

“Learn, Love, & Live More!”

Matthew 8:28-34

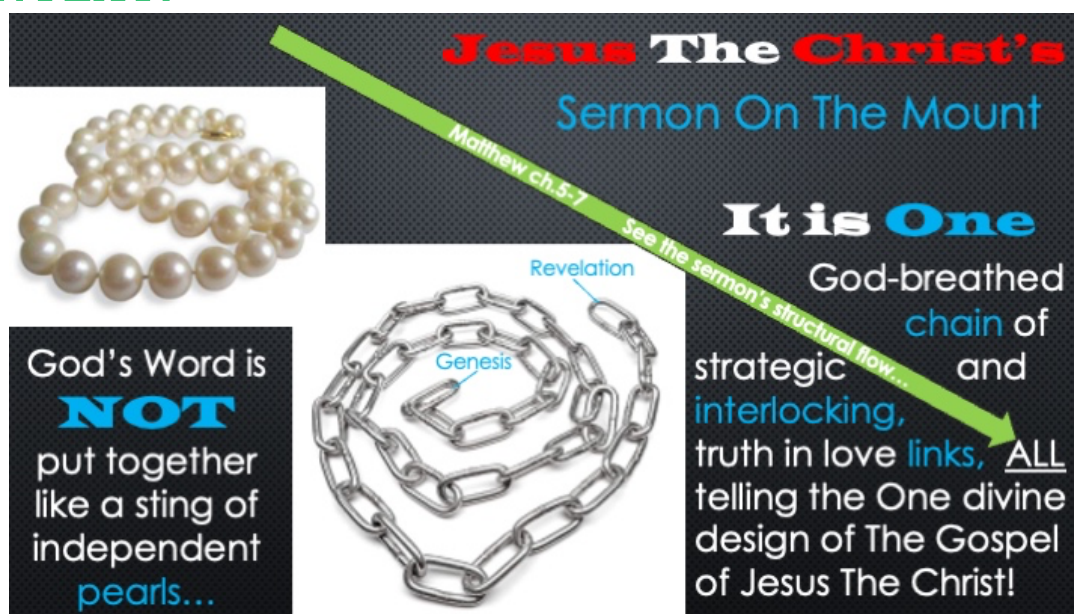
December 14, 2025

INTRO: *How well informed, inspected, & inspired are you?*

- Do you **hear, listen, or learn** God's Word, will, & ways?
- Do you **learn, love, or live** God's Word, will, & ways?
- Do you live His 3-W's superficially or **supernaturally**?

PRAYER

CONTEXT:



BIG IDEA: Per God's Word, will, & way...
Messiah was & IS on a miraculous mission
to define & describe kingdom citizens...
to find the lost & grow the found...
to save & sanctify sinful souls!

PREVIEW:

1. God & His Word INFORM
2. God & His Word INSPECT
3. God & His Word INSPIRE

*** It's why He came & what He did... It's who He was & who He is! ***

TEXT:

Matthew 8:28-34

I. He's INFORMING us...

(Big Idea... / Example... / ,)

Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons

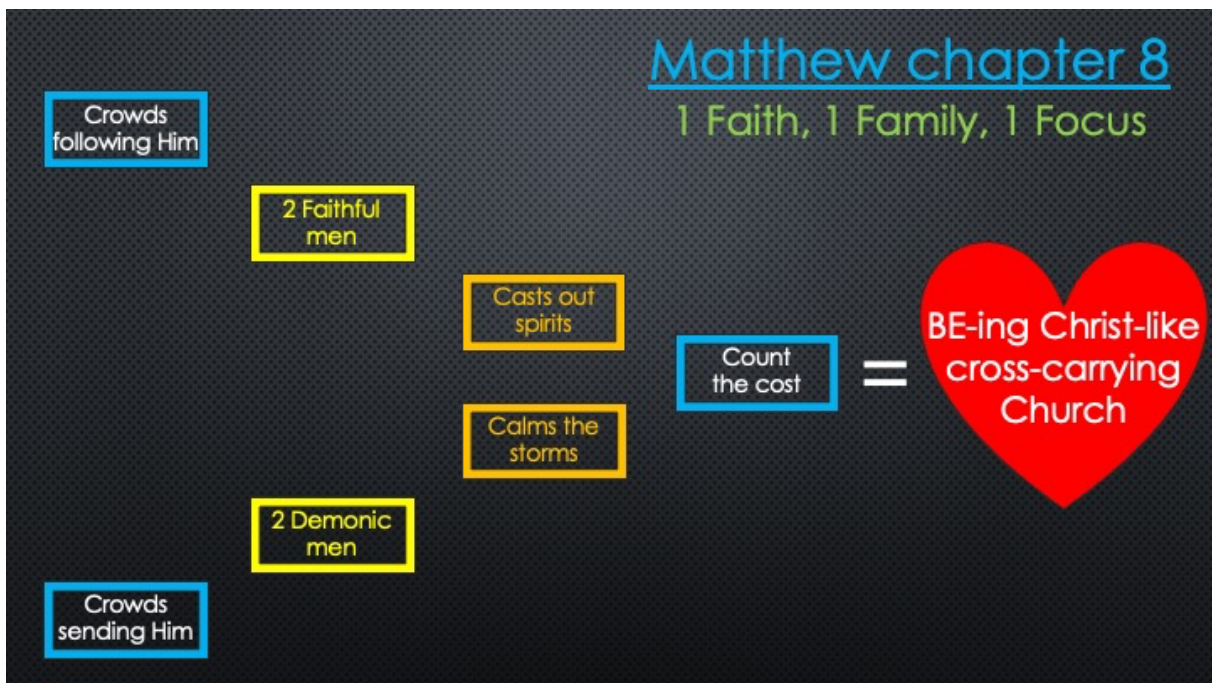
28And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. 29And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" 30Now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

