

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: July 12, 2009

The Testimony of a Delivered Demoniac

by Dan Trygg

“...And *the people* came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the ‘legion’; and they became frightened. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and *all* about the swine. ¹⁷ And they began to implore Him to leave their region. ¹⁸ As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. ¹⁹ And He did not let him, but He said to him, ‘Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you.’ ²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.”

Mark 5:14b-20

We have been following the sequence of events in Mark, noting how incredibly packed Jesus’ days of ministry were. When He attempted to come back to Peter’s house, the crowds gathered at the door, and the needs were so pressing and seemingly endless that He and the apostles could not even take time to eat a meal. Then, He went out to the seashore, where He taught in parables throughout the afternoon. **When evening came, He and the apostles decided to cross over the Sea of Galilee to the eastern shore.** Although Jesus soon fell asleep, a powerful storm caught them out on the lake, and threatened to overwhelm the boat and sink it. Waking from His sleep, the Lord commanded the storm to stop, and it did. **The storm would probably have come out of the north. Its force and duration undoubtedly blew the boat considerably south from what their intended destination may have been.** Instead of simply crossing over from west to east, they came to land in the south-eastern corner of the Sea, in the region of Gadara, one of the ten cities of the Decapolis. **The Decapolis was a political district made up by a league of ten cities (*deca* = ten; *polis* = city). It was located at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, and east of the western side of the Jordan valley.** The language describes only the general setting, not a specific place. There is only one area on this SE corner of the Sea of Galilee where there is a steep embankment leading to the lake. **The area was populated mostly by Gentiles,** and the relationship between the inhabitants and the Jews was somewhat tense, due to Jewish prejudice toward Gentiles, and a corresponding contempt toward Jewish practices.

This incident is recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels (Matt. 8:8-34; Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39), **probably because of the extreme condition of the man who was afflicted.** Matthew’s account records that there were *two* men afflicted with demons, but the focus of the other accounts is on this one man who was infested with the legion of demons. **We must remember the purpose and nature of the gospel writings.** They are not intended to present a *complete* record of everything Jesus did or said. Instead, they record a *selection* of significant events which establish who Jesus was, and the nature of His ministry. Furthermore, each author edited his account to fit his audience.

The accounts of this incident are helpful to instruct us about the nature of demonization, especially in such an extreme scenario. **The language is very precise.** There are seventeen references to the demons in these three accounts. In spite of the popularity of the English description of such a person as someone who is “demon possessed”, that description does not occur here, or *anywhere else in the Bible*. **No one is ever described as “demon possessed” in the original languages.** It is a misnomer, ...an unfortunate and very misleading attempt at translating the original language into English. In fact, the very opposite is true: Instead of people being possessed by demons, the text says that “a certain man out from the city *having demons* met Him” (Lk. 8:27). In other words, he “possessed” the demons in his body, they did not “possess” him. It does mention that “many demons *had entered* him” (Lk. 8:30), just as later they “entered into the pigs” (Lk. 8:33; Mk. 5:13). **By far the most common description in the gospels, however, is simply “the one being demonized”** (Matt. 8:28,33; Mk. 5:15,16,18; Lk. 8:36). The simplest way to try to understand what this means is that a person is being influenced by a demon, in some way or another. A “demon” and an “unclean spirit” also seem to be synonymous terms (Mk. 5:2,8,13; Lk. 8:29), or at least refer to the same entity.

It also mentions that often the demon “had violently-seized him” (Lk. 8:29), a word also used for violently seizing and dragging people to court (Acts 6:12; 19:29), or of a hurricane wind violently seizing and dragging a ship off course (Acts. 27:15), ...**a very strong word-picture of the sudden and powerful effect of a demon upon someone** it is influencing. In the context, *this “seizing” influence is related to bursts of energy and strength in enabling the demoniac to tear apart chains and shatter fetters, ...feats that go way beyond normal human ability.* The text also mentions that **“he had been driven by the demon into desolate places”.** The word for “had been driven” is from a word that means to “cause an object to move by means of a strong force; to set in motion, push, impel, or carry along”. This word was used of boats and clouds being driven along by the wind (Jas. 3:4; II Pet. 2:17), or propelled by rowing (Mk. 6:48; Jn. 6:19). **The demons drove the man to isolation and personal degradation.** The man had not worn clothes *for a long*

time, nor had he been living in a house, but among the tombs (Lk. 8:27). We also discover that day and night he wandered about, crying out and cutting himself with stones (Mk. 5:5). (Observe that the modern phenomenon of cutting, which has rapidly grown to nearly epidemic proportions, especially among young people, may be fundamentally a *spiritual* problem.) From Matt. 8:28, we see that **the demonized men were very much given to violence, with the result that no one could pass by their cave.** Outbursts of threatening, violent or self-destructive behaviors are common for those who are demonized.

