

- B. His request: "And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country" (10).
1. According to Luke 8:31: "...that he would not command them to depart into the abyss."
  2. The terms "abyss" is used nine times in the NT: Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3; Lk. 8:31. It refers to the abode of demons or evil spirits in all but the first scripture, and it means "bottomless pit." In Romans 10:7, it is equivalent to Hades, the more comprehensive term which includes the abode of both righteous and wicked spirits awaiting resurrection and judgment; hence the abode of Jesus between death and resurrection.
  3. "How they had managed to escape from the abyss and get into this man is one of the unsolved mysteries of the spirit world. Knowing so little as we do of that world, we need not be surprised that we know not this"--McGarvey.
  - C. Into the swine: "Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of many swine feeding...." (Mark 5:11-13; Luke 8:32,33; Matt. 8:32).
    1. Preferring to abide in that country, the Lord granted their request.
    2. Whether their motive was to injure Jesus in that area or not, Jesus merely gave consent to the doomed spirits. Becoming as crazy as the man had been, the entire herd, about 2,000, rushed down the steep into the sea and were drowned.
- IV. EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE (5:14-20; Luke 8:34-39; Matthew 8:33,34).
- A. The miracle was reported by the swine herdsman "in the city, and in the country."
  - B. A Jesus-possessed man. (See Cox, Miracles of Jesus, p. 29).
    1. Tranquillized—"Sitting," instead of raging.
    2. Civilized - "clothed," instead of naked.
    3. Intellectualized, sane—"In his right mind" instead of deranged.
    4. Spiritualized—"At the feet of Jesus," instead of impure.  - C. In great fear, all the people asked, and besought Jesus to depart their country. Jesus departed (Mark 5:17,21; Luke 8:37,40; Matt. 8:34; 9:1).
  - D. The man healed, not being allowed his request to go with Jesus, was sent to his home and friends, gladly giving publicity to him who saved him (Mark 7:31-37).

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON ELEVEN  
Healing of the Fierce Demoniac  
Mark 5:1-20

INTRODUCTION -

I. Having stilled the tempest and the Sea of Galilee, Jesus went east toward "the country of the Gerasenes" (5:1). Matthew (8:28) calls it the "Gadarenes."

Whether the difference is merely one made by some copyist is not certainly known. The place, however, was in the still larger district known as Decapolis (ten cities).

II. This miracle demonstrates the Lord's power over demons, evil spirits.

A. There is some mystery about demonology which cannot be explained, yet the subject occupies a prominent place in the Bible.

1. Turning from God to familiar spirits was forbidden in the law of Moses (Lev. 19:31).
  2. The Bible speaks of demons as distinct spirits (distinct from the person in whom they dwell). (Mark 1:25; James 2:19; Rev. 16:14).
  3. Jesus so recognized and treated them (Matt. 12:43-45a; Luke 11:24-26).
  4. Sin may have paved the way for their entry, for such demon possession could not take place without the consent of the person (John 13:27; 1 Samuel 16:14; 1 Kings 22:21-23).
  5. They were not merely diseases such as insanity and epilepsy, as is so often explained today by skeptics. In the Bible they are contrasted with diseases (Matt. 4:24; Mark 1:32-34).
  6. They were intelligences of some kind, for they were spoken to and they could answer (Matt. 8:31).
  7. Some of them possessed superhuman knowledge, for they knew divine beings (Matt. 8:29; Luke 4:34; Acts 19:15).
  8. They had desires and expressed them (Mark 5:12,13).
  9. They believe, know and confess (James 2:19; Luke 4:34; Acts 16:17). See Fourfold Gospel, 167. A. L. Commentary, 5-1-49, p. 118.
- B. A. Campbell, who delivered a lecture on Demonology, set forth the view that "the demons of the New Testament were the spirits of dead men." His view was that was the prevailing belief among the Jews and Greeks of the apostolic age, and of the ages preceding and following it, and that there is no spe-

cial or peculiar Bible interpretation which would deny that to be the true meaning. Cf. McGarvey, Commentary on Matthew--Mark, p. 77, 78.

C. Whether demon possession is still possible or not is a matter of frequent discussion. So far as we know, such is not possible now. Though we know of no scripture which states specifically that such is not possible, we know of no evidence or scripture that demons are allowed to influence men now as then. See A. L. Commentary, 2-23-36, p. 58. The most likely reason is that since miracles have served their purpose, there being no one on earth now able to cast out demons, God will no longer permit us to be tormented by that for which there is no relief. See Gospel Advocate, 3-14-74, p. 164; 3-21-74, p. 177; 4-18-74; 5-16-74.

#### DISCUSSION -

##### I. THE DEMONIAIC DESCRIBED (Mark 5:1-5; cf. Luke 8:26,27).

- A. To the other side: "And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes" (1).
1. The little town of Gergesa is on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee, about half way between the northern and southern ends of the lake.
  2. Gergesa was in the district of the Gerasenes. McGarvey & Pendleton point out that Gadara was some 16 miles southeast and some seven miles inland from the lake. At least 50 miles southeast, on the borders of Arabia was Gerasa. There is some question whether there was an error in transcribing "Gerasenes" here from what was more likely "Gergesenes," as in Matthew 8:28.
- B. The possessed man, out of the tombs: "And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain" (2,3).
1. The tombs were in the sides of the mountain, which McGarvey reported filed with natural and artificial caves, used as tombs.
  2. Matthew mentions two men demon-possessed; evidently Mark and Luke describe the fiercer of the two, who spoke to Jesus. As Matthew Henry quaintly remarks, "If there were two, there was one."

3. The principal one was greatly disturbed mentally. He, being so far from God, being without shame or modesty, wore no clothes. (Mentioned only by Luke). Like the spirit which possessed him, he was unclean.

4. Living alone in the tombs (regarded unclean by all the Jews), he possessed super-human strength and was a very dangerous, anti-social man no man could bind, chain or tame.

4. Wandering day and night through the tombs and mountains, he tormented himself by cutting himself with stones, and crying out in agony as his own spirit evidently vainly tried to throw off the influence of the demons.

##### III. THE APPEAL TO JESUS (Mark 5:6-8; cf. Luke 8:28,29).

- A. Ran and worshipped: "And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee, by God, torment me not" (6,7).
1. The man cried out, though it was the demon speaking through him.
  2. Knowing it was useless to run from Jesus, the demons, recognizing the supremacy of the Lord, appealed to Jesus to be let alone.
- B. Come forth: "For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man" (8; cf. Luke 8:29; Matt. 8:29).
1. This command of the Lord explains the reason for the demon's appeal. This was a meeting of two great opposing powers for possession and control of a human personality.
  2. "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time" (Matt. 8:29)? This indicates they recognized and expected Jesus to be finally victorious over such doomed spirits.

##### III. THE REQUEST GRANTED (Mark 5:9-13a; cf. Luke 8:30-33).

- A. What is thy name? "And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many" (9).
1. Jesus may have asked this question of the man to assure him of his pity; but the demons in charge continued to do the speaking.
  2. Legion was the name of a Roman military unit of 4,000 to 6,000 men.
  3. As used here, it probably meant a large but indefinite number.