



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

**9/2, 9/9 (9/16 = Pr. Robin & Steve & Bruce:** FYI, focus enlarged for WNC. Apostles to Peter to studying Peter's letters. This should take us through the winter!

Too much great information on the team of the Apostles that help set up the study of Peter.

**Nikki:** Can use below for bulletin

**Jessica:** Work your magic. Will take us through the end of 2020 with the study of Peter and his letters beginning in 2021. The promo can be related with wording update when we get to 2021.

CAN WE DO A VIDEO ANNC OF THIS AS A TEAM?

Maybe IN the radio station? Where Bruce can walk behind us as we record? Or would you advise it just be me? Inviting them to actually come on Wednesday night but also tune in to the Podcast/Videocast

**Michelle:** Just want you to be informed.

Join Pastor Orleen and the Wednesday Night Crew as we answer: "Who Are The Apostles?"

Begins: September 16th @ Wednesday Night Church.6:30PM-8PM in the auditorium. We will end this series with an in-depth study of the Apostle Peter.)

**Miracles break this 400 years of "silence"** (mindsets were created as well as civic structure):

- God's silence is broken by John the Baptist's declaration of Jesus' miraculous birth.
- His miracles force us to say "yes" or "no" to Him.
- They authenticate His ministry.
- They reveal His character.

1. **Jesus turns water to wine.** John 2:1-11
2. **Jesus heals a nobleman's son.** John 4:46-54
3. Jesus provides a great catch of fish. *Luke 5:1-11*
4. Jesus heals a demoniac in a synagogue. *Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37*
5. Jesus heals Peter's wife's mother. *Luke 4:38, 39; Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31*
6. Jesus cleanses a leper. *Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-15*
7. Jesus heals a paralytic. *Luke 5:18-26; Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:3-12*
8. **Jesus heals a cripple at Bethesda.** *John 5:1-18*
9. Jesus heals a withered hand. *Luke 6:6-10; Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6*
10. Jesus heals a centurion's servant. *Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10*
11. Jesus raises a widow's son. *Luke 7:11-17*
12. Jesus stills a storm. *Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25; Matthew 8:23-27*
13. Jesus delivers a demoniac in Gedara. *Luke 8:27-39; Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20*
14. Jesus heals a hemorrhaging woman. *Luke 8:43-48; Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34*
15. Jesus raises Jairus's daughter. *Luke 8:41-56; Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43*
16. Jesus heals two blind men. *Matthew 9:27-31*
17. Jesus casts out a dumb spirit. *Matthew 9:32-35*
18. **Jesus feeds 5,000 people.** *John 6:1-14; Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17*

19. **Jesus walks on water.** *Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:15-21*
20. Jesus heals a Syro-phonician girl. *Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30*
21. Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man. *Mark 7:31-37*
22. Jesus feeds 4,000 people. *Matthew 15:30-38; Mark 8:1-9*
23. Jesus heals a blind man. *Mark 8:22-26*
24. Jesus delivers a demonized boy. *Mark 9:14-29; Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43*
25. Jesus provides money in a fish's mouth. *Matthew 17:24-27*
26. **Jesus heals a man born blind.** *John 9*
27. Jesus heals a woman bound by Satan. *Luke 13:10-17*
28. Jesus heals a man with dropsy. *Luke 14:1-6*
29. **Jesus raises Lazarus.** *John 11*
30. Jesus cleanses ten lepers. *Luke 17:11-19*
31. Jesus heals Bartimaeus. *Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43*
32. Jesus curses a fig tree. *Matthew 21:17-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-24*
33. **Jesus replaces Malchus's ear.** *Matthew 26:51-56; Mark 14:46, 47; Luke 22:50, 51; John 18:10, 11*
34. **Wonders at Calvary.** Mt 28, Luke 24, Mark 16, John 20
35. **Jesus provides a catch of fish.** *John 21:1-14*

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<sup>1</sup> Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (pp. 163-165). Nashville: T. Nelson.



When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing)  
When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

- **What is being communicating about Christ in this Miracle?** (About Jesus' Divinity and His unique Mission). "Special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.

**9<sup>th</sup> When Jesus Walks on Water** *Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:15–21*

The natural and supernatural power that resides in Christ is now accessible to His Disciples via FAITH

**8<sup>th</sup> When Jesus Feeds the 5,000** (Week #9)

Jesus Provides

**7<sup>th</sup> When Jesus Heals Malchus' Ear** **John 18** (week #8)

Jesus willingly goes to His death. Obedience unto the cross. Obedience unto death.

**Obedience** "Shall I not drink from the cup the Father has given me?"

**6<sup>th</sup> The Large Catch of Fish** (Week #7)

Apart from me, you can do nothing and I am STILL HERE with you.

**5<sup>th</sup>. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.** (Week #6)

Jesus has Power over death.

**4th. Jesus heals a man born blind** **Jesus creates EYES = Jesus has creation power!** (Week #5)

Jesus is the only one who can give light to those lost in darkness (spiritually as well as physically).

(He can create what is not there.)

**3rd. Jesus heals an unbelieving invalid at Bethesda** (Week #4)

Jesus and the Father are ONE. (Master of Time?)\*

As Jesus went to find the man to let him know it was Christ who had the power to heal an unbeliever

Jesus is the one who can bring Salvation. **Jesus and the Father are ONE:**

- Grace bestowed on anyone He chooses (believer or unbeliever)
- Even on the Sabbath (He is LORD of the Sabbath)
- Power over the hopeless. (38 year invalid)

**2nd. Jesus heals a nobleman's son.** *John 4:46–54* (Week #3)

Jesus' Words are the Power of God [Jesus spoke and what He says is Truth]

- The greatest demonstration of God's deity is His ability to create everything by the power of His word. That's who He is. That's what He does. **His words are not just informative; they are performative.** Divine words spoken long-distance from over eighteen miles away had caused the terminally sick boy to recover.

**Jesus Says:**

- Believe and inherit eternal life. **John 3:16**
- Your sins are forgiven. **Mark 2:9**
- Faith comes through hearing God's Word. **Romans 10:17**
- His Word exposes our inner thoughts. **Hebrews 4:12**
- His Word cleanses. **Ephesians 5:25-26**
- His Word Sanctifies. **John 17:17**
- His Word bears much fruit when it grows in our life. **John 15:7-8**
- His Word defeats the Enemy of our souls. **Ephesians 6:17**

**1st. Jesus turns water to wine.** *John 2:1–11* (Week #2)

Jesus Transforms

Week #1: Intertestamental period



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**Jesus Delivers a Demoniac in Gedara**

Luke 8:27–39; Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20

**Luke 8:27-39**

<sup>27</sup> When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.<sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.”<sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)<sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him.<sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart **into the abyss**.<sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission.<sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.<sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.<sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.<sup>37</sup> **Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear.** So he got into the boat and returned.<sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,<sup>39</sup> **“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”** And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

**Matthew 8:28-34**

**Jesus Heals Two Men with Demons**

<sup>28</sup> And 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**.<sup>29</sup> 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?”<sup>30</sup> Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them.<sup>31</sup> And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.”<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men.<sup>34</sup> And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

**Mark 5:1-20**

**Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon**

<sup>5</sup> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.<sup>2</sup> And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.<sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain,<sup>4</sup> for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. **No one had the strength to subdue him.**<sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.<sup>6</sup> And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him.<sup>7</sup> And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”<sup>8</sup> For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”<sup>9</sup> And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”<sup>10</sup> And he begged him earnestly **not to send them out of the country**.<sup>11</sup> Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,<sup>12</sup> and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.”<sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out **and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand**, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

<sup>14</sup> The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup> And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. <sup>17</sup> And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. <sup>18</sup> As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. <sup>19</sup> And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled

### Background Notes:

- Gentile Territory - The variants in the names are not a major problem, because one refers to a town and the other to a district in the general area of Decapolis [the "ten cities"], which was Gentile territory.
- Tombs as the resting place of the dead were **ritually unclean for Jews**. It is fascinating to note that the demons in this man begged to enter pigs, who were also ritually unclean. The account is thus bracketed by references to the unclean places preferred by demons. This underlines their own corrupt and corrupting nature (see Luke 8:29, which calls the demon an "unclean spirit").
- **"Into the abyss" (8:31)**. The "abyss" is a place in which some of the angels who fell with Satan are currently confined, awaiting God's final judgment

**2 Pet. 2:4** <sup>4</sup> For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell<sup>[a]</sup> and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

**Jude 6** <sup>6</sup> And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

- As Jesus' ministry progresses, it appears the miracles are being performed for only a few to see, be around for. (Not dealing with the crowds any longer.)
- It was universally believed, in both Jewish and pagan circles, that there are forces beyond what we can see and hear, and that some of them are good (angels) and some evil (demons).
- This is not a dualistic belief, at least not in Judaism, which acknowledges God as sovereign: Satan and his demonic forces were originally made to know and enjoy God, but have rebelled. They have great power, but not unlimited power. God is still in ultimate control.
- Here are two men, eaten up by these dark forces in their lives, driven berserk and living in the tombs (frequently associated with the occult, both then and now).
- The Jews knew well that when the day of judgment arrived God and his Messiah would utterly destroy all demons. The demonic awareness in these two men sensed that Jesus was indeed that Messiah.
- Had the day of judgment come? That fear lies behind their question, forced up through the voices of the men: 'What do you want with us, Son of God?... Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?' (29).
- Jesus does not parley with the evil spirits. He simply utters one word of command, 'Go!' (32), and they go—into the herd of pigs, which stampedes over the steep bank into the lake.

### Insights:

- The man, for all his wild and unpredictable behaviour (3–5), is irresistibly drawn to Jesus (6).
- It is not a meeting of hope however. He fears the worst (7) once Jesus speaks a word of exorcism (8).