- A. **BIG IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (like it or not!)
- B. **EXAMPLE:** Even demons know & obey Him
- C. **COMMA “,”:** We’re just getting started...

II. He’s INSPECTING us...

(Bigger Idea / Explained / .)

- A. **BIGGER IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (Who are you?)
- B. **EXPLAINED:** Fickle followers vs. faithful family
- C. **PERIOD “.”:** The point/period is count the cost!



III. He’s INSPIRING us...

(Biggest / Exemplified / !)

Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39

MK Then they LK sailed MK to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes, LK which is opposite Galilee. MK And when He had LK stepped MK out of the boat LK on the land, MK immediately there met Him MT two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

[One of these was] LK a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. MK And no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. “ and with a loud voice said, MT“ What have we to do with You, MK Jesus, Son of the Most High God? MT Have You come here to torment us before the time? MK I implore You by God that You do not torment me.”

LK For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

MK Then LK Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” MK And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many”— LK because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him MK earnestly that He would not send them out of the country [nor] LK command them to go out into the abyss.

MK Now a large herd of swine was feeding there, MT a good way off from them, MK near the mountains. So ALL the demons begged Him, saying, MT “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine, MK that we may enter “them.” And at

once Jesus gave them permission [and] MT said to them, "Go." MK Then the unclean spirits went out LK of the man MK and entered MT into the herd of swine MK (there were about two thousand); and MT suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. LK When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled MT and they went away into the city and told everything LK in the city and in the country MT including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out MK to see what it was that had happened.

Then they came to MT meet Jesus, LK and found the man MK who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, LK from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

MK And those who saw it told them LK by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed, MK and about the swine. Then LK the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the "Gadarenes MT begged Him to depart from their region, LK for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

Now the man from whom the demons had departed **BEGGED HIM THAT HE MIGHT BE WITH HIM.**

MK However, Jesus did not permit him, but LK sent him away, saying, MK ***"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."***

And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis, LK throughout the whole city what great things MK Jesus had done for him; and...

all marveled."

(IT'S THE PARADOX OF GRACE)

- A. **BIGGEST IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (Amen & Amen)
- B. **EXEMPLIFIED:** miracle MESSIAH mission
- C. **EXCLAMATION MARK "!"**: God, Go!,
grace, gospel, & glory

Informing...

- ALL Appreciate & Actualize Amazing GRACE
- Christians Champion Christ's GOSPEL
- Global Giving and Growing of God's GLORY

Inspecting...

- Authentic Awe of The Almighty!
- Commitment without Conditions.
- Seeking Sacrificial & Serving Sanctification

Inspiring...

- The Great Commandments & Commission
- The BEing of Beatitudes & Fruit of the Spirit
- The 2 of 7 churches & living in God's armor!

REVIEW:

Per God's Word, will, & way...
Messiah was & IS on a miraculous mission
to define & describe kingdom citizens...
to find the lost & grow the found...
to save & sanctify sin-filled souls!

1. INFORMING

- A. **BIG IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (like it or not!)
- B. **EXAMPLE:** Even demons know & obey Him
- C. **COMMA “,”:** We're just getting started...

2. INSPECTING

- A. **BIGGER IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (Who are you?)
- B. **EXPLAINED:** Fickle followers vs. faithful family
- C. **PERIOD “.”:** The point/period is count the cost!

3. INSPIRING

- A. **BIGGEST IDEA:** Jesus IS Lord! (Amen & Amen)
- B. **EXEMPLIFIED:** miracle MESSIAH mission
- C. **EXCLAMATION MARK “!”:**
 - God Go! Grace Gospel God's Glory

CLOSE:

In the same way that people cannot divide to dismiss their Head, Heart, & Hands... neither can they compartmentalize Christ's Messianic miracles & mission.

Informing...

- ALL Appreciate & Actualize Amazing GRACE
- Christians Champion Christ's GOSPEL
- *Grace+Gospel+Go = God's global glory grows!*

Inspecting...

