

We must be careful not to derive a demonology based upon this encounter only, for Luke is not trying to establish a detailed instruction of how demons work, what the abyss is, how they travel, etc. What he is showing is that Jesus is vastly superior in power, authority, and goodness. Jesus comes in mercy to man and judgment to His enemies, no matter how many demons there are, they quake and shiver in the presence of the Son of God.

Luke gives us great hope in this passage of Jesus' supreme power and authority to free us from the tyranny of our spiritual enemies. I have listed four, but I am sure that there are more.

1. HOPE #1: The Gospel of the Kingdom is for All Peoples
  - a. Gerasenes - Booming and bustling lively region
    - i. All the gospel writers who convey this story use the phrase ‘the country of...’
    - ii. Thus, they indicate an area, a region, not a particular town
  - b. Pagan – indicated by pig farming
    - i. Region to the east of the Galilee that was highly Hellenized
    - ii. Most of the locals were of Syrian descent
      1. Interestingly, there is evidence of very early Christian influence in the region
      2. Did it begin with this man's testimony?
  - c. Jesus lands here with a purpose
    - i. Jesus always has a purpose for going where he is going
      1. Interestingly, here he seems to get off the boat, deal with this demoniac, and then leave
      2. It's not much of a trip compared to his earlier travels, but we must confirm that he is purposeful in it
    - ii. Luke is answering the question that the disciples left off with in v25 – “What kind of man is this?”
      1. Nature obeys him immediately
      2. Demons cower before him
      3. His greatness brings fear to people
2. HOPE #2: Jesus Can Rescue the Most Devastated Life
  - a. It is amazing to see how Jesus crossed the sea for this enslaved filthy violent man
    - i. This man was ceremonially unclean, having lived among the tombs and the pigs
    - ii. Jesus went to him so that he could be clean by the power of the King
  - b. The man's devastation is revealed in three ways, all of which reveal a form of isolation
    - i. from the city but lived in the tombs
      1. isolated from people - anti-social
      2. moved to be near death and decay and destruction – a place of uncleanness
    - ii. naked (for a long time) and lived in no house
      1. nakedness is undignified, shameful, particularly in the Near East culture
      2. he wandered without order
      3. his homelessness was not the curse but the result of being unable to live within the confines of a relationship
    - iii. could not be contained, but broke bonds and escaped to the wilderness
      1. Mark refers to him cutting himself with stones (Mark 5)
      2. His anti-social behavior was violent and he could not be contained
      3. He was driven violently to isolation, disorder, shame, and destruction
  - c. The cause of his plight was that he was “demonized”

- i. Interestingly, the Scriptures never use the phrase “possessed by” demons, but rather that a person “was having demons” or was “demonized”
- ii. Luke recognizes, as the medical field did in his day, the difference between illness and mental disorders or psychological disease
  - 1. Hippocrates explained all of it as of natural causes, but Luke explains this particular man as having a spiritual root
  - 2. There are elements which describe the morbidity of this spiritual oppression
    - a. the nature of the torment of these demons was not simply to bring suffering (which they did), but was to bring about isolation, loneliness, the brokenness of insanity and selfishness that did not concern itself with others
    - b. This man was trapped, seized, and shackled by these many spiritual powers who had invaded him
    - c. This imprisonment lead to a morbid desire for destruction, decay, isolation, nakedness, and superhuman strength
      - i. This is not to say that all these signs are signs of demonization, but rather that Luke is showing just how enslaved this man was to this legion of demons
      - ii. He is really, really, broken by them (and Jesus is about to show himself really, really, powerful and authoritative)
- d. The role and desire of demons is to devastate those “made in the image of God”, to deface His image in them and to demean the dignity therein
  - i. This man’s lack of possessing his own mind was indicative of the enemy’s undermining his likeness to God
  - ii. He could no longer think of himself in relationship to God, others, himself, and creation
  - iii. As a destroyer, these demons were seeking (and had succeeded thus far), to debase and demean and destroy this man and to make him do things that dehumanize and humiliate and to render him severely different than God made humanity to be (like God morally, relationally, and communicatory)
- e. “Who was to show him the compassion that would snatch him out of so many deaths after a thousand defeats?” – Jean Calvin

