





Set Free!

Matthew 8:28-34

Mark 5:1-20

Luke 8:26-39

Life of Jesus: Miracles

Jesus was on the way to a Gentile region when he calmed the storm. After the storm, they came to the shore in the Gadarenes, or Gerasenes, which were part of a group of primarily Greek Gentile towns. Decapolis was the name given to these ten Greek cities located in what is now modern-day Jordan, Israel and Syria.

When Jesus and his disciples got off the boat, a demon possessed man with an unclean spirit met him. The book of Matthew says there were two men, but the stories in Mark and Luke focus on one man. We have been given details about one particular man.

The man lived in the graveyard.

He was naked; he wore no clothes, and he was very fierce.

He had been possessed with devils for a long time, and he did not live in a house, but in the tombs.

Discuss:

This man was probably well known as the crazy guy who lived in the cemetery or graveyard (tombs). He was scary and people avoided this area completely. He wouldn't let anyone go this way; you could not travel in this area or you would be stopped by this fierce man.

People had tried to tie him up and put chains on him, but he broke the chains off. They had put shackles on him (metal ankle bindings with heavy metal ball and chains) and he smashed them. He was very fierce and very strong, and no one could tame him. He broke free of these chains and then the devil drove him into the wilderness.

This man was always in the tombs or mountains and he cried all night and day. He was tormented and miserable, and he cut himself with stones, so he would have had bleeding cuts and scars. This man was a prisoner in his own body. He was controlled by demons and was crying out for help.

When he saw Jesus, the man came and fell down at Jesus' feet and worshipped him.

Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, then the devils spoke through the man. He cried out with a loud voice and said,

"What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I beg you not to torment me."

It was the man's voice; but the demons spoke through him.

Matthew's account says the demons asked Jesus if he came to torment them before the time. The devils know that time here is limited. The Bible has already said that the devil and his angels (demons) will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10, 14).

And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered "Legion," because he was filled with many demons. A legion was a Roman military term that meant between 3000-6000 men in a regiment. There were a lot of demons in this man.

The demons begged Jesus not to send them out of the region: into the abyss, or bottomless pit.

In the distance there was a large herd of about 2000 pigs feeding on the mountain.



Set Free!

Discuss:

The Jews viewed pigs as dirty and vile animals. According to the law of Moses, Jews were not allowed to eat pigs because they were unclean animals. The fact that there were so many pigs here shows that it was a gentile region. Historical sources say that this was a very pagan area and the pigs were likely used for sacrifices to Greek gods and used for food.

The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the herd of pigs (swine).

Jesus told them to “Go.” The demons came out of the man, and went into the herd of pigs, and the whole herd ran violently - stampeded- down a steep hill into the sea.

Since this event, researchers have gone to this area and found where they believe is the exact place that this happened. Videos have been made showing the area where this is believed to have taken place. It is interesting to see that the pigs did not just plunge off the edge of a cliff. They deliberately ran down a steep hill, and then across a flat plains area directly into the water. Because of the landscape of the area, it would not have been mistaken as an accidental fall from a cliff, it was evident they were deliberately driven into the sea where they drowned.

The men who were keeping the pigs saw what happened and ran away. They went and told everyone in the city and in the country about what happened to the pigs, and what happened to the crazy man (men).

Discuss:

What if these were your pigs? Did you buy these pigs? What did you do with these pigs?

You might have been a man who sold them in the market for pagan sacrifices. You might have sold them for meat in the market. That is a LOT of pigs.

Would you be upset if all your pigs died? How would this affect you financially? You wouldn't be able to sell them because they are all dead. This would have cost the owners a lot of money.

The people in the city were afraid. They came and found Jesus and found the man who used to be possessed now sitting at Jesus' feet.

The famous crazy man is now sitting with clothes on, normal and in his right mind, sitting and talking to Jesus.

News spread quickly, and everyone in the city and surrounding area heard about this.

They knew the crazy man was now normal, and all the pigs ran to their death. The whole city came and asked Jesus to leave; not only did they ask, but they also *begged* Jesus to leave.

Except the man who had been possessed by the devils.

He begged Jesus to let him come with him.

But Jesus told the man to go home and go back to his friends. This man must have had a family and friends before he went crazy. Jesus told him to go tell all about the great things the Lord did for him.

Jesus and his disciples got back in the boat and left. The man went on his way and went all over Decapolis telling everyone the great things that Jesus had done for him. People were surprised and amazed; the man probably had a reputation of being the crazy guy, and everyone could now see that his life was **totally** changed (2 Corinthians 5:17; Isaiah 61:1).



Set Free!

Things were different when Jesus returned to this area over a year later.

He came to the city of Gennesaret, which was one of the cities in the Decapolis region. The man who was no longer crazy must have been a great witness for Jesus, because on his second visit the people met him as soon as he got off the ship. But this time they welcomed him, bringing him all the sick and diseased people to be healed. Jesus traveled through the villages, cities and throughout the country and when people heard where he was, they brought sick people in their beds to meet Jesus.

When he came through the cities, they laid sick people in the streets and begged just to touch the edges of his clothes, and everyone who touched him was healed (Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56).

Jesus in the Story



When Jesus was on his way to this area, he calmed the storm on the sea. In that lesson, similarities were shown between the story of the calming of the sea with Jonah. Jonah was headed to Nineveh, and Jesus was headed to this gentile region. Jesus said the only sign that would be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

This is the first time that anyone had seen authority taken over the devil. Before Jesus came into the world in the flesh, there were no accounts of anyone ever taking authority over the devil. Until the Son of God was present in the world, the authority was not present to command the demons (devils, spirits) to leave.

All the people were overcome with amazement and asked one another, "What is this message? With authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" Luke 4:36

Notice in every account of this story with the demon possessed man, the demons say to Jesus, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God?" The demons recognized Jesus and knew the authority that he had over them (Luke 4:41).

Jesus also gave this power in His name to the disciples:

And having summoned His twelve disciples. He gave to them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every sickness. Matthew 10:1

Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons. Mark 3:14-15

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1-2

All power in heaven and in earth has been given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18).

As Christians and followers of Jesus, we have the same power and authority that Jesus gave to his disciples. This authority is available to us through the power that is *in Jesus' name*.

"...And these signs shall follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover," Mark 16:17-18.

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

13. Set Free!

Read Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56

Jesus returned to this area later and the people had a different response:

1. Where did the people meet Jesus?
2. What did they bring to Jesus?
3. Who was healed?

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...

14. Only Believe

Read Mark 5:27-34; Luke 8:44-48

1. Does this lady ask Jesus to heal her?
2. What happened to her when she touched Jesus?
3. What happened to Jesus when the lady touched him?
4. What did Jesus say made her well?

Malachi 4:2

But to you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall fed calves.

15. What Do You Have?

1. Who doubted there would be enough?
2. What did the disciples want to tell the people?
3. What did Jesus do with the food after blessing it and giving thanks?
4. How much was left over?

Psalms 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

16. If It Is You

1. What did Peter say to Jesus?
2. What happened as soon as they stepped into the ship?
3. After seeing this, why were the disciples now convinced that Jesus was the Son of God?

Job 9:8, 10

He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea. He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number.