- Authentic Awe of The Almighty!
- Commitment without Conditions.
- Seeking Sacrificial & Serving Sanctification

Inspiring...

- ALL Appreciating Amazing GRACE
- Christians Championing Christ's GOSPEL
- Global Giving and Growing of God's GLORY

PRAYER

WORSHIP:

"How Great Is Our God" (globally sung)

Study Notes:

TEXT:

Matthew 8:28-34

Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons

[28](#)And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes,^e 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.

"70. Jesus Casts Out Demons into Swine

Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39

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cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. “ and with a loud voice said, MT” What have we to do with You, MK Jesus, Son of the Most High God? MT Have You come here to torment us before the time? MK I implore You by God that You do not torment me.”

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Excerpt From: John F. MacArthur. "One Perfect Life."

ALL of Matthew 8 (ESV)

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

¹When he came down from the mountain, **great crowds followed him**. ²And **behold**, a leper^a came to him and **kneled before him**, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me **clean**." ³And Jesus^b stretched out his hand and **touched** him, saying, "**I will; be clean**." And **immediately** his leprosy was **cleansed**. ⁴And Jesus said to him, "See that you **say nothing to anyone**, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for **a proof** to them."

The Faith of a Centurion

⁵When he had entered Capernaum, a **centurion came forward** to him, **appealing to him**, ⁶"Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." ⁷And he said to him, "**I will come and heal him**." ⁸But the centurion replied, "Lord, **I am not worthy** to have you come under my roof, but **only say the word**, and my servant **will be healed**." ⁹For I too am a man **under authority**, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant,^c 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰**When Jesus heard this, he marveled** and said to **those who followed him**, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel^d have I found **such faith**." ¹¹I tell you, **many will come from east and west and recline at table** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob **in the kingdom of heaven**, ¹²while the **sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness**. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; **let it be done for you as you have believed**." And the **servant was healed** at that very moment.

Jesus Heals Many

¹⁴And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his **mother-in-law lying sick with a fever**. ¹⁵He **touched her** hand, and **the fever left her**, and **she rose** and began **to serve him**. ¹⁶That evening they brought to him many who were **oppressed by demons**, and **he cast out the spirits with a word and healed** all who were sick. ¹⁷This was **to fulfill** what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

The Cost of Following Jesus

¹⁸Now when Jesus saw **a crowd around him**, **he gave orders to go** over to the other side. ¹⁹And a **scribe came** up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰And **Jesus said** to him, "**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**" ²¹Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²²And **Jesus said** to him, "**Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.**"

Jesus Calms a Storm

²³And when he got into the boat, **his disciples followed him**. ²⁴And **behold**, there arose a **great storm** on the sea, so that the **boat was being swamped** by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵And they went and woke him, saying, "**Save us, Lord; we are perishing.**" ²⁶And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, **O you of little faith?**" Then **he rose and rebuked the winds** and the sea, and there was a **great calm**. ²⁷And the **men marveled**, saying, "**What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?**"

Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons

²⁸And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, **two demon-possessed^f men met him**, coming out of the tombs, **so fierce** that no **one could pass** that way. ²⁹And **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?**” ³⁰Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹And **the demons begged him**, saying, “If you cast us out, **send us away into the herd** of pigs.” ³²And 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. ³³The **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.

Footnotes:

a 2 Leprosy was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13

b 3 Greek *he*

c 9 Or *bondservant*

d 10 Some manuscripts *not even in Israel*

e 28 Some manuscripts *Gergesenes*; some *Gerasenes*

f 28 Greek *daimonizomai* (demonized); also verse 33; elsewhere rendered *oppressed by demons*

ESV Text Edition® (2016).

MacArthur Commentary

THE POSSESSION BY THE DEMONS

And when He had come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now there was at a distance from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." (8:28–31)

After the miraculous stilling of the storm, Jesus and His disciples continued across the Sea of Galilee **to the other side**.

By now it was daylight and the group of boats (see Mark 4:36) landed in **the country of the Gadarenes**. Those whom **Matthew calls Gadarenes** were also called Gerasenes (Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26) or Gergesenes, as found in some Greek texts.

The small town of Gerasa, or Gergesa (from which come *Gerasenes* and *Gergesenes*, respectively) was **on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, about six miles across the water from Capernaum**, and the steep cliffs nearby fit the geographical setting described here.

The town of Gadara (from which comes **Gadarenes**) is located farther south and is inland; but the general region, including Gerasa, was often referred to as **the country of the Gadarenes**.

THE RECEPTION BY THE DEMONS

two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. (8:28b)

In their accounts of this incident, Mark (5:2) and Luke (8:27) mention only one demon-possessed man but do not state that only one was present.

For their particular purposes they chose to focus on the more dominant of the **two men**.

