLIANT INVERSION OF MARK 5

THE DEMONS



Begged to stay
in the region.

Jesus said YES.

THE TOWNSPEOPLE



Begged Jesus to
leave the region.

Jesus said YES.

THE RESTORED MAN



Begged to go with
Jesus in the boat.

Jesus said NO.

God grants the devastating requests of those who reject Him, but denies the petition of the restored man—not out of rejection, but to issue a commission.

THE DENIAL WAS ACTUALLY A COMMISSION

**“Jesus did not
permit him.”**

(A jarring denial of
a faithful request)

THE COMMAND

**“Go home to your friends and tell them what
great things the Lord has done for you.”**

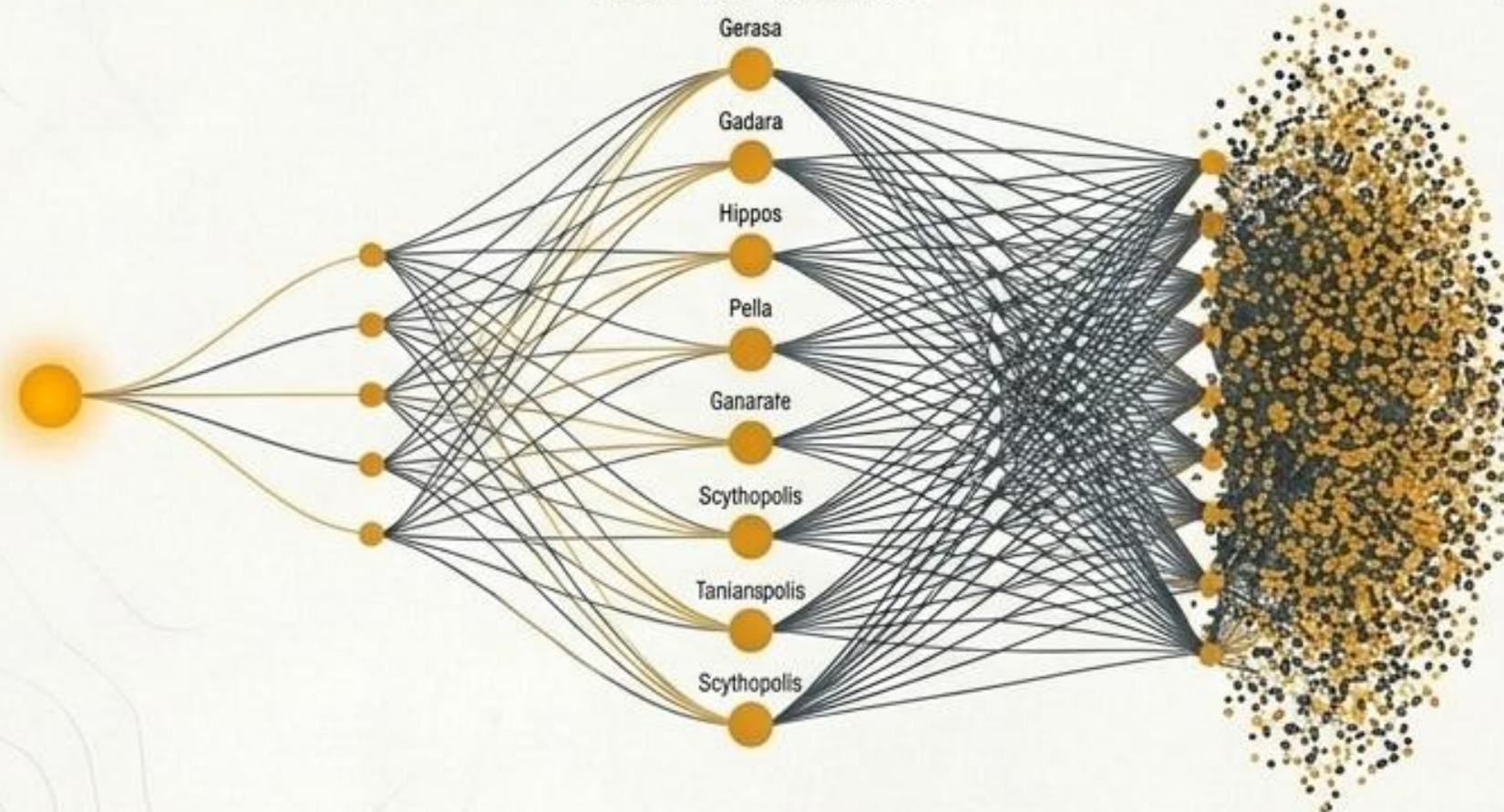
- **The Contrast:** In Jewish territory, Jesus repeatedly commanded silence (the leper, the little girl). Here in Gentile territory, He commands public proclamation.
- **The Credential:** No theological curriculum, no synagogue standing. The man's only qualification is his physical evidence—a restored mind.
- **The Assignment:** He is sent as a solitary missionary back into the tombs he terrorized, to the ten cities of the Decapolis. His history wasn't a disqualification; it was his proof.

THE RETURN ON THE PIGS WAS THE DECAPOLIS

POINT A - Mark 5

Jesus arrives, heals one man. The **entire** district begs Him to leave. One man is left behind to tell his story.

THE 10 CITIES



POINT B - Mark 7-8

Jesus travels back through the Decapolis. A crowd of **4,000 Gentiles** gathers around Him for three days just to hear Him teach, leading to the miraculous feeding.

POINT A - MARK 5

THE 10 CITIES

POINT B - MARK 7-8

What changed between the two visits? One restored man went home and told the truth. The loss of the herd bought the salvation of the Decapolis.