[**NAME:** We should remember that the knowing of the name, accurately, was believed to give one power over the person named, since the name stood for the nature of the person (hence Jesus' giving of extra, typical, names to some of the disciples, as in Mk. 3:16–17). ]



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demonic

- The demons resist Jesus' first command, in which he did not name them, by crying out his name and identity. This plainly fails to overpower Jesus, who now asks for the man's name (9).
- The response enables the man to describe his condition (9). Since a legion consisted of upward of 6,000 soldiers, the answer does not provide names but it graphically describes his condition, and he seems unable to distinguish himself from the army which occupies his territory.
- Yet neither can he break their hold over him, even to asking for them to remain (10).
- The spirits, however, know they have met a superior power. They (note the use of the plural now in the communication coming from the wretched man) dissociate themselves from their human abode in a bizarre negotiation about where they will go (11–12).
- Even here Mark draws attention to the power of Jesus. He not only casts them out but also controls their destination.

### **People Involved:**

#### **Jesus**

Jesus is in complete control in a confrontation with a demon.

Although the many demons exercised control of an individual, Jesus' power over the demons was undiminished.

#### **The demonized man**

The contrast between the condition of the man while dominated by demons and after Jesus expelled them is sharply drawn.

The symptoms of extreme demon possession seen in this man include the following:

- Disregard for personal dignity (nakedness, Luke 8:27).
- Withdrawal from society (Luke 8:27).
- Disregard for normal comforts (lived in the tombs, Luke 8:27).
- Affinity for unclean, isolated locations (lived in tombs, Luke 8:27).
- Violence against others (Luke 8:29).
- Unusual physical strength (Luke 8:29).
- Inarticulate speech (Mark 5:5).
- Self mutilation (Mark 5:5).

\*Perhaps the decisive demonstration of possession was

a.) The recognition by the demon of Jesus (Luke 8:30) and forced submission to him (Luke 8:31).

b.) Contrast (SIGNS OF DELIVERANCE) we see in Luke 8:35:

- "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."
- The evil powers which had dominated him were gone, and the transformation was evident to all.
- The man asked permission to go with Jesus, Christ sent him home, encouraging him to "tell what great things God had done for you."

#### **The demon**

- The demon had complete control of the man, and spoke through his voice.
- The name "Legion" was descriptive rather than personal. (Note:6,000 men in a fully staffed Roman legion.)
- The name was appropriate because many demons had taken up residence in the victim's personality.
- The demons had to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus and to do whatever Christ commanded.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

Verse 28: The demon's cry may sound pitiful. **But that demon had no pity on the man** whom he tormented. Although Jesus had commanded the demon to leave the man, and the demon had to obey, he begged Jesus for a concession.

- Christ's control over the demons was so complete that they could not act of their own volition. *They could do only what Jesus permitted them to do.*
- Demons begged to be permitted to enter other living beings, even animals. Yet as soon as they entered the pigs, they dashed into the sea and were drowned.

**“What God permits the evil spirits to do always proves to be their undoing.”**

### The people of the region

The people of the region reacted strangely to the miracle. Rather than see the possibilities for healing of their own sick by Jesus, they felt only a terror of the unknown, and they begged Jesus to leave the region.

### **Small Group:**

#### The Responses:

##### A. The People of the Region

*“The whole multitude... asked him to depart” (8:37)*

- It was made after the people of the region had **carefully** examined what had happened.
  - “heard” reports of what had happened (Luke 8:34)
  - “went out to see what had happened” (Luke 8:35).
  - When they saw the demonized man fully restored, they inquired and learned “by what means he who had been demon possessed was healed” (Luke 8:36).
- Yet, after going through this process and learning the facts, the “whole multitude” asked Jesus to leave.

**Question #1: WHY?** Did the people of the region respond as they did? Asking Jesus to leave.

Were they afraid Jesus' powers would be turned against them?  
Were they worried about the possible fate of other herds of pigs?  
Couldn't they see what Jesus' powerful, healing presence might mean to them and their loved ones?  
Did they NOT WANT TO fully commitment to Jesus, commitment remains a matter of faith.

##### B. The Man

### **Question #2: What did the man do?**

*“Jesus sent him” (8:38, 39).* The man Jesus had restored wanted to go with Jesus. Instead, Jesus sent him to his “own house” to “tell what great things God has done for you.” Christ still has a





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demonic

mission for those who make the commitment of faith to him. And it is the same mission on which the man freed from demons was sent. We are to go to our “own house”—our own family, our own coworkers, our own neighborhood—and tell what God has done for us.

The response of the healed man (in Mark).

- Not only does he believe, he wishes to follow physically, joining the line of disciples to get into the boat (18).
  - Jesus, who plainly does not yet trust his disciples to go out alone preaching, since they barely yet have what he calls faith (4:40), sends ‘Legion’ straight back home to preach the good news.
  - Has this man has already been to the heart of the gospel, in that his experience of exorcism is a dying and rising one? Certainly he has known what the disciples have not yet been willing to discover (4:35–41), **namely what it means for one’s life and future to be wholly in Jesus’ hands and at his disposal, and to have emerged at the other end a ‘saved’ person.**
- C. **#3. What is being communicating about Christ in this Miracle?** (About Jesus’ Divinity and His unique Mission). “Special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.”

### SELF REFLECTION:

Asking the people to concentrate on what Jesus is saying to them in **this** Miracle.

Once we can answer what He is saying, we can move on to whether our beliefs and actions need to change.

- What is my understanding of the supernatural? How REAL is it to me?
  - Do I find it makes me afraid, like the people of the Region?
  - Do I just try to “stay away from it”? (If it isn’t near me, I do not have to deal with it.)
  - Do I enjoy the Hollywood treatment of the supernatural? Is there anything wrong with that?
  - Have I ever learned about the “Three Kingdoms” that teach about the power and authority of the Spiritual realm and my part in it?
- 
- What is Jesus speaking(revealing) to ME through this miracle?

“Jesus’ miracles ... are signs of God’s kingly rule, the dawn of which Jesus announced in His proclamation (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:39; 6:6; Luke 4:14f., 44).

### Jesus’ words and works are the beginning of the age of salvation.

- The casting out of demons signals God’s invasion into the realm of Satan and its final annihilation (Matt. 12:29 par. Mark 3:27; Luke 11:21f.; Is. 49:24f.; Luke. 10:18; John 12:31; Rev. 20:1ff., 10)
- The raising of the dead announces that death will be forever done away with (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4; Is. 25:8)
- The healing of the sick bears witness to the cessation of all suffering (Rev. 21:4)
- The miraculous provisions of food are fore-tokens of the end of all physical need (Rev. 7:16f.)



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

- The stilling of the storm points forward to complete victory over the powers of chaos which threaten the earth (Rev. 21:1).<sup>2</sup>

### THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE:

- The church is not a company of people who enjoy a trouble-free life. **It never experiences such a thing itself, and has no right to offer it to others.**
- Neither, on the other hand, should it be a community which is inundated with troubles and has no more ability than anyone else to cope with them.
- the miracle which the church of Jesus Christ should both embody and **proclaim is the power to cope with the evils of life.** The disciples of Christ are neither free *from* tribulation, nor helpless *in* tribulation, but victorious *over* tribulation. We turn again to the words of Luke's great friend Paul, to summarize this lesson—the purpose of trouble in the Christian life:

### 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

#### God of All Comfort

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

### NoTES:

#### JESUS DELIVERS A DEMONIAK IN GEDARA *Luke 8:27–39; Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20*

Jesus met a violent man who terrorized the region of Gedara, and cast many demons out of him.

**Background of the miracle.** Demon possession was a reality in New Testament times, as it is in our own day. For a fascinating exploration of this subject, see *Every Good and Evil Angel in the Bible*.

Mark and Luke give lengthy reports of this miracle, and each writer mentions only one demonized man. Matthew mentions two men and identifies the area where the miracle took place as Gergesa rather than Gerasa (Mark; see the NKJV footnote to Luke 8:26). **The variants in the names are not a major problem, because one refers to a town and the other to a district in the general area of Decapolis [the “ten cities”], which was Gentile territory.**

The discrepancy between the number of demonized men has led some interpreters to argue that one of the Gospel accounts must be in error. But one authority makes this point:

**Suppose you told a friend, “Jim was at the party but came late,” while another person told the same friend, “Jim and Carl came late to the party.” Should you be charged with an error because you failed to mention Carl when telling about Jim? Of course not. Why then should the New Testament be charged with an error because Matthew mentions two demon-possessed men while Mark and Luke tell about only one? (*Bible Difficulties Solved*, Baker, 237).**

The fact is that the basic elements in each Gospel are the same, and there is no major conflict among these three different accounts. For the sake of simplicity, our discussion will draw from the accounts in Mark and Luke. They are longer and more detailed than Matthew's version.

**Parties to the miracle.** The interaction in the story focuses our attention on Jesus, the demonized man, the demon, and the people of the region.

**Jesus.** Again, Jesus is shown to be in complete control in a confrontation with a demon. Although the many demons exercised control of an individual, Jesus' power over the demons was undiminished.

**The demonized man.** The contrast between the condition of the man while dominated by demons and after Jesus expelled them is sharply drawn.

The symptoms of extreme demon possession seen in this man include the following:

- Disregard for personal dignity (nakedness, Luke 8:27).

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<sup>2</sup> Hayford, J. W. (1995). *His name is Jesus: life and power in the master's ministry. A study of Matthew, Mark and Luke*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

- Withdrawal from society (Luke 8:27).
- Disregard for normal comforts (lived in the tombs, Luke 8:27).
- Affinity for unclean, isolated locations (lived in tombs, Luke 8:27).
- Violence against others (Luke 8:29).
- Unusual physical strength (Luke 8:29).
- Inarticulate speech (Mark 5:5).
- Self mutilation (Mark 5:5).

Perhaps the decisive demonstration of possession was the recognition by the demon of Jesus (Luke 8:30) and forced submission to him (Luke 8:31).

What a contrast we see in Luke 8:35, which describes the man who had been freed from the control of demons as “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.” The evil powers which had dominated him were gone, and the transformation was evident to all.

*The demon.* The demon had complete control of the man, and spoke through his voice. The name “Legion” was descriptive rather than personal. The name was appropriate because many demons had taken up residence in the victim’s personality. But it is also clear from each account that the demons had to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus and to do whatever Christ commanded.