Daimonizomai (**demon-possessed**) simply means to be demonized, to be under the control of a demonic spirit, without regard to the kind or degree of control.

Although its accounts of demonized people reflect many different conditions and degrees of control, Scripture does not clearly distinguish between being possessed, obsessed, or oppressed by demons.

DEMONIZATION MAY BE DENNED AS A CONDITION IN WHICH ONE OR MORE DEMONS INHABITS AND GAINS CONTROL OVER A HUMAN BEING.

Demons can attack men spiritually, mentally, and physically.

In the spiritual realm they promote false religions, demon worship, the occult, and innumerable kinds of immorality, including murder (Rev. 9:20–21; 18:23–24). In the intellectual and psychological realm they promote such things as false

doctrines; insanity and masochism, as in this demon-possessed man, who gashed himself with stones (Mark 5:5); and inability to speak and suicidal mania (see Mark 9:17–22).

DEMON DOMINATION WAS A COMMON AFFLICTION IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES, even among God's chosen people, the Jews. In the apostolic church, the gift of miracles, or powers, was the ability to cast out demons. It is interesting, however, that we read of no account of demon possession in the city of Jerusalem.

Throughout history, including modern times, that particular aspect of Satan's activity seems to appear more commonly in rural and unsophisticated areas than in sophisticated urban society. It is also more common where animistic religion and its accompanying fear and worship of evil spirits are strong. In more advanced societies, a person who is seriously deranged by demons is likely to be considered insane and placed in a mental institution, and it seems certain that many people who are diagnosed as mentally ill are actually demonized.

It is significant that Jesus never blamed a person for being either diseased or demon controlled. He recognized them as victims of powers beyond their own control and as in need of deliverance, not exhortation or condemnation.

As we see with these two men who were demon-possessed, **THE PERSONALITY AND VOICE OF A DEMON CAN AT WILL, AND SOMETIMES CONTINUOUSLY, ECLIPSE THE PERSONALITY AND VOICE OF THE OCCUPIED PERSON.**

When Jesus asked one of the men, “What is your name?” the demon responded through the man’s mouth, saying, **“My name is Legion; for we are many”** (Mark 5:9).

These men lived in burial chambers that were commonly hewn out of rock hillsides or cliffs on the outskirts of a town or city, and **as they saw Jesus approaching they met Him as they were coming out of the tombs**. It is possible they were Jews, for whom touching a dead body was the greatest ceremonial defilement. If so, their being forced by the demons to live in a cemetery was an additional humiliation and torment.

They were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. We learn from the other gospel accounts that **at least one of the men wore no clothes and that he had such great strength that no chain could keep him bound. He was often driven into the desert by the demons and spent much of his time ranting and raving, “crying out and gashing himself with stones”** (Mark 5:4–5; Luke 8:27–29).

THE RECOGNITION BY THE DEMONS

And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” (8:29)

What do we have to do with You meant, “What are You doing here and why are You bothering us?” By addressing Jesus as **Son of God** **THE DEMONS SHOWED THAT THEY IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED WHO HE WAS.**

Mark reports that one of the men “ran up and bowed down before Him” (5:6).

The word from which “bowed down” comes (*proskuneō*) is usually translated “worship,”

because it represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence. The term carries the idea of profound awe and respect.

Demons hate and loathe everything about God, yet they are powerless to do anything but bow down before Him when in His presence—just as one day at His name every knee will “bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth” (Phil. 2:10).

Demons are fallen angels, and before they joined Satan in his rebellion against God they knew intimately each member of the Trinity. Though they had never before seen Him in human form, they instantly recognized Jesus as the second Person of the Godhead. As spirits, they recognized His spirit. They knew intuitively that they were standing in the presence of the Son of God, the “Son of the Most High God,” as Mark (5:7) and Luke (8:28) report.

As we learn from another encounter of Jesus with demons, they also “knew Him to be the Christ,” that is, the Messiah (Luke 4:41).

They knew Jesus was their divine antagonist and that He had full power and authority to destroy them at will.

By their question, **Have You come here to torment us before the time?** they acknowledged that **THEY KNEW THERE WAS A DIVINELY APPOINTED TIME, NOT YET COME, WHEN HE WOULD INDEED JUDGE THEM AND PUNISH THEM WITH ETERNAL DAMNATION.**

Their eschatology like the rest of their theology was factually correct.

As James tells us, ***“the demons also believe, and shudder”*** ([James 2:19](#)). They shudder because their belief is that of recognition but not acceptance, and **THEY FULLY REALIZE THE CONSEQUENCE OF REJECTING GOD.**

In light of their knowledge about His divine power and plan it seems strange that Satan and his fallen hosts bothered to tempt and attack Jesus. But the supreme deceivers are also supremely self-deceived, and in their evil delusions they somehow hoped to frustrate Christ in His humanity. By inducing Him to sin, perhaps they could drag Him down to the lake of fire with them when judgment came. Perhaps they thought He was somehow less powerful and righteous on earth than they knew Him to have been in heaven. In any case, it is the nature of Satan and of those who belong to him to oppose God, no matter what the consequences or prospect for success.

