

Lesson 258

The Demoniac of Gadara

Story Elements



- **Text:** Luke 8:26-39 (also Mark 5:1-20; Matt. 8:28-34)
- **Setting:** circa 28 AD in Gadara (or Gerasa, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee)
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, and a demon-possessed man.
- **Plot:** Jesus delivers a man from the power of many devils.
- **Key word(s):** “_____” – In the previous account, Jesus demonstrated His power over a violent storm that terrified His disciples. In this account, we see His power over terror again—not the terror of a raging sea, but the terror of a demon-possessed man who brought fear to an entire region.
- **Climax:** **Mark 5:9** *And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.* The severity of the man’s demonic bondage is strikingly revealed in his sudden shift from

the singular pronoun “my” to the plural pronoun “we.”

The Demoniac Described

- 1) (vv 26-27) Having crossed the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and his disciples are met on the other side by a man possessed of many devils. Notice his description (which is symptomatic of many who are under demonic influence):
 - a) *ware no clothes* - he was unashamedly _____.
 - b) *neither abode in any house, but in the tombs* - he had an affinity for the _____ and the macabre.
 - c) (v 29) *he brake the bands* - the devils empowered him with unnatural, violent strength.
 - d) (Mark 5:5) *crying and cutting himself with stones* - under constant mental anguish, he sought relief through _____.

APPLICATION ➔ J.C. Ryle warns “...the devil is continually exercising a fearful power over many hearts and souls. He still urges many, in whose hearts he reigns, into self-dishonoring and self-destroying habits of life.”¹

The Demons Denounced

- 2) (v 28) The devils immediately recognized Jesus as the Son of God, and acknowledged the deity of Christ by asking not to be tormented. Even the devils know Christ is King and Judge and he will one day be their Tormentor. Notice:

Matthew 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

- a) (v 30) The devils begged Jesus not to send them into the deep (or “the _____”), which is the place of torment for the wicked. Matthew Henry notes that, “They do not say, *I beseech thee, save me*, but only, *Torment me not*. See whose language *they* speak that have only a dread of hell as a place of torment, but no desire of heaven as a place of holiness and love.”²
- b) Jesus asked for the demons’ name, not because he needed the information to cast it out, but because he wished for all to know the _____ of the man’s condition.

¹ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Volume II* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 267.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1849.

The Demoniac Delivered

- 3) (vv 32-33) The devils intended Jesus to cast them into a herd of swine instead of sending them to the place of torment. The demon-possessed herd then ran down a steep incline and drowned in the sea. This detail of the story raises two questions: (1) Why did the devils wish to possess swine? (2) Why did Jesus permit this? I answer:
- a) As to the first question: it seems that devils cast out are sent to the abyss, and the swine were the only living bodies in the vicinity. The details of the spirit world are best left veiled as they are in Holy Scripture. Too much conjecture is unproductive.
 - b) As to the second question: perhaps Jesus permitted the herd of swine to be destroyed to bring to light the villagers' materialism and _____.

APPLICATION➡ Whatever the reasons, Spurgeon reminds us “Swine prefer _____ to devilry; and if men were not worse than swine, they would be of the same opinion.”³

- 4) (vv 34-39) We see two very different reactions to the man's deliverance:
- a) The swine herders (and the people of the town) feared Christ and were probably not a little upset over the loss of 2,000 pigs that perished (Mark 5:13). Instead of asking the Savior to stay and preach and heal, they begged him to _____.

APPLICATION➔ Matthew Henry laments, "t truly is a great tragedy that the country of the Gadarenes asked Jesus to leave instead of stay. "Those lose their Saviour, and their hopes in him, that love their swine better."⁴

- b) The man who had been possessed was grateful and asked to continue traveling with Jesus, but the Savior instructed him to return to his home and share his testimony.

APPLICATION➔ Some may wonder why the Savior would not allow the man to continue to follow Him. It is because Jesus was not wanted there. But in His mercy, He would not leave the Decapolis region without a powerful _____ of Christ's might and mercy.

[illegible]

Answer Key: key word(s) “devils” • 1. fewer; a) immodest; b) death; d) self-mutilation • 2. a) Abyss; b) severity • 3. b) greed; ➔ death • 4. a) leave; ➔ testimony

³ Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 54.

⁴ Henry.