*The people of the region.* The people of the region reacted strangely to the miracle. Rather than see the possibilities for healing of their own sick by Jesus, they felt only a terror of the unknown, and they begged Jesus to leave the region.

**How the story unfolds.** Jesus sailed with his disciples across the Sea of Galilee to Gentile territory. As soon as he landed, he was met by a demon-possessed man. The demon was forced to his knees before Jesus, for he recognized Christ as the “Son of the Most High God,” and begged Jesus not to “torment me.” The demon confessed that his name was Legion, “because many demons had entered him.”

The demons, fully exposed, begged Jesus to let them enter a nearby herd of pigs. Jesus permitted them to do so, but the pigs ran into the sea and drowned.

The demonized man was fully restored and listening to Jesus when people from the area hurried to this location to find out what had happened. They were so terrified by the supernatural events that they begged Jesus to leave their territory.

When the restored man asked permission to go with Jesus, Christ sent him home, encouraging him to “tell what great things God had done for you.”



**“He lived in the tombs” (Luke 8:27).** Tombs as the resting place of the dead were **ritually unclean for Jews**. It is fascinating to note that the demons in this man begged to enter pigs, who were also ritually unclean. The account is thus bracketed by references to the unclean places preferred by demons. This underlines their own corrupt and corrupting nature (see Luke 8:29, which calls the demon an “unclean spirit”).

**“What have I to do with you” (8:28).** The Greek saying, “What to me and to you,” is both an admission of Jesus’ superiority and an expression of the demon’s desire to distance himself from Christ.

**“I beg You, do not torment me” (8:28).** The demon’s cry may sound pitiful. **But that demon had no pity on the man** whom he tormented. Although Jesus had commanded the demon to leave the man, and the demon had to obey, he begged Jesus for a concession.

**“Legion, because many demons had entered him” (8:30).** There were **6,000 men in a fully staffed Roman legion**. This name doesn’t necessarily mean there were 6,000 demons infecting this victim. It does indicate what the text states: that “many demons had entered him.”

We know little about how a demon settles into the personality and gains control over a person. This passage reminds us that more than one demon can express itself through individuals who become vulnerable to possession. Satanism and demon possession are often depicted by movie producers who know nothing of the terrible reality. This encourages the foolish to seek out such experiences.

**“Into the abyss” (8:31).** The “abyss” is a place in which some of the angels who fell with Satan are currently confined, awaiting God’s final judgment (see 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

**“He permitted them” (8:32).** Christ’s control over the demons was so complete that they could not act of their own volition. They could do only what Jesus permitted them to do. It is ironic that the demons begged to be



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

permitted to enter other living beings, even animals. Yet as soon as they entered the pigs, they dashed into the sea and were drowned. What God permits the evil spirits to do always proves to be their undoing.

**“The whole multitude... asked him to depart” (8:37).** The interesting thing about this request is that it was made after the people of the region had carefully examined what had happened. They “heard” reports of what had happened (Luke 8:34), and then “went out to see what had happened” (Luke 8:35). When they saw the demonized man fully restored, they inquired and learned “by what means he who had been demon possessed was healed” (Luke 8:36). Yet, after going through this process and learning the facts, the “whole multitude” asked Jesus to leave.

How amazing! Were they afraid Jesus’ powers would be turned against them? Were they worried about the possible fate of other herds of pigs? Couldn’t they see what Jesus’ powerful, healing presence might mean to them and their loved ones?

We can’t understand how these people, after such careful examination, could turn Jesus away! This is a powerful reminder to us that while the facts call for full commitment to Jesus, commitment remains a matter of faith.

**“Jesus sent him” (8:38, 39).** The man Jesus had restored wanted to go with Jesus. Instead, Jesus sent him to his “own house” to “tell what great things God has done for you.” Christ still has a mission for those who make the commitment of faith to him. And it is the same mission on which the man freed from demons was sent. We are to go to our “own house”—our own family, our own coworkers, our own neighborhood—and tell what God has done for us.

**The message of the miracle.** The miracle accounts emphasize the total control the demons had gained over their victim. Yet that control was easily broken by Jesus. He easily expelled not one but many demons. The response of the Gerasenes and the freed victim portray the two possible responses we can make to Jesus. The miracle itself emphasizes the absolute and total authority of Jesus over all in the spiritual realm that might harm us.<sup>3</sup>

### **Why Are There Two Demon-Possessed Men in the Gerasene Tombs in Matthew, but Only One in Mark and Luke?**

The three passages that describe the incident with the demoniacs in the country of the Gerasenes, also called Gadarenes, are Matthew 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–20, and Luke 8:26–39. The Matthew account mentions two demon-possessed men, while Mark and Luke only mention one. Is there a discrepancy in these accounts, and do the Gospel writers contradict one another?

The first thing to determine is whether the three writers are describing the same event. The timing of the event in all three accounts—immediately following the calming of the storm on the sea of Galilee—as well as other similarities (living in the tombs, the ferocity of the demoniac, the conversation with the demons, the driving of them into the pigs, the drowning of the herd, and the response of those who witnessed the scene) all give credence to Matthew, Mark, and Luke all describing the same event. The question remains, then, whether there was one demoniac or two.

Matthew tells us there were two demoniacs, while Mark and Luke only mention one of the two. It is unclear why they chose to mention only one, but that does not negate the possibility of a second demoniac being present. Mark and Luke do not say there was “only one” demon-possessed man. They simply state that one of the two met Jesus and spoke to Him. For whatever reason, Matthew simply gives us more information than Mark and Luke.

In any case, no contradiction exists. A contradiction occurs only if one statement makes the other impossible and there is absolutely no way for them to be reconciled. For example, let’s say we put two apples on a table. Statement 1: There are two apples on the table. Statement 2: There is only one apple on the table. These two statements contradict each other. Now read these two statements: Statement 1: There are two apples on the table. Statement 2: There is an apple on the table. These two statements do not contradict each other. In the same way, the biblical accounts do not represent a contradiction. All three accounts describe demon possession and the power that Jesus has over the spirit world. All three tell us that He made a point to cross the sea to save someone from the demons. All three affirm that there was at least one man who was plagued by demons. The fact that the three accounts differ in some minor details only proves that they were written by three different authors, each of whom chose to focus on a different aspect of the account.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Richards, L. (1998). *Every miracle in the Bible* (pp. 198–200). Nashville: T. Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> Got Questions Ministries. (2002–2013). *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

### LUKE

#### Lord of the new Israel 8:22–56

Four miracle-stories follow. **Jesus calms a storm on the Lake of Galilee (8:22–25), exorcizes the demons from a possessed man (8:26–39), heals a woman of her haemorrhage, and raises a child from death (8:40–56).** Luke is skilled in the art of word-painting, and he displays this series of incidents before us like a row of pictures of the miraculous power of Jesus.

To regard Luke thus as an artist, at any rate in this chapter and some of those that have gone before it, is to gain insight into what he is aiming to do as he depicts these incidents.

#### 1. Luke the artist

The best-known name in the world of modern art is probably that of Picasso. To those who know next to nothing about art, his work no doubt seems to be a collection of pictures which are all equally peculiar. But once you begin to study them, you find that in fact there is a progression in them. Pictures produced between certain dates belong to his Blue Period, others to his Pink Period, and so on, and in a gallery they might well be arranged in groups accordingly.

This is what we find with Luke's word-pictures when we begin to study them. His stories about Jesus are not a heap of miscellaneous items jumbled together. He has grouped some of the miracles here in chapter 8, others in chapter 7, others again in chapters 4 and 5: **an early 'period', a middle 'period', and here the latest 'period', though there will of course be more to follow.**

We shall consider first the pictures in this room in the gallery, then compare them with those of the 'early period', and then try to see the relationship between all three groups just mentioned.

##### a. 'Eighth-chapter' pictures: a group

We have seen that Luke's story of Jesus is by no means a straightforward account of things in the order in which they happened. **The order of his Gospel is not chronological, but logical.** He has a plan in which he is prepared to rearrange events so as to bring out their true meaning.

But in this chapter he is for once grouping together a series of events which actually did happen, it seems, in sequence. Follow through the verses quoted above, and you can see how the four stories are linked, not only in the way that Luke has written them up, but in their actual order of occurrence. A comparison between Luke 8 and the corresponding passages in Matthew (8 and 9) and Mark (4 and 5) will show that it is the other two evangelists who have rearranged the incidents to suit their own purposes, while it is Luke for whom the original sequences of events best expresses what he wants to say about Jesus.

It is not only that Luke groups these stories together, then. **Apparently Jesus himself performed these four miracles in quick succession.** They clearly belong in the same group.

##### b. 'Fourth-and-fifth-chapter' pictures and 'eighth-chapter' pictures: a contrast

Comparing the miracle-stories of the 'latest period' with those of the 'early period', we notice obvious similarities. In each case there is a series of striking examples of the power of Jesus over the power of evil, whether in the minds, bodies, or circumstances of men.

But there are differences; and one respect in which the earlier group gives a different impression from the later one is epitomized in the verses quoted above. In chapters 4 and 5 most of Luke's pictures are crowded canvasses; in chapter 8, most of the scenes depict a few figures only. Consider the following: in the 'early period', Jesus heals a demoniac in a synagogue full of worshippers (4:31–37), heals many sick folk at Simon's house (4:40), is prevented from finding solitude (4:42) and is mobbed by the people (5:1), finds great multitudes gathering after his curing of a leper (5:15), and performs another cure in a house so crowded that the sick man has to be lowered through the roof (5:17–19). In the 'latest period', by contrast, he is alone on the lake with no more than a boatload of his disciples (8:22), heals the Gerasene demoniac in the presence of the same few friends (8:26ff.), and raises Jairus's daughter from death in the presence of only five other persons (8:51).

Exceptions to this might be pointed out (*e.g.* 5:12–14; 8:42b). But it is an unmistakable impression; and when we ask ourselves why it should be so, chapter 6 provides an answer.