The demons understood much more about Jesus' identity and about the divine plan of redemption and judgment than did the twelve disciples at that time. It was much later that Peter confessed before Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” a truth he came to know only by divine revelation (Matt. 16:16–17).

The demons knew they were not destined for judgment until after the Millennium and they consequently wondered why Christ now had dealings with them.

*It was much too early for their scheduled **time of torment**, and yet they sensed that Jesus was about to interrupt and destroy their present evil work.*

THE REQUEST OF THE DEMONS

Now there was at a distance from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, “If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” (8:30–31)

In desperation the demons looked around for a way of escape, and they spotted **a herd of many swine feeding** in a pasture.

The great size of the **herd**, which numbered 2,000 animals (Mark 5:13), indicates that the number of demons was also large (see also Mark 5:9).

If You are going to cast us out was not a statement of uncertainty or mere possibility. The idea is, “In light of the fact that You are about to cast us out, ...” Knowing Jesus’ compassion for men and His divine plan to destroy the works of the devil, **THE DEMONS KNEW HE WOULD NOT LET THEM CONTINUE TO INHABIT AND TORMENT THE TWO MEN.**

The request of the demons seems bizarre, and we are not told why they asked to be sent into the herd of swine.

Perhaps they thought the Lord had changed His timetable for judgment and would otherwise immediately throw them into the great abyss. Even inhabiting pigs would be immeasurably better than that. Because **swine** were the most unclean of all unclean animals to the Jews, perhaps the demons thought Jesus would not care if the demons took control of them. Or, **BY INHABITING AND THEN DESTROYING THE PIGS, PERHAPS THEY COULD CAUSE THE PIGS’ OWNERS AND OTHERS IN THE AREA TO TURN AGAINST JESUS. PERHAPS JESUS WOULD BE KILLED FOR KILLING THE PIGS.** Whatever the reason for the demons’ request, it was predicated on the clear understanding that Jesus would not allow them to remain where they were.

THE POWER OF CHRIST

And He said to them, “Be gone!” And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. (8:32)

When the disciples cast out demons even with God’s commissioning and empowering, it often required considerable time and persistence as well as prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29).

But **Jesus cast the entire legion of demons out of the two men with but a word: Begone!** He gave permission to the demons (see Luke 8:32) in the form of a command which they were powerless to disobey, and immediately **they came out, and went into the swine.**

Again...

we can only wonder at the demons’ reason for doing what they did.

Whether they directed **the whole herd** to rush **down the steep bank into the sea** where they **perished in the waters**, or whether that was simply the animals’ frenzied response to being inhabited by the evil spirits, it seems likely the demons knew the outcome in advance. But we do not know why they did what they did or what happened to them after the pigs drowned.

As fallen angels, demons are extremely powerful beings
(SEE 2 KINGS 19:35; Ps. 103:20; 2 PET. 2:11).

When an angel was sent with a message for the prophet Daniel, he was delayed by a demon (called “the prince of the kingdom of Persia”) for three weeks, and the Lord had to send the archangel Michael to his aid (Dan. 10:13).

It is therefore hardly surprising that Paul warns us that even as God's own children we cannot withstand the attacks of demons apart from the Lord's armor, especially the shield of faith ([Eph. 6:16](#)).

DEMONS HAVE SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE (EZEK. 28:3–4), SUPERIOR STRENGTH (MARK 5:4; ACTS 19:16), SUPERIOR SUPERNATURAL POWERS TO PERFORM “SIGNS AND FALSE WONDERS” (2 THESS. 2:9), AND THE SUPERIOR EXPERIENCE OF HAVING EXISTED LONG BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, FIRST AS HOLY ANGELS AND THEN AS FALLEN. THEY NOT ONLY HAVE GREAT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S NATURE AND POWER BUT ALSO GREAT KNOWLEDGE OF MAN’S NATURE AND WEAKNESSES. AS SPIRIT BEINGS THEY ARE NOT LIMITED BY TIME, SPACE, OR FORM.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ has the power to bruise Satan's head and it will only be by the Lord's power that he will be bound and cast into the abyss and eventually into the lake of fire

and brimstone (Rev. 20:3, 10). It required tremendous power to cast out so many demons as Jesus did in the country of the Gadarenes, yet He did it in an instant.

Many people wonder why Jesus would allow so many animals, even unclean pigs, to be destroyed just to cater to the bizarre request of a bunch of demons.

But animals were created for man's use and consumption, and those pigs were destined for slaughter anyway. Their being drowned brought considerable financial loss, but if the owners were Jews—as they may well have been—they had no business raising pigs in the first place.