### 3. HOPE #3: The Spiritual Enemies of God Know They’re Doomed

- a. The presence of Jesus makes the demonized man cried out
  - i. he screamed – a loud scream – WHEN HE SAW JESUS
  - ii. Most likely this is a night scene, not a daylight scene
    - 1. Imagine getting off the boat after a huge storm in which you thought you were going to die, only to be confronted by this man screaming in the dark as he approaches
    - 2. Yet, he doesn’t attack...he surrenders to Jesus
- b. fell down before him
  - i. not in worship, but in surrender
  - ii. Note that the demons don’t even try to resist Jesus, but only beg him to delay their destruction
- c. saying:
  - i. "What is between us?"
    - 1. This has the basic idea of “Mind your own business!” or “Leave us alone!”
    - 2. The demons immediately fear their impending doom, indicating that the demonic world has no false hopes of victory in the end. They know they’re doomed because God is sovereign and some judgments have already occurred.

- a. Luke 10:18
    - b. Jude 1:6
  - ii. "Jesus, son of the most high God"
    - 1. Legion recognizes Jesus
    - 2. This title cannot be taken as merely messianic (such as 'son of God' can refer to biblical kings), but only as divine because of the unique title "Most High God"
    - 3. The language here and in the demon's name (Legion) is very Hellenistic, indicating that the man's knowledge and understanding is not eradicated by the demon into some Aramaic form
  - iii. "I beg you, do not torment me"
    - 1. they don't want to be sent into the abyss
      - a. the "torment" that they fear is being sent into isolation, ironically
      - b. The tormenters who isolate fear being tormented in isolation
    - 2. They recognize Jesus' authority to judge them, and that their judgment would be torment
      - a. JESUS HAS BOTH THE POWER AND THE AUTHORITY TO JUDGE HIS SPIRITUAL ENEMIES
4. HOPE #4: Jesus Has All Power and Authority Over All Things
- a. He asks him his name
    - i. To give a person one's name upon request was to acknowledge their authority over you
      - 1. Genesis 32:29 – Jacob asks for his wrestler's name, but does not receive it
    - ii. This whole encounter is meant to show Jesus' power over all demonic forces unified in strength – they are no match, thus their name "Legion" is important
      - 1. Jesus doesn't always ask for a name, but he does here to show his great authority
    - iii. Jesus is the King over all:
 

"Today Jesus alone rules and reigns in exalted glory as Lord over man and beast, male and female, gays and straights, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, simple and wise, powerful and powerless, Republicans and Democrats, married and single, chaste and unchaste, modern and postmodern, Christians and non-Christians, angels and demons, the living and the dead, every religion, every spirituality, every philosophy, every thought, every word, every deed, every dollar, and every inch of creation, which he claims as his possession under his throne that is over all." — Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Jesus*
  - b. There are many demons
    - i. Legion is roman unit of 2-6000 soldiers
      - 1. Military term for a military context
      - 2. The most powerful unit in the most powerful army in the world
    - ii. The point is that even when there is a huge number of spiritual foes, they don't even stand a chance against Jesus and his authority – and they know it!
  - c. They beg him to let them into the pigs, rather than the abyss
    - i. They "beg" Jesus not to send them away into the abyss, which they consider torture
      - 1. It seems that spiritual persons, angels and demons, were also created for community and they fear isolation?
    - ii. They must ask his permission and receive his permission before they can go anywhere!
    - iii. Think about that! Satan is simply not that powerful, nor does he have any authority outside the permission of God.
  - d. Jesus gives them permission
    - i. This shows his great authority and power

1. Demons don't simply answer to Satan, but Jesus trumps all hierarchy in the spiritual realm
- ii. It also shows compassion upon demons! What?!
- iii. They leave the man and enter the pigs and destroy the pigs in the lake
  1. There are many questions left here regarding the demons and the pigs, but the primary point is to show that the demons left the man and did not remain to harm others
  2. Interestingly, Jesus let the demons destroy the pigs but they were not allowed to harm the Image-Bearer
    - a. Jesus, then, shows us that humanity is of greater value to the LORD than the rest of creation
- iv. Remember this when God gives permission for Satan to bring some kind of suffering into your life: God is for your good in it
  1. **2 Corinthians 12:7** So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. (2Co 12:7 ESV)