For between the two groups of miracles as event of great importance has occurred. Jesus has instituted a new kind of sabbath (6:1–11), appointed twelve new leaders for the people of God (6:12–16), and given the new law (6:17–49). We are beginning to see the new Israel appear. **From among the people in general, Jesus is 'calling out'**



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

his own people, the church. So it is not surprising that whereas the first miracles were performed before the general public, these later miracles are more especially for the benefit of his own disciples. Those were for the world at large; these are for the church.

c. *'Fourth-and-fifth-chapter', 'seventh-chapter', and 'eighth-chapter' pictures: a sequence*

Now we come to compare all three groups of miracle-stories that Luke has so far presented to us, as it were the 'early' 'middle', and 'latest' periods in the picture-gallery.

In the first group Jesus uses of himself the title which was to become his favourite, 'Son of man' (5:24). It means Man with a capital M, real Man, God's Man. We have already seen this status claimed for him in the genealogy of 3:23-38 and the temptations of 4:1-13, as part of the meaning of another great title, 'Son of God'. **For the first time in human history we are seeing Man as God meant him to be, with authority over the world and the devil.** No wonder that when this sort of greatness was demonstrated before the eyes of men in general, 'they were all amazed' (4:36). There was such a contrast between normal human experience and what this Man was doing. The difference between him and them was made very plain.

The miracles of the second group illustrate the 'good news' Jesus brings. It is good news for the poor (7:22) and good news of the kingdom (8:1) Jesus the Man, whose manhood contrasts so strongly with that of mankind at large, is here Jesus the King, who out of his wealth and power offers blessings to any who are 'poor' enough to receive them—the Gentile, the widow, the prostitute (7:1-17, 36-50); those who are prepared to receive, listen, and obey (8:4-21). We might say that while the early miracles brought conviction to the careless outsider, those of the 'middle period' brought blessing to the concerned enquirer.

And those of this 'latest period' bring **challenge to the committed follower**. For the peerless Man and the generous king is also the 'Master' among his disciples (8:22, 24). They have been convicted of the hopeless gulf that yawns between themselves and him, they have humbly and gratefully accepted his offer of salvation, and now they are his committed followers. They find themselves literally all in the same boat! It is for them, his own people, his own disciples, that Jesus performs this group of miracles.

### 2. Luke the preacher

The word-pictures of 8:22-56 have a message, then, for Jesus's disciples; which means that they have a message for the church. Luke, who is concerned not only to paint pictures but to preach sermons, **intends that these four miracles should speak particularly to those who have attached themselves to Jesus and are trying to learn from him as a group of his people.**

If this is so, and the events of this passage took place especially for the benefit of the church, what lessons are we, as members of the church, meant to learn from them?

In general, we may notice that all of them concern the evil that is in the world, especially as it affects the ordinary life of men. For this aspect of evil we might use the old-fashioned word 'tribulation', which is comprehensive enough to cover a near-shipwreck, a meeting with a madman, a hopeless illness, and a harrowing bereavement. It might be asked why, as he begins his course of instruction for those who are now his committed followers, Jesus places at the head of his syllabus this subject of tribulation, rather than (say) the fatherhood of God, or the demands of the law, or the nature of the church. One answer would be that in this chapter he is doing wonderful works, rather than speaking wonderful words; and **since the chief point of most of his miracles is to show how he overcomes evil**, the facing of tribulation is a subject which naturally arise at this point, while the others may be more readily taught by word of mouth. But there is a deeper answer. For Luke, Jesus is above all things the Saviour of the world. It is therefore of the first importance to understand that title. From what does he save us? Why, from evil! But in what sense does he save us from it? Are we exempted from it? If not, how do we cope with it? What in practice does 'salvation' mean, in a world where evil is obviously still so strong? Questions of this sort spring directly from Luke's main theme.

**In particular, we are to learn three things concerning this matter of tribulation: the necessity of it, the conquest of it, and the purpose of it.**

#### a. **The necessity of tribulation in the Christian life**

It is a pernicious error to suppose that the Christian life brings freedom from trouble. When Jesus says that 'If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed', he is certainly not promising exemption from the normal ills of life. The man who accepts Christ imagining that from then onwards trouble will no longer come his way is heading for disaster. For it is sure to come; and when it does, he will be pitched into doubt or even despair.

**No, Jesus does not promise a trouble-free life. If is not that tribulation may come, nor even that it will come, but that it must come.** In the very next chapter we shall find him spelling this out: 'The Son of man *must* suffer ... If



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me' (9:22–23). The apostolic church teaches the same severe truth: 'To enter the kingdom of God we *must* pass through many hardships' (Acts 14:22 NEB). That is why the heading of this section is not 'The possibility', nor even 'The inevitability', but 'The necessity of tribulation in the Christian life'.

For we cannot avoid the fact that Jesus was altogether in control of the whole chain of events in this passage. *He* took his disciples across the lake, where a storm was going to burst upon them, to the other shore, where a demoniac was going to meet them; *he* took them back to Capernaum, drew their attention to the sick woman in the crowd, and at Jairus's house closeted three of them with himself and the dead child. They have become his own special friends, and members of the kingdom of God—do they perhaps imagine that henceforth they will escape the grimness of life? Instead, Jesus forces them to confront a storm, a demoniac, an invalid, and a corpse. He is saying, as it were, 'Though you enjoy my salvation, you still live in a world where evil is rampant. How will you face it?'

The storm on the lake is an example, of course, of all the adverse circumstances which may come our way—not excluding actual storms, as many a Christian traveller has found. The demoniac of Gerasa exemplifies all the evil that afflicts the minds and personalities of men, again not excluding, even in our own day, literal demon-possession. The woman's haemorrhage represents any kind of physical illness or weakness; and the death of Jairus's daughter reminds us of the 'last enemy' that lies in wait for every one of us. Peter, without doubt a witness of all four incidents, sums up this lesson in his first letter: '**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you**' (1 Pet. 4:12). Although he is speaking particularly of the fires of persecution, he could have said the same with regard to any kind of tribulation.

**Christians must learn to confront trouble.**

### **b. The conquest of tribulation in the Christian life**

But even plainer in this group of stories is the fact that though tribulation must be expected, it can also be overcome. The stories are told for the sake of their happy endings.

Is it stressing the obvious to point out *who* overcomes the problem in each case? But perhaps the church does need reminding, especially when it has become established and organized, and has set up its machinery for coping with trouble, that it is *Jesus* who puts forth his power in the conquest of evil; and it may be a good thing for us to notice that the nearest the disciples got to even co-operating with him, let alone doing the job themselves, was a cry for help (8:24).

So to the question 'Who can overcome tribulation?' the answer is 'Jesus only'; and that enables us to answer also the question of *how*, in quite practical terms, it is to be overcome. If Jesus is the overcomer, then the **first** necessity for those facing trouble is that they should have him with them, or rather that they should be with him. In the case of these disciples, he was present to their sight; in our case, he must be present to our faith—both in the individual heart ('Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exist and that he rewards those who seek him') and in the loving friendship of fellow-believers ('Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them').<sup>6</sup> But for us as for them the principle is the same, and that is that apart from him we can do nothing. We need to know that he is present, in both senses of the word: he is *here*, and he is *now*.

**Secondly**, we must believe him to be Lord of the past also[HIS TIMELINE & OUR TIMELINE]. Long before we reached our present situation, he had already planned our journey to Gerasa and our return to Capernaum, seeing in advance the evils which would confront us, the dismay they would cause, the victories he would win, and the lessons we should learn. Because he is the Author of the story, and therefore is not himself bound by the time sequence along which his brain-children must move, all the great 'beforehand' words of theology add their special lustre to his name: foreknowledge, predestination, grace. Here we are, wherever 'here' may be; but not without his knowing that we should come here, nor without his knowing how he would bring glory and blessing out of our being here.

This brings us at once to the **third** practical step: that we grasp the fact that **he will bring good out of evil**. He is Lord not only of the past and the present, but also of the future. Naturally, where our own future is concerned this is altogether a matter of faith. But that faith has a firm basis in what we know of our predecessors' 'futures': the kind of Christians, for example, that emerged in the end from the harrowing experiences recorded by Luke here in chapter 8. What the Lord had in store for them we shall see in a moment, when we come to consider the purpose of tribulation in the Christian life. But that the outcome of their troubles was in his capable hands, and that our own future is no less secure, there can be doubt.

In this way Jesus teaches us how we for our part may cope with tribulation. As to the question of how he for his part deals with it, we should understand that his methods here are only examples, just as the troubles themselves





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demonic

are only examples. There are other kinds of problem, and there are also other ways of dealing with the problems. Reading the story of the early church, we find that where demon-possession is concerned, practically every case which is mentioned is also cured; but we find also that, with regard to illness, there were some notable cases in which the divine answer was *not* miraculous healing, while as for the raising of corpses, most first-century Christians who died seem to have stayed dead! And the one great storm described in detail in the New Testament raged for fourteen days on end, till it had shipwrecked Paul on Malta (Acts 27).

Jesus may not give the kind of victory we expect. But he will always overcome trouble in some way if we ask him. His answer in trying circumstances may be relief; but it may equally be endurance. His answer in illness may be health; but it may be courage instead. He may plan rescue from death's door, or permit bereavement and give new hope with it. But 'in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us' (Rom. 8:37).

### **c. The purpose of tribulation in the Christian life**

We have to look on into the next chapters to find out why the disciples of Jesus needed to learn these lessons. For there we see a splendid and challenging sight. 'He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out' (9:1–2); 'After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them' (10:1). **It was in preparation for the church's own gospel outreach that it had to have its own private course of lessons from the miracles of its Lord.**

With what message do Christ's disciples go forth—not simply on their lips, but in their lives? What does their corporate witness show to the world?