But the souls of the two possessed men were of infinitely greater value than the two thousand animals, and Jesus did not hesitate to permit such a relatively small sacrifice to be made on the men's behalf.

The primary lesson of this passage, however, does not have to do with the right to raise or eat pigs or with the relative value of pigs and human beings.

THE LORD'S SUPREME PURPOSE IN CASTING OUT THE DEMONS AND MATTHEW'S PURPOSE IN REPORTING IT WERE TO DEMONSTRATE JESUS' AUTHORITY AND POWER OVER SATAN AND HIS FORCES.

*The fact that the demons **went into the swine** and the swine reacted in the frenzy they did was*

dramatic and convincing evidence that they had left the two men. Their fierceness and violence was transferred to the pigs and there could be no doubt in the minds of observers as to what had happened.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PEOPLE

And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city, and reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they entreated Him to depart from their region.
(8:33–34)

When **the herdsmen** saw what happened to their pigs, they **ran away**. The fact that **they reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs**, indicates they realized the connection between the two demon-possessed men and what had happened to the animals.

The pigs' mass suicide proved that Jesus had indeed cast the demons out of the men. Further evidence, which the **herdsmen** and the others discovered when they returned to the scene, was that one of the men—and presumably the other as well—was clothed and sat in his right mind at Jesus' feet (Luke 8:35).

The townspeople, probably including the owners of the pigs, were so amazed by the report that **the whole city came out to meet Jesus**.

That they came specifically **to meet Jesus** shows that He was the focus of attention.

He was of greater concern to them than either the pigs or the two previously possessed men.

Contrary to the suggestion of many interpreters through the centuries, there is no indication in the text that the response of the people was due to their materialistic concern over the loss of so many pigs. Though they were possibly present, the owners of the pigs are not mentioned in any of the three gospel accounts.

**THE ISSUE WAS NOT THE DEMONS,
THE PIGS, OR THE TWO MEN,
BUT JESUS.**

**The people of the city
(probably Gerasa) did not even
give Him the reluctant
reverence shown
by the demons.**

They did not seem the least interested in finding out who He was or why He had come to their area. **THEY WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM,** and entreated Him to depart from their region. They had at first simply come out “to see what it was that had happened,” but when “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 the ‘legion’; **... THEY BECAME FRIGHTENED**” (Mark 5:14–15). They were not angry or resentful but scared.

*When unholy men come face-to-face
with the holy God, they are terrified.*

Again we are reminded that when Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted,” he exclaimed, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:1, 5).

After Peter witnessed Jesus’ miraculous provision of fish that nearly swamped two fishing boats, “he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ ” (Luke 5:8).

When the storm came on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were afraid, but when they saw Jesus still the storm they were even more afraid (Mark 4:38–41).

They were more afraid of Jesus than the storm, because they realized that God Himself was in the boat with them. The sinner who knows he faces God can only see his sin, and the result is fear.

We are not told exactly what the people from the city thought of Jesus. We only know that **they had a glimpse of the supernatural and it caused them to panic.**

They saw One who could control demons, who could control animals, and who could restore shattered minds to sanity—and they wanted nothing to do with Him.

Here we find the first opposition to Jesus recorded in the gospels.

***The people did not ridicule or persecute
Jesus; they simply asked Him
to leave them alone.***

Perhaps they resented His righteousness exposing their sin, His power exposing their weakness, or His compassion exposing their hardness of heart. Perhaps they could not tolerate Jesus because of His perfection. But unlike the scribes and Pharisees, these people showed no interest at all in who Jesus was or in His teaching or work. They seemed totally

indifferent to His person and ministry. They did not care if He was the Messiah. They did not seem to care whether His powers were good or whether He was from God. They did not care anything about Him, except that He would go away. Their rejection of Jesus was in the form of great indifference, the same indifference to God shown by most men throughout history—the indifference that wants to let God alone and to be left alone by God. The Lord was an intrusion with whom they did not want to be bothered.

**IN GREAT CONTRAST TO THE ATTITUDE OF
THOSE PEOPLE, ONE OF THE MEN WHO
HAD BEEN DEMON-POSSESSED
BEGGED JESUS**

“that he might accompany Him”

(Mark 5:18).

He was so grateful to Jesus for deliverance and so drawn to Him in love and adoration that he could not bear to be separated from Him.

But Jesus had other plans for the man, 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*’ ” (v. 19).

Jesus sent the man back to his own people—quite probably the very people who had asked Jesus to leave—to testify to them of the Lord’s love and mercy.