All the afflictions, and all the temptations, and all the oppressions, and all the oppositions, and all the persecutions which befall a godly man, shall work for his good. Every cross, and every loss, and every disease which befall the holy man, shall work for his good. Every device, every snare, every deceit, every stratagem, and every enterprise of Satan against the holy man, shall work for his good. Every prosperity and every adversity; every storm and every calm; every bitter and every sweet; every cross and every comfort—shall work for the holy man's good.

When God gives a mercy—that shall work for his good. When God takes away a mercy that shall work for his good.

O Christian! What though friends and relations frown upon you, what though enemies are plotting and conspiring against you, what though needs, like armed men, are breaking in upon you, what though men rage, and devils roar against you, what though sickness is devastating your family, what though death stands every day at your elbow—yet there is no reason for you to fear nor faint, because all these things shall work for your good!" — Thomas Brooks

## 5. Two Reactions: Fear or Faith

### a. Reaction of the locals:

- i. The pig farmers saw this and word spread quickly throughout the city and the countryside
- ii. They came and saw the man restored, sitting calmly at Jesus' feet, clothed and sane.
  1. The farmers explained how he had been "healed" - restored
- iii. They were freaked out - afraid
  1. They begged Jesus to go away, to leave them
  2. They were so afraid of Jesus' power that, even though he had healed and restored a man, they didn't want him around.
    - a. This was not about the loss of pigs, but about fear of his great power
- iv. They cared more about themselves than they did Jesus or the healed man

### b. Reaction of the Man:

- i. Jesus sets out to leave, but the man begs to be near Jesus
  1. Jesus tells the man to stay
    - a. Literally, "sent him away"
  2. but commands the man to tell his story of what God had done in his own city

- a. Sometimes Jesus says to leave your town and follow him, sometimes he say to proclaim him in your own city
  - b. There is a point that this is a Gentile city, so he commands the man to tell his story, where earlier he had told people to keep quiet near Jerusalem because he was not to be crowned king by the people (he came to die)
- ii. Jesus doesn't just send him away, but "sends him home" and gives him a mission: "declare all that God has done for you"
  - 1. Going home is the restoration that this man needed after being isolated for many years
  - 2. It is wholeness: spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational wholeness brought about by Jesus
- iii. Note: Jesus said to declare all that GOD had done for him and the man went about proclaiming all that JESUS had done for him

### Gospel Connection: What Kind of Man is This?

Jesus has tremendous authority and power and no enemy can stand before Him. He rescues us from our enslavement to death and destruction, both objectively (judicial) and subjectively (experiential). He was isolated that you might be brought in, entombed that you might be raised to life, bound up that you might be set free, shamed that you might find honor, and devastated for your rescue that you might know the joy of His enduring life. He was raised victorious, leading captives in his train, the divine rescue of slaves set free by the powerful King of Grace. There is no power that is formed against you that can now stand. If God is for you, no enemy physical or spiritual, can destroy you! Your King rode to your rescue, slayed the dragon, and carried the girl from the fray in His arms away from the danger of devastating isolation, judgment, and destruction to always secure and protect you from all your foes.

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone...<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and rescue all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Heb 2:9,14-15 ESV)

### Benediction:

"If Christ on the cross has spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter this great enemy of our souls. The result of the battle is certain, for as the Lord our Savior has overcome once even so shall we most surely conquer in him.

Hold up the cross before you. Let that be your shield and buckler and rest assured that as your master not only routed the foe but afterwards took the spoil, it shall be even so with you.

Your battles with Satan shall turn to your advantage. You shall become all the richer for your antagonists. The more numerous they shall be, the greater shall be your share of the spoil. Your tribulation shall work patience, and your patience experience, and your experience hope – a hope that makes not ashamed. Through this much tribulation shall you inherit the kingdom, and by the very attacks of Satan shall you be helped the better to enjoy the rest which remains to the people of God." -Charles Spurgeon