The church is not a company of people who enjoy a trouble-free life. It never experiences such a thing itself, and has no right to offer it to others. Neither, on the other hand, should it be a community which is inundated with troubles and has no more ability than anyone else to cope with them. No; the miracle which the church of Jesus Christ should both embody and proclaim is *the power to cope with the evils of life*. The disciples of Christ are neither free *from* tribulation, nor helpless *in* tribulation, but victorious *over* tribulation. We turn again to the words of Luke's great friend Paul, to summarize this lesson—the purpose of trouble in the Christian life:

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.'<sup>5</sup>

### **Matthew**

#### **B. Discipleship (8–10)**

##### **5. Who is this Jesus?**

###### **8:1–9:34**

The first great section of the Gospel has been concluded. It has dealt with the beginnings of the good news, the birth and early years of Jesus, the inauguration of his ministry, and the manifesto of his kingdom. We are now about to begin the central panel in the first part of the book, embracing chapters 8–10. **It is all concerned with the nature of discipleship.** It flows naturally out of a consideration of Christian beginnings, and it leads naturally into the major theme of the next panel in chapters 11–13 on accepting or rejecting Jesus. Chapters 8 and 9 introduce the birth of discipleship, and it all depends on who Jesus really is. Matthew sets out to tell us.

The Sermon has faced us with the solemnity of choice. Chapters 8 and 9 follow that up. They concentrate on challenging the reader with one single, critical question. Who is this Jesus? The one who has just been portrayed as so mighty in word is about to be displayed as no less mighty in deed. In these chapters the authority of the King and the challenge of discipleship, explicit and implicit, are writ large. In broad terms:

the disciples see Jesus' power to heal (8:1–17)

the cost and difficulty of discipleship are brought before us (8:18–27)

the power of Jesus over nature, sin and the demonic is stressed (8:28–9:8)

the call and transformation of Matthew clearly form a paradigm (9:9–17)

Jesus' disregard for convention is evident, changing the lives of tax men, women in need, and the blind and dumb—all outsiders (9:18–33)

This section is all working up to the call, commissioning and sending out of the disciples in chapter 10. It drives us inexorably to the conclusion that Jesus is indeed Immanuel, God with us. Once that is understood, Jesus can send his disciples out on mission.

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<sup>5</sup> Wilcock, M. (1979). *The Savior of the world: the message of Luke's gospel* (pp. 96–104). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

We need to look more closely at the way Matthew has constructed this part of his story. Chapters 8 and 9 largely consist of three sets of miracles, and each set contains three miracles.

### **The first trio: the healings of Jesus (8:1–17)**

Chapter 8 opens with three miraculous healings of Jesus. The authority of God is manifest not only in his preaching but in his mighty deeds. In verses 1–4 he heals a Jewish man with leprosy, in verses 5–13 a Gentile centurion, and verses in 14–17 a disciple's relative. The signs of the breaking in of the kingdom are plain.

The variety in these three healings is important.

#### *The Jewish leprosy sufferer (8:1–4)*

If Matthew meant leprosy proper, rather than skin disease in a more general sense (see the NIV margin), it is highly significant, for leprosy sentenced sufferers to a living death. It cut them off from civilization and made them live alone. 'He remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.'<sup>2</sup> The disease gradually spread and sensation ceased; more and more parts of the anatomy became disfigured or fell off. The outcome was death. Never was there a disease that so separated victims from their fellows. Never has there been a condition that so illustrated the spiritual condition of humankind. For sin is a terrible disease that separates us from our fellows and from God; it spreads, and it is fatal. No wonder the man with leprosy had to cry, 'Unclean!' to warn bystanders to keep their distance. Significantly, whereas other diseases are 'healed', this alone is said to be 'cleansed'. The trouble was, of course, that leprosy sufferers did not get healed! There was no known cure.

There is therefore a dramatic appropriateness in the fact that the first mighty act of Jesus, in Matthew's presentation, was the cleansing of a man with leprosy. It was something extraordinary and eloquent, even more so than the memorable television pictures of Princess Diana touching people with Aids at a time when many were afraid to do so. Here is someone who actually touched a man whom others shunned. It was unthinkable: but so is the love of God to sinners. Here is someone who can do what Judaism never succeeded in doing: heal a person with leprosy. Could the fulfilment of Judaism have come? Interestingly enough, here in Matthew's account, the fulfilment of the law is the climax of the story. 'Go, show yourself to the priest (wouldn't it have been marvellous to see his face when a healed leprosy sufferer walked in?) and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them' (4). A testimony to what? To the fact that one greater than Moses had come; to the fact that what Judaism could not do, in cleansing from leprosy and from the disease of sin that it represented, the fulfiller of Judaism was doing. Here was no intrusion: it was the completion of all that Judaism pointed to. What a frontispiece for the book of miracles!

#### *The Gentile centurion (8:5–13)*

The apostolic gospel was 'first for the Jew, then for the Gentile'. That is exactly what we find prefigured in the Gospels. To be sure, Jesus concentrated on Israel during his ministry, but there are a number of pointers to the Gentile mission that would later develop. This is one of them. Jesus reaches out to this Gentile army officer. His concern is universal. We never read of him entering a Gentile home, but we do find him saying *the word* (8), and that word of Jesus is mighty to heal. The word of the risen and ascended Jesus was mighty both to transform lives and to heal bodies, in the Gentile mission as well as among those Jews who were responding to their Messiah. A story like this would be an enormous encouragement to those Gentile believers (many of them, no doubt, in Matthew's own congregation) who had never seen Jesus, but who had trusted his word and felt his power in their lives. And the attitude of this pagan centurion was a great example of the proper approach to Jesus. For it spoke of simple, profound faith. That was what brought Abraham to experience the power of God. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. But in Israel in Jesus' day there was not too much of that living trust in God's power to heal. Forty years later, as the gospel spread from a hardening Judaism to the Gentiles, there was less. That is why Jesus' words to this soldier were so treasured and remembered: 'I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith' (10). Abraham's descendants will indeed be as numerous as the stars in the sky, just as God had promised, but their identity would be a surprise to the Jews. For many of them would be Gentiles, coming alongside those heroes of long ago who really trusted God: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They would take their place at table with the patriarchs, while the heirs to the kingdom would be thrown out. This was staggering. The Jews looked forward to the messianic banquet as their private preserve, yet here is Jesus saying that the banquet would see many Jews excluded and many of the despised pagans welcomed. The Jews had to learn the lesson, which their ancestors knew and Gentiles were beginning to discover, along with the centurion in the days of Jesus, that faith is the key to entry into the messianic banquet, and faith is the key to experiencing the power of Jesus.

#### *Peter's mother-in-law (8:14–17)*

Tired though he was with his ministry of healing and exorcism, Jesus still put himself out by healing one from whom he could well have expected a refreshing meal. When he got to Peter's home, he found Peter's mother-in-law in the grip of a high fever, probably malaria. He touched her hand and the fever left her—an immediate and wonderful cure. The result? She got up and served them.

I am sure that Matthew means us to learn from this. The disciples in Matthew's day had their family lives and their measure of domestic sickness. This story must have encouraged them greatly to pray for healing among their nearest and dearest. Had not Jesus bothered to heal someone closely related to Peter, an early disciple? Then let them expect him to do the same in their day and in their homes. There is reason to believe, as we have seen, that Matthew's Gospel had a particular purpose: to equip Christian leaders. The purpose of this particular miracle story was surely to lift their faith that God would heal in their own homes and those of people near to them. Jesus laid his hand on the woman, and she was healed. And the disciples should do likewise.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

In recent years I have repented of my earlier scepticism in this matter, and have often followed the example set out here. And I have often seen healings result. But many people are not healed. It is a mystery which we shall never plumb. We can never be dogmatic about when God will heal and when he will not. But what happened regularly and without a failure rate in the life of Jesus does happen occasionally and with many failures when his disciples pray in faith and call on God to heal. It is a sign of the kingdom. We should be surprised if we never see it. The powers of the age to come have broken into our world; but the powers of this age are there too. We have to live with that ambivalence. We are in a 'betwixt and between' state in this mortal life: we shall see the pain and the failure, but we shall also see the power and the glory, at least sometimes, if we maintain that attitude of simple trust in the heavenly Father which Jesus so movingly displayed.

Matthew goes on to tell of other healings and exorcisms on that astonishing Sabbath day. Notice the differentiation between deliverance ministry (*he drove out the spirits with a word*) and healing (*and healed all the sick*; 16). We shall need to look further into this later. But the evangelist's conclusion of this trio of healings is remarkable. He sees it as the fulfilment of Isaiah 53:4. That was, of course, a messianic prophecy, but it applied in the first instance to the sinbearing which Jesus undertook for us upon the cross. There are many passages in the New Testament which show how important this chapter, Isaiah 53, was for the early Christians. It helped them to understand what Jesus achieved for them at Calvary. But here the Isaiah passage seems to be used with a secondary application. It is related not to the death of Jesus but to his healing ministry. And it seems to say that so costly was this healing that Jesus *took up our infirmities* on himself, *and carried our diseases* (17). He bore our sicknesses as well as our sins. There is no suggestion of Calvary here. There is no justification for the claim of some charismatics that Jesus bore our sicknesses as well as our sins upon the cross. But Matthew does see the healing ministry of Jesus as part of the pain and hardship which Isaiah foresaw for the Servant of the Lord in chapters 40–55 of his book. Of course, sickness is related (though not, according to Scripture, directly related) to sin, and so it is not possible entirely to dissociate the healing ministry from the vicarious suffering in this picture of the Servant. But Matthew sees him here coming from the mountain of revelation (chs. 5–7) and entering into the valley of the shadow, where sickness and demonic forces held sway. And he was willing to carry the burden of the pain, ostracism and defilement of broken humankind, just as he would later bear its sin. Here is a fulfilment of the prophet's words deeper than he could ever have imagined.

### **Two short pieces on discipleship (8:18–22)**

The next two passages pick up the challenge of what we have just read, and prepare the way for the next trio of miracles that will follow.

#### *A call to costly commitment (8:18–20)*

In response to the enthusiastic '*I will follow you wherever you go*' (19), Jesus points out the cost of commitment. To follow him will involve hardship, insecurity and homelessness. That was his lot. It would be the lot of his disciples too. It is remarkable that a teacher of the law should honour Jesus as highly as is reported here, for Jesus had not been educated at the scribal schools. But admiration will not suffice. Discipleship demands sterner stuff: blood, toil, tears, sweat. Is he prepared for the cost?