**THE MAN WAS TO BE AN
EVANGELIST AND
MISSIONARY TO HIS OWN
PEOPLE, LIVING TESTIMONY
THAT THE ONE WHOM THEY
HAD REJECTED
NEVERTHELESS LOVED AND
SOUGHT TO REDEEM THEM.**

Even to those who entreat **Him to depart**, Jesus extends His grace.¹

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985–1989), 40–46.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

8:28-34 The devils have nothing to do with Christ as a Saviour; they neither have, nor hope for any benefit from him. Oh the depth of this mystery of Divine love; that fallen man has so much to do with Christ, when fallen angels have nothing to do with him! Heb 2:16. Surely here was torment, to be forced to own the excellence that is in Christ, and yet they had no part in him. The devils desire not to have any thing to do with Christ as a Ruler. See whose language those speak, who will have nothing to do with the gospel of Christ. But it is not true that the devils have nothing to do with Christ as a Judge; for they have, and they know it, and thus it is with all the children of men. Satan and his instruments can go no further than he permits; they must quit possession when he commands. They cannot break his hedge of protection about his people; they cannot enter even a swine without his leave. They had leave. God often, for wise and holy ends, permits the efforts of Satan's rage. Thus the devil hurries people to sin; hurries them to what they have resolved against, which they know will be shame and grief to them: miserable is the condition of those who are led captive by him at his will. **THERE ARE A GREAT MANY WHO PREFER THEIR SWINE BEFORE THE SAVIOUR, AND SO COME SHORT OF CHRIST AND SALVATION BY HIM.** They desire Christ to depart out of their hearts, and will not suffer his word to have place in them, **BECAUSE HE AND HIS WORD WOULD DESTROY THEIR BRUTISH LUSTS,** those swine which they give themselves up to feed.

And justly will Christ forsake all that are weary of him; and say hereafter, Depart, ye cursed, to those who now say to the Almighty, Depart from us.

MacLaren's Expositions

THE PEACE-BRINGER IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Matthew 8:28-34.

Matthew keeps to chronological order in the first and second miracles of the second triplet, but probably His reason for bringing them together was rather similarity in their

contents than proximity in their time. For one cannot but feel that the stilling of the storm, which manifested Jesus as the Peace-bringer in the realm of the Natural, is fitly followed by the casting out of demons, which showed Him as the Lord of still wider and darker realms, and the Peace-bringer to spirits tortured and torn by a mysterious tyranny. His meek power sways all creatures; His 'word runneth very swiftly.' Winds and seas and demons hearken and obey. Cheap ridicule has been plentifully flung at this miracle, and some defenders of the Gospels have tried to explain it away, and have almost apologised for it, but, while it raises difficult problems in its details, the total effect of it is to present a sublime conception of Jesus and of His absolute, universal authority. The conception is heightened in sublimity when the two adjacent miracles are contemplated in connection.

There is singular variation in the readings of the name of the scene of the miracle in the three evangelists. According to the reading of the Authorised Version, Matthew locates it in the 'country of the Gergesenes'; Mark and Luke, in the 'country of the Gadarenes'; whereas the Revised Version, following the general consensus of textual critics, reads 'Gadarenes' in Matthew and 'Gerasenes' in Mark and Luke. Now, Gadara is over six miles from the lake, and the deep gorge of a river lies between, so that it is out of the question as the scene of the miracle. But the only Gerasa known, till lately, is even more impossible, for it is far to the east of the lake. But some years since, Thomson found ruins bearing the name of Khersa or Gersa, 'at the only portion of that coast on which the steep hills come down to the shore' {Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land, p. 459}. This is probably the site of the miracle, and may have been included in the territory dependent on Gadara, and so have been rightly described as in 'the country of the Gadarenes.'

Matthew again abbreviates, omitting many of the most striking and solemn features of the narrative as given by the other two evangelists, and he also diverges from them in mentioning two demoniacs instead of one. That is not contradiction, for if there were two, there was one, but it is divergence, due to more accurate information. Whether they were meant so or no, the abbreviations have the striking result that Jesus speaks but one word, the permissive 'Go,' and that thus His simple presence is the potent spell before which the demons cower and flee. They know Him as 'the Son of God'; a name which, on their lips, must be taken in its full significance. If demoniacal possession is a fact, there is no difficulty in accounting for the name here given to Jesus, nor for the sudden change from the fierce purpose of barring an intruder's path to abject submission. If it is not a fact, to make a plausible explanation of either circumstance will be a task needing many contortions, as is seen by the attempts to achieve it. For example, we are told that the demoniacs were afraid of Jesus, because He 'was not afraid of them,' and they knew Him, because 'men with shattered reason also felt the spell, while the wise and the strong-minded often used their intellect, under the force of passion or prejudice, to resist the force of truth.' Possibly the last clause goes as far to explain some critics' non-recognition of demoniacal possession as the first does to explain the demoniacs' recognition of Jesus!

To the demonic nature Christ's coming brought torture, as the sunbeam, which gives life

to many, also gives death to ugly creatures that crawl and swarm in the dark. Turn up a stone, and the creeping things hurry out of the penetrating glare so unwelcome. 'What maketh heaven, that maketh hell,' and the same presence is life or death, joy or agony. The dear perception of divine purity and the shuddering recoil of impotent hatred from it are surely of the very essence of the demonic nature, and every man, who looks into the depths of his own spirit, knows that the possibilities of such a state are in him.