Initially, **when Jesus and the disciples came to shore, the men came out of the tombs, probably to attack them as they had done to so many other passersby. Instead, Jesus recognized their affliction and began to command the unclean spirits to come out of the men.** The demons in both men cried out (Matt. 8:29), “What to us and to you, Son of God? Have you come before the time to torment us?” As in other encounters with the demonic, **the unclean spirits recognized Jesus immediately.** Note that *they acknowledged that there is an appointed time when they will be confronted and judged.* They want to know if Jesus had come to punish them *before* the appointed time. The phrase, “What to me and to you” is an expression for “What do we have to do with each other?”, or, “What business do we have with you?” From Mark’s account, **they even attempted to appeal to God’s legal protection,** “I adjure you by God, do not torment me!” The word “adjure” (“implore” in the NASB), is the Greek word, *orkizō*, meaning, “I put you under oath”. Note that this is the same root as the word *exorkizō*, from which we get the word, “exorcist”. **An exorcist is one who puts a demon under oath before God and the court of heaven to demand and enforce the legal expulsion of the demon based upon the authority of the Kingdom of Christ and His work of deliverance.** Here, *the demons try to bring Jesus to court to demand that Jesus leave them alone*, because the time for judgment had not yet come. **It is a common strategy of demons to attempt to muddy the waters of authority and legality to attempt to confuse and block the assertion that they must leave.** Note that Mark tells us that Jesus “had been saying to him, ‘Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!’” (Mk. 5:8) The verb indicates repeated, ongoing action. From this, **we can conclude that (1.) Not even Jesus always got instantaneous results,** when He commanded a demon to leave. Thus, we should not be surprised to find that demons will not always respond to us right away, either. *We must persist* in our just assertion, as Jesus did here. **(2.) The demons’ attempt to “counter sue” Jesus was in response to the Lord’s command to leave.** Again, we should not be surprised if demons attempt to claim that we have no authority to force them to leave. In effect, that is what the demon was attempting to do here, ...to shake *Jesus’ conviction* that He had the legal right to compel the demon to vacate the man’s life. Pretty brazen, don’t you think? **We should not be surprised at similar tactics and attitudes when we encounter demons. Do not waver.**

When the demon resisted Jesus’ command, He probed for more information. He asked, “What is your name?” Note that Jesus, as a human, was limited in His knowledge. (This is the *only* time it is recorded that Jesus asked a demon for his name, yet some people insist that every time a person attempts to deliver someone from a demon, they need to discover the demon’s name. This is a misperception, and the wrong emphasis. Note that Jesus did *not* get the names of every demon present, nor did He press further to obtain them.) The unclean spirit revealed, “Legion is a name to me, for we are many” (Mk. 5:9). This indicated that the number of demons roughly corresponded to the troop strength in a Roman legion, about 6,000! This poor man had 6,000 voices in his head! This number seems credible, in light of the number of swine later affected. This was enough information for Jesus to understand what He was up against, and *He persisted* in His demand.

At this point, the demons realize that Jesus was not going to be put off, and they began bargaining. Remember, they had been in this man for a long while. Their first concern was to not be sent to the Abyss (Lk. 8:31), a bottomless pit where the devil will eventually be imprisoned (Rev. 20:1-3). Nor did they want to be cast out of the region (Mk. 5:10; cf. Matt. 12:43-45). Then they earnestly implored Him to send them into the nearby pigs, so that they might enter them. Jesus permitted this, and immediately the herd of 2,000 pigs rushed down the bank and drowned in the sea.

The pig herders saw all of this, and ran both to the city and the surrounding farms to tell their tale. Consequently, many came to see what had taken place. When they arrived they saw the formerly notorious, crazy, naked, violent, demonized man sitting, clothed and in his right mind. The transformation was amazing! The entire episode was frightening to them, however. As they heard the swine herders describe the events, and the destruction of the pigs, they began to ask Jesus to leave their region. People often remain afraid of the supernatural, even when the encounter is very one-sided. The man who had been demonized wanted to accompany Jesus, probably thinking that he had no life there in that region, and naturally wanted to be with the One who had delivered him. Jesus, however, was not willing to let him come, but instead **the Lord commissioned him to go home to his relatives and family and report to them what God had done for him. He took this charge to heart, and went through the entire Decapolis area, proclaiming what Jesus had done for him.** Mark’s final comment: “And all were being amazed!” **The man had the greatest impact among those who had known him previous to the wonderful transformation.**