#### *Discipleship begins now (8:20–22)*

Another would-be disciple wants to follow Jesus but hopes to put it off. To 'bury one's father' (21) meant to wait until one's father was dead and buried. This man was presented with the urgency of decision. Those who love parent or child more than Jesus are not worthy of him. The challenge of the kingdom will not brook delay. '*Let the dead bury their own dead*' (22) in all probability means, 'Let those who have not found the life of the kingdom attend to matters like burial'; but perhaps we should accept a slight change in the underlying Aramaic which would give the meaning, 'Let the waverers bury their dead.' At all events it is a warning against missing the boat, and a challenge to respond and begin discipleship while opportunity knocks. It may well be that in so well-planned a Gospel as Matthew's there is an intended run-on to the next story, the stilling of the storm. The waverer, poised on the brink of discipleship, is given a promise of security in the midst of rough seas if only he will keep his eyes on Jesus.

### **The second trio: the power of Jesus (8:23–9:8)**

This section is as carefully presented as the last. Matthew gives us three mighty acts of Jesus, demonstrating his power over nature (8:23–27), his power over the demonic (8:28–34) and his power over sin (9:1–8), followed, as before, by two pieces on discipleship: first the call of Matthew, and secondly the discussion of new wine in old wineskins (9:9–17).

#### *The power of Jesus over the forces of nature (8:23–27)*

It is important to recall that the Hebrews were land-lubbers. They did not enjoy the sea. Accordingly, in the Gospels with a Hebrew background such as Matthew and Mark, Galilee, though no bigger than many a Scottish loch, is a 'sea', whereas to Luke with his wider horizons it is just a *limnē*, a lake. The sea represented to Jews the forces of chaos: in heaven there would be no more sea! From earliest days the terrifying sea had been the habitation of Rahab and Leviathan and other unspeakable monsters. It is out of the sea that the Lord builds the firmament of the earth. He is sovereign over all those threatening forces.<sup>14</sup> Thus Psalm 65:5–8 worships 'God our Saviour'. Why? Because by his strength he formed the mountains, and he 'stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves'. Again, Psalm 89 celebrates the greatness of the Lord: 'you rule over the surging sea: when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab ...' (verses 9–10). And so when Jesus stills the storm that had suddenly whipped up from nowhere on that treacherous lake, the awe of the disciples was beyond words. '*What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!*' (27). And the question began to dawn in their minds: could this Jesus be exercising God Almighty's own prerogative to quiet the storm?



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

So the main point of this passage is to demonstrate the power of Jesus over nature. He exercises God's own power over the forces of chaos. That is why he sleeps quietly in the back of the boat: partly natural exhaustion, no doubt; but Matthew also wants us to see the utter confidence which Jesus exudes. He is in control of the situation. And what a situation! Those freak storms on the lake can easily be fatal. But so could the frequent squalls which beset the ship of the church (that analogy is common in the apostolic fathers). Matthew's readers must trust the power of Jesus in the storms of their lives.<sup>16</sup> Maybe that is why, alone of the Synoptists, Matthew records Jesus' rebuke to the disciples ('*You of little faith, why are you so afraid?*' 26) in this rather unnatural position before he has dealt with the storm. There is no doubt that the Lord has power to *save* (25). The crucial condition is faith. Jesus has God's own power to quell any force exercised against his disciples. He asks only one thing: implicit trust. The lesson would not be lost on Matthew's hearers.

One interesting detail here leads in to the next story. Remarkably, the word translated *storm* (24) is *seismos*, which generally means an earthquake; some mighty force had suddenly stirred up the placid lake into frenzy. And Jesus, in quelling the storm, is said to 'rebuke' it (26). Remarkable! The inference is that that storm was yet another attack of the powers of darkness to snuff Jesus out before his work was done. In and under the natural phenomenon of a sudden storm, Jesus discerned the work of the devil. We should be very careful before we make the same assumptions, but we cannot rule them out.

### ***The power of Jesus over the demoniac (8:28–34)***

This story of the Gadarene demoniacs shows **Jesus' absolute authority over the forces of evil**. It was universally believed, in both Jewish and pagan circles, that there are forces beyond what we can see and hear, and that some of them are good (angels) and some evil (demons). This is not a dualistic belief, at least not in Judaism, which acknowledges God as sovereign: Satan and his demonic forces were originally made to know and enjoy God, but have rebelled. They have great power, but not unlimited power. God is still in ultimate control. And here are two men, eaten up by these dark forces in their lives, driven berserk and living in the tombs (frequently associated with the occult, both then and now). The Jews knew well that when the day of judgment arrived God and his Messiah would utterly destroy all demons. The demonic awareness in these two men sensed that Jesus was indeed that Messiah. Had the day of judgment come? That fear lies behind their question, forced up through the voices of the men: 'What do you want with us, Son of God?... Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?' (29). Jesus does not parley with the evil spirits. He simply utters one word of command, 'Go!' (32), and they go—into the herd of pigs, which stampedes over the steep bank into the lake.

Much ink and compassion have been spilled upon the pigs by scholars who no doubt enjoy their bacon for breakfast and their pork for dinner. But the main point is not the pigs. It may be that Jesus foresaw their fate. It may be not. The main points are first that Jesus exercises God's almighty power over the demons, and secondly that human beings are of much more value than a herd of pigs.

**Yes, God's ultimate authority over Satan is vested in this man.** That is what the story underlines. But there are a number of fascinating details. Why does Matthew mention two demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke know of only one? Perhaps because only one of them became a Christian and was known in the Christian community. But Matthew does this 'doubling' on other occasions (e.g. 9:27; 20:30), so we must look deeper. It seems that we are met by a Semitic cast of expression. **The 'two' may not mean that there were literally two, but that this sort of thing happened more than once.** Or it may allude to the Jewish maxim that 'A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses'. That is a strong feature in John's Gospel,<sup>20</sup> where Jesus points out that he and his Father are both testifying, and that his words and his works both testify to who he is. **Two witnesses establish the veracity of an event.** It may seem a very strange form of expression to us, but it made good sense to the Semitic mind. Matthew, by this curious duplication of people in some of the stories, may simply be emphasizing the veracity of his account. It is, however, not possible to be certain what prompted Matthew's duplication.

One is also prompted to wonder **why the people were keeping pigs anyhow**. If the area was Jewish, pig farming was forbidden. If it was the more pagan area of Perea, as it seems to have been (*the region of the Gadarenes*, 28), then it represents Jesus' first visit outside Jewish soil, and he is immediately introduced as Lord over the demonic forces that kept pagan people in thralldom [slavery]. The demoniacs' question 'Have you come *here* to torture us?' would acquire added force. It would point to the ongoing exorcism on Gentile soil which was such a mark of the progress of the church. And the opposition the incident precipitated (unrelieved, as in Mark, by even a mention of the healing of the two men) may give us a glimpse of how difficult the mission of the church was in that area of Transjordan in Matthew's day. Finally, the phenomenon of evil spirits moving from one carrier to another is attested both in antiquity and today: I have seen it myself during ministry. The destruction of the herd of pigs served as a graphic assurance to the men in question that they really were free at last and that the evil spirits would never return. Jesus is Lord over all the forces of Satan.

*The power of Jesus over sin (9:1–8)*



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demonic

**Having shown Jesus as the one who wields God's power over two massive areas, nature and the demonic, Matthew chooses to insert a third story at this point. He wants to show that Jesus is authorized to exercise divine authority in yet another area, the forgiveness of sins.** As in the previous story, Matthew's account is much more abbreviated than Mark's: he has so much other material he wants to include within the limits of a single scroll.

Matthew accentuates elements in Jesus that point to his divine nature. He sees the vicarious faith of the paralysed man's friends. He knows the thoughts of his scribal critics. He shows God's power to heal. He evokes glory to God who had given such authority to human beings. But the heart of the matter on which Matthew concentrates is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus takes it upon himself to do what only God can do—forgive sins. It is a preposterous claim. It immediately induces the charge of blasphemy. And it looks to us as if such a claim was empirically unverifiable. Not, however, to the scribes. There was a deeply rooted conviction in Judaism that all suffering was a result of personal sin, and that nobody could be cured until he or she was forgiven. For instance, Rabbi Chija ben Abba said, 'No sick person is cured from sickness until all his sins have been forgiven him.' Rabbi Alexander agreed: 'The sick does not arise from his sickness until his sins are forgiven.' With that understanding, imagine the impact that the healing of this man would have had. Not only would it have shown that the word of Jesus was mighty to effect change, just as the word of God had been from the beginning of time. It would have given the most powerful evidence to them that Jesus really was authorized to forgive sins. If not, how could he have cured the sick man? And **that led to the corollary that he was performing on earth the very task that God reserved for himself in heaven.**

The impact of the authority of Jesus is impossible to miss. Matthew has laid enormous stress on it. It is seen in his teaching (7:28–29). It is seen in his power over sicknesses as varied as leprosy, fever and paralysis (8:1–17). It is seen in his authority over nature (8:23–27) and over the demons (8:28–34). And now, climactically, he claims the authority to exercise the divine function of forgiving sins. And he backs it up by a spectacular healing. The implication is obvious; the challenge inescapable.

In these three stories, then, Jesus is laying claim to divine authority. The claim is explicit. It is superbly documented. It challenges the hearers to the roots of their being. Some, like the disciples, are awed (8:27). Some, like the people of Gadara, do not want anything to do with him (8:34). Some, like the scribes, are scandalized (9:3)—the first indication of the Jewish opposition that will eventually send him to his death. Some, like the crowd who had witnessed the healing of the paralytic, praise God (9:8). But none of these is an adequate response. Nothing less than complete and immediate obedience to such a call and allegiance to such a person will suffice. And this, therefore, is the precise moment for the call and response of Matthew to be recorded. There is a deep inner logic in it. 'If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him,' said England cricketer and missionary pioneer C. T. Studd many centuries later. Matthew had no such clear light as Studd, but the three preceding stories demonstrate that Jesus was no mere human. He was bringing in God's kingdom. Matthew was challenged to respond.