Our Lord discriminated between healing the sick and casting out demons. He distinguished between forms of disease due to possession and the same diseases when dissociated from it, as, for example, cases of dumbness. His whole attitude, both in His actual dealing with the possessed and in His referring to the subject, gave His complete adhesion to the reality of the awful thing. It is vain to say that He humoured the delusions of insanity in order to cure them. That theory does not adequately explain any of the facts and does not touch some of them. It is perilous to try to weaken the force of the narrative by saying that the evangelists were under the influence of popular notions {which are quietly assumed to have been wrong}, and hence that their prepossessions coloured their representations. If the mirror was so distorted, what reliance can be placed on any part of its reflection of Jesus? There can be no doubt that the Gospel narrative asserts and assumes the reality of demoniacal possession, and if the representation that Jesus also assumed it is due to the evangelists, what trust can be reposed in authorities which misrepresent Him in such a matter? On the other hand, if they do not misrepresent Him, and He blundered, confounding mere insanity with possession by a demon, what reliance can be reposed in Him as our Teacher of the Unseen World? The issues involved are very grave and far-reaching, and raillery or sarcasm is out of place.

But the question is pertinent: By what right do we allege that demoniacal possession is an exploded figment and an impossibility? Do we know ourselves or our fellows so thoroughly as to be warranted in denying that deep down in the mysterious 'subliminal consciousness' there is a gate through which spiritual beings may come into contact with human personalities? He would be bold, to the verge of presumption or somewhat further, who should take up such a position. And have we any better right to assume that we know so much of the universe as to be sure that there are no evil spirits there, who can come into contact with human spirits and wield an alien tyranny over them? The Christian attitude is not that of such far-reaching denial which outruns our knowledge, but that of calm belief that Jesus is the head of all principality and power, and that to Him all are subject. It is taken for granted that the supposed possession is insanity. But may it not rather be that to-day some of the supposed insanity is possession? Be that as it may-and perhaps those who have the widest experience of 'lunatics' would be the least ready to dismiss the possibility,-Jesus recognised the reality that there were souls oppressed by a real personality, which had settled itself in the house of life, and none of us has wide and deep enough knowledge to contradict Him. Might it not be better to accept His witness in this, as in other matters beyond our ken, as true, and to ponder it?

The demons' petition, according to the Received Text, takes the form, 'Suffer us to go,'

while the reading adopted by most modern editors is 'Send us.' The former reading seems to be taken from [Luke 8:32](#), while Mark has 'Send' {not the same word as now read in Matthew}. But Mark goes on to say, not that Jesus sent them, but that He 'suffered them' or 'gave them leave' {the same word as in Matthew, according to the Received Text}. Thus, Jesus' part in the transaction is simply permissive, and the one word which He speaks is authoritative indeed in its curtness, and means simply 'away,' or 'begone.' It casts them out but does not send them in. He did not send them into the herd, but out of the men, and did not prevent their entrance into the swine. It should further be noted that nothing in the narrative suggests that the destruction of the herd was designed even by the demons, much less by Jesus. The maddened brutes rushed straight before them, not knowing why or where; the steep slope was in front, and the sea was at its foot, and their terrified, short gallop ended there. The last thing the demons would have done would have been to banish themselves, as the death of the swine did banish them, from their new shelter. There is no need, then, to invent justifications for Christ's destroying the herd, for He did not destroy it. No doubt, keeping swine was a breach of Jewish law; no doubt the two demoniacs and the bystanders would be more convinced of the reality of the exorcism by the fate of the swine, but these apologies are needless.

The narrative suggests some affinity between the demoniac and the animal nature, and though it is easy to ridicule, it is impossible to disprove, the suggestion. We know too little about either to do that, and what we cannot disprove it is somewhat venturesome hardly to deny. There are depths in the one nature, which we cannot fathom though its possessors are close to us; the other is removed from our investigation altogether. Where we are so utterly ignorant we had better neither affirm nor deny. But we may take a homiletical use out of that apparent affinity, and recognise that a spirit in rebellion against God necessarily gravitates downwards, and becomes more or less bestialised.

No wonder that the swineherds fled, but, surely, it is a wonder that eagerness to be rid of Jesus was the sole result of the miracle. Perhaps the reason was the loss of the swine, which would bulk largest in their keepers' excited story; perhaps the reason was a fear that He would find out and rebuke other instances of breach of strict Jewish propriety, perhaps it was simply the shrinking from any close contact with the heavenly, or apparently supernatural, which is so instinctive in us, and witnesses to a dormant consciousness of discord with Heaven. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,' is the cry of the roused conscience. And, alas! it has power to send away Him whom we need, and who comes to us, just because we are sinful, and just that He may deliver us from our sin.