### **The calling of Matthew (9:9–13)**

Matthew exacted taxes for the Roman invaders. The system of taxation lent itself to corruption, and tax collectors were proverbially rich and fanatically hated. Not only did they fleece you; they worked for the hated oppressors the Romans, either directly or under a client kingdom such as Herod ran. Matthew will have heard the teaching of Jesus in the Capernaum area. He will have seen the miracles of Jesus. He will have been wondering about this amazing man everyone was talking about. And then suddenly Jesus stood in front of him, and said, 'Follow me' (9). Matthew did just that. That is truly amazing—amazing that Jesus should bother about someone so universally despised and hated; amazing that Matthew should leave everything to follow this carpenter; amazing that Jesus had such authority that when he said to a businessman, 'Follow me', **the man obeyed; and amazing the transformation in Matthew's life that resulted. And we owe to Matthew the first written records about Jesus, contained, along with other material, in this Gospel. He would have had facility with a pen, and Jesus took this quality and used it in his cause. He can do the same with any who, like Matthew, get up and follow him.**

Such a conversion is worth a party. Matthew throws one, and we see Jesus totally at home among a bunch of crooks who were Matthew's friends and colleagues. Unlike some church people in many parts of the world, Jesus was totally relaxed in the presence of 'sinners' and outsiders of every kind. They loved to be with him. He was so attractive, such good company. When the Pharisees saw this they were scandalized. But Jesus was quite unabashed. *'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners'* (12, quoting Hos. 6:6). He charged the Pharisees with being immaculate in their pattern of sacrifices, but devoid of mercy. They despised people like Matthew, and God will not tolerate it. The divine mercy welcomes sinners like Matthew when they repent and follow Jesus. But the



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

Pharisees choose to exclude themselves from the party. Here we see among the Pharisees a tendency, which will reappear more strongly as the story unfolds, to judge Jesus rather than revel in the mercy he offers, and to pride themselves on their own fancied goodness instead of recognizing his. The Pharisees could not tolerate the generosity of God to the paralysed man, to Matthew or to his crooked friends. Those who think they are healthy do not need a doctor: ironic words. There are, of course, no 'healthy' under God's expert examination, but there are lots of people who think they are. Such people do not see their need of a doctor, although they harbour germs of the same fatal disease of sin which they condemn in its cruder forms in others. There is no room for the Pharisee spirit in the kingdom. The word means 'separated ones', proud that they stand out from the crowd and are good people. Such an attitude stinks in God's nostrils. The kingdom is a one-class society—for sinners only.

So, after the three demonstrations of Jesus' power, the evangelist has given us a call to commitment. He follows it with a claim to uniqueness.<sup>6</sup>

### Mark

#### 8. Jesus heals a demon-possessed man (5:1–20)

After a major nature miracle Mark now moves to an equally important healing miracle involving the casting out of demons but going into considerable detail about it. Again there is strong evidence of eye-witness account, probably from Peter.

There is a further new element in the story relating to the question of where it took place. There are at least three options. The main text of Mark has *Gerasenes* (which Luke, in 8:26, also chooses). An alternative in some reliable manuscripts of Mark has *Gergesenes*—a version at least as early as Origen. Matthew, though evidently using Mark's gospel as a guide, opts for *Gadarenes*. The possibility of errors by copyists is obvious. But so is the alternative that the later gospel writers, or the copyists, were trying to correct what they viewed as a mistake. Gergesa was a place of little significance, while Gadara and Gerasa were sizeable towns. On the other hand both Gadara and Gerasa were several miles from the shore of the lake, making the descent by the pigs (in 11–13, assuming this to be part of the original story) very unlikely, unless strong emphasis is placed upon the events taking place in the region of whichever place seems most likely. On these grounds Gergesa seems to be the best placed geographically for the story to be enacted in full. The site of a small unpretentious location may be significant in itself.

Perhaps most likely of all is Cranfield's conclusion that scribes took Mark's reference to Geresenes to necessitate the well-known Gerasa, whereas he meant the smaller town, reflected in modern names Kersa and Koursi, right by the shore.

The real importance of this whole development, in the ministry of Jesus and in Mark's account of it, is that it probably **is a deliberate step into Gentile territory**. Mark, typically, makes no attempt to explain any inner reason of Jesus for the move. He simply states it, maybe expecting his readers, like the very first witnesses of Jesus, to learn how to perceive the meaning of Jesus' actions. Serious, persistent, perceptive faith is required from the readers also. The reason might be once again to get away from the crowds or to have space to wait on God. In terms of what follows in the story and its significance, however, a deliberate excursion into Gentile territory, at this point of opposition and doubt from his own people, might seem the most likely reason. It also helps us to understand some of the more difficult elements in the story.

As to the story, verses 3–5 need to be seen as an explanatory commentary on verse 2, since verse 6 could lead straight on from verse 2. It does not require the solution of a later insertion. The detail of verses 3–5 is accurate as far as the treatment of the demon-possessed was concerned. It also prepares the way for the contrast described so briefly and powerfully in verse 15 (*sitting ... dressed and in his right mind*). Something dramatic evidently took place.

The confrontation between Jesus and the demon-possessed man is full of insights. The man, for all his wild and unpredictable behaviour (3–5), is irresistibly drawn to Jesus (6). It is not a meeting of hope however. He fears the worst (7) once Jesus speaks a word of exorcism (8). We should remember that the knowing of the name, accurately, was believed to give one power over the person named, since the name stood for the nature of the person (hence Jesus' giving of extra, typical, names to some of the disciples, as in Mk. 3:16–17). The demons resist Jesus' first command, in which he did not name them, by crying out his name and identity. This plainly fails to overpower Jesus, who now asks for the man's name (9). The response enables the man to describe his condition (9). Since a legion consisted of upward of 6,000 soldiers, the answer does not provide names but it graphically describes his condition, and he seems unable to distinguish himself from the army which occupies his territory. Yet neither can he break

<sup>6</sup> Green, M. (2001). [The message of Matthew: the kingdom of heaven](#) (pp. 113–124). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

their hold over him, even to asking for them to remain (10). The spirits, however, know they have met a superior power. They (note the use of the plural now in the communication coming from the wretched man) dissociate themselves from their human abode in a bizarre negotiation about where they will go (11–12). Even here Mark draws attention to the power of Jesus. He not only casts them out but also controls their destination. The resultant action proved disastrous for the pigs (13) but entirely liberating for the man (15).

Such a story is, of course, strange territory for scientifically oriented readers to cross. Some readers may regard the section about the pigs as an addition from folklore, noting that Jews would in particular enjoy the selection of pigs, to them unclean animals. Or they may see this as a way of accounting for the upset to a herd of swine, caused by all the commotion of this confrontation. The question there is how well the story holds together as it stands. But Mark, as elsewhere, plainly tells the story as something that happened, from start to finish. If we trust his account as guided by God's spirit we will accept this story too.

Whatever conclusions we reach, we do well to hold it tentatively and humbly. We are considering areas of human life which are largely strange to many in the West (though not to all); but which are still part of the lives of other cultures. We should by now have learned not to dismiss such things as superstition, since our Western civilization is nowadays constantly shown to fall short by contrast with the deeply spiritual perceptions of other cultures. One thinks of the struggle of our medical scientists to re-establish medicine as being not about healing diseases, which we do increasingly well with our advanced technology; but about health and wholeness of the person, including spiritual dimensions, which some African and Asian cultures have known for centuries. It is not difficult for us to perceive the personal nature of much evil in the world: the wholly untypical way that some humans behave under the influence of evil, and the dramatic and sudden way in which some people are set free from such behaviour patterns. At very least we do well to keep an open mind in such matters, recognizing that the conditions described certainly are still with us today, in corporate as well as individual forms. At most we can recognize that we have not found better ways of understanding human evil behaviour which adequately accounts for its bestiality and unexpectedness. Nor have we seen power greater than that of Jesus to deal with it.

In Mark's developing story it is the next verses (14–20) that contain the most telling material. First there is the surprising account (except to those who have learned what the parable of the sower meant, Mk. 4:3–20) of the reaction of the local inhabitants. The swineherds spread the story, the people come running, they see the man at the centre of the story totally cured, and they are awed in the presence of a supernatural happening (14–15). Those who had been present now tell the detail (16).

We are ready for an outburst of faith and discipleship as we reach this point in the story. The opposite happens! They ask him to leave. Mark could hardly spell out more clearly his conviction that even the most powerful of healing miracles cannot, do not, of themselves induce faith or provide a foundation for it. Everything hangs on the openness of the observers to seeing beyond the miracle to the person at its heart. Gentiles, if such they were, are no different from Jews at this point. They too fail to see beyond the sign to the reality.

By strong contrast then, Mark now tells of the response of the healed man. Not only does he believe, he wishes to follow physically, joining the line of disciples to get into the boat (18). Now comes another surprise. Jesus, who plainly does not yet trust his disciples to go out alone preaching, since they barely yet have what he calls faith (4:40), sends 'Legion' straight back home to preach the good news. Is it too much to suggest that this man has already been to the heart of the gospel, in that his experience of exorcism is a dying and rising one? Certainly he has known what the disciples have not yet been willing to discover (4:35–41), namely what it means for one's life and future to be wholly in Jesus' hands and at his disposal, and to have emerged at the other end a 'saved' person. Such, evidently, in the mysterious economy of God, are to be trusted with the message while those with much more background are stumbling forward on a voyage of virgin discovery. The man's message is how the good news has liberated him (5:19). This is the content he promptly delivered (20).

One remaining issue concerns the inconsistency between, for example, 1:34 and 44 on the one hand, where healed people are bidden to be silent about what has happened, and 5:19 in this story where Jesus positively commands the man to preach. We can, of course, simply observe that Jesus is not bound to any rigid patterns of ours, particularly since different circumstances and people require different treatment. Yet we are surely obliged to look for patterns if any should be discernible; and one possibility is that this story of Legion probably happened in Gentile territory. The people who would hear this cured man had none of the presuppositions of Jesus' own people about the shape of the task of the Messiah. They would be free, if they could hear about and respond to a man into whose hands you could place your life absolutely, and feel the force of transcendent power. It is at least a possible explanation. If it is accurate then Mark adds another category of exception to Jesus' reluctance for his work and his





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

status to be spread abroad. Not only religious leaders, disciples and those in dire need may learn the secret. Gentiles too may know, not yet from Jesus' apostles but from one of their own who knows that a total entrusting of your life to Jesus is at the heart of the kingdom's meaning.

### ***Our need to be there where 'Legion' is***

This stirring drama, once generalized and applied to our day, may come as a challenge to our Christian witness. In how many ways are people, individually and corporately, living lives which in one form or another reflect the particular elements or the overall state of the man called Legion? Jesus was exposed to such people and needs by his wandering presence. He was ready for the necessary confrontation between good and evil that a captive might be set free. At political, social and economic structural levels, as well as in cultural, family and individual areas of life, the demonstration of the power of Jesus to set free through his disciples is still awaited while too often the disciples are hidden away in our churches or comfortable subcultures. The sense of God's transcendent power in the midst of society, expressing itself in lowly liberating love, is not known because his disciples, the chosen avenues of that powerful love, are largely absent.

### ***Faith means ultimate risk***

What is more serious is that such absence from the world's stage may reflect failure on our part truly to live out the heart of discipleship as Mark portrays it (and as Legion experienced it), the total commitment of life, the risking of everything, in trusting ourselves to God in Jesus Christ. Much of our search for more secure ways of being Christian may in fact be escapes from the raw reality which Mark communicates.<sup>7</sup>

## **DEMONS:**

### **MATTHEW 8:29** SPIRITUAL REALITIES BEYOND YOU

**Jesus often encountered demons like those that possessed the men at Gadara (Matt. 8:28-34).**

**The mention of demons affirms the reality of powerful spiritual forces in the universe.**

**Scripture has much to say about angels and demons.**

**Angels** are members of an order of heavenly beings who are superior to humans in power and intelligence (Heb. 2:7; 2 Pet. 2:11; see "The Reality of Angels" at Zech. 3:1). However, unlike God they are not all-powerful or all-knowing (Ps. 103:20; 2 Thess. 1:7). God often sends them to announce good news, such as the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:30-31), or to warn of coming dangers, such as the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:16-19:29).

Angels played a particularly active role in the events surrounding Jesus' birth, resurrection, and ascension. They:

- counseled Joseph to wed Mary (Matt. 1:20);
- warned Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary and the Christ child (2:13);
- instructed Joseph to return the family to Palestine (2:19);
- foretold to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-38);
- announced to shepherds the birth of Christ (2:8-15);
- appeared to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to strengthen Him (22:43);
- rolled back the stone from Jesus' empty tomb (Matt. 28:2);
- appeared to women at the empty tomb to announce Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:4-7, 23; John 20:12);
- promised Jesus' return after His ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

Since Pentecost, the frequency of angelic activity in human affairs appears to have diminished, perhaps because of the larger role played by the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

**Demons** are fallen angels that have been cast out of heaven. They seek to undermine the cause of righteousness in the world (1 Pet. 3:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Scripture describes them with various names: "unclean spirits" (Mark 6:7), "wicked or evil spirits" (Luke 7:21; Acts 19:12-13), "spirit of divination" (Acts 16:16), "deceiving spirits" (1 Tim. 4:1), and "spirit of error" (1 John 4:6).

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<sup>7</sup> English, D. (1992). [\*The message of Mark: the mystery of faith\*](#) (pp. 107-112). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

*Scripture presents demons not as mythological creatures, but as real beings involved in historical events. See "Demons" at Luke 11:14.<sup>8</sup>*

### Chapter 27

#### WHAT ARE DEMONS LIKE?

Since demons belong to the same class of beings as angels and Satan, all these creatures have much in common.

#### I. THEIR PERSONAL NATURE

##### A. They are Genuine Persons

Demons are not forces or concepts that merely exist in our minds. Demons exist; their reality does not depend on the existence and ability of human beings to conceive of them.

1. *Intelligence.* They possess intelligence, knowing who the Lord was while He was on earth (Mark 1:24) and knowing their own eventual doom (Matt. 8:29). They also believe in monotheism (James 2:19).
2. *Emotions.* They can exhibit emotion, especially when confronted with judgment (Luke 8:28; James 2:19).
3. *Wills.* They can give expression to their wills (Luke 8:32).
4. *Personality.* They are described by personal pronouns (Luke 8:27–30).

##### B. They are Spirit Beings

In contrast to flesh and blood beings, demons are spirit beings (Eph. 6:12). Nevertheless, they are localized, since, as creatures, they are limited and not infinite as God is. Generally they are invisible to human beings, though on occasion their presence is apparent through various means (Acts 19:15; Rev. 9:1–12; 16:13).

#### II. THEIR INTELLECTUAL NATURE

Demons show great intelligence, as would be expected from such a high order of beings. They knew who Jesus is (Mark 1:24). They realized their own eventual doom (Matt. 8:29). They know there is only one God (James 2:19). They develop and promote systems of doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1–3), an activity that will apparently increase as the end of the age approaches.

Intelligence can be enhanced by experience. Every demon, of course, has existed throughout all the span of human history. Though each one has not observed everything that has transpired throughout history, their longevity gives an added dimension to their native intelligence. They have observed human beings in almost every conceivable situation; therefore, they can accurately predict what individuals will do in most circumstances.

#### III. THEIR IMMORAL NATURE

##### A. In Their Beings

Demons are designated as "unclean spirits" (Matt. 10:1), as "evil spirits" (Luke 7:21), as "the spirit of an unclean demon" (Luke 4:33), and "spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). All of these terms clearly indicate the immoral nature of demons.

##### B. In Their Goals

Immorality is whatever is inconsistent with good, but good must ultimately be defined in relation to the will of God. Therefore, the immoral activities of demons may include anything that opposes the will of God.

Here are some observations of one who was deeply involved in spiritism.

The spirits I encountered at seances were, for the most part, very moralistic. They encouraged us not to smoke or drink or do anything else that would harm our minds and bodies. Ministers were told to preach morality, good manners, and civic pride. I knew ministers who actually had spirit messages taken down by their secretaries and then used them from the pulpit! The spirits often talked about an ethical Jesus, but never about the Savior who died a sacrificial death for sin.

In contrast to the high moral and ethical tone of the seances in our home, I attended some where the spirits were blasphemous and sensual.

The immoral goals of demons must include both the promotion of evil immorality and good immorality. This is completely in line with Satan's goals and his desire to counterfeit what is right.

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<sup>8</sup> [Word in life study Bible](#). (1996). (electronic ed., Mt 8:29–9:4). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

### IV. THEIR POWERS

#### A. Their Strength

At times demons can exhibit superhuman strength as they work through human beings. The demon-possessed maniac of the Gerasenes was able to break all shackles and chains (Mark 5:3). The sons of Sceva were overpowered by the demon-possessed man in Acts 19:16.

#### B. Their Intelligence

I have already mentioned their superior intelligence. But the question always arises, do demons know the future? Certainly they can understand the plan of God for the future as they find it in the Bible. Does Acts 16:16 indicate they can predict the future? Evidently not, for the word “fortunetelling,” used only here in the New Testament, must be understood in a bad sense; that is, “pretending to foretell the future.” When it is used in the Septuagint, it invariably refers to the words of lying prophets or those who practiced evil arts that were forbidden by the Law.

#### C. Their Presence

Demons are not infinite; they are limited and they are creatures, albeit superhuman ones. Apparently they are not present everywhere; yet they are not so restricted as humans are by the normal barriers of space (Luke 8:30—a legion of demons dwelt in one man). The very fact that demons can enter human or animal bodies shows they can pass through barriers that would restrict human beings.

The very large number of demons may make them seem to be everywhere present, though that is not so. Yet Satan working with them can use their number to attempt to promote his plans everywhere.

To sum up: Demons are not humans; neither are they God. But they are superhuman with superior intelligence and experience and powers. To deny the existence of demons is not skepticism; it only displays ignorance. To be unrealistic about their power is foolhardy.

### Chapter 28

#### WHAT DO DEMONS DO?

### I. IN RELATION TO SATAN

In general demons act as Satan’s emissaries to promote his purpose to thwart the plan of God. Though Satan experiences creaturely limitations, demons extend his power and activities greatly. In fact, at times it may seem that Satan enjoys omniscience and omnipresence, though in actuality he does not. It is just that the demons extend Satan’s activities so much that one might think Satan himself is doing it all (Eph. 6:11–12).

### II. IN RELATION TO GOD

#### A. They Oppose the Plan of God

Having chosen to rebel against God and side with Satan, demons continue to oppose the purposes of God in this world (Dan. 10:10–14; Rev. 16:13–16).

#### B. They May Be Used by God to Carry Out His Purposes

On occasion God may use demons to further His purposes. He sent an evil spirit to stir up the people of Shechem against Abimelech (Judg. 9:23). He used an evil spirit to punish Saul with a mental disturbance that bordered on madness (1 Sam. 16:14). He sent a deceiving spirit to control the prophets and to give Ahab the wrong advice (1 Kings 22:22). He used one to afflict Paul so that he would not become overly proud (2 Cor. 12:7). Because they are creatures, demons are accountable to God and thus can be used by Him as He may desire.

### III. IN RELATION TO RELIGION

#### A. They Promote Idolatry

In carrying out their opposition to God, demons actively try to turn men to the worship of idols. This was true in Old Testament times (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:36–38). It is true now (1 Cor. 10:20), and demon worship will apparently be widespread during the coming Tribulation days (Rev. 9:20).

#### B. They Promote False Religion

1. *They teach a worthless savior.* John warned his readers to test the spirits, for demons influence false (human) prophets (1 John 4:1–4). A major test of orthodoxy (though not the only one) was the affirmation of the reality of the Incarnation; for if Christ had not taken on Himself a human body He could not have died and been our Savior.

Paul also warned of this attack on the Incarnation in the teachings of demons (1 Tim. 3:16–4:3). If 3:16 is a summary of truth contained in what was likely part of an early Christian hymn, then we may assume that demons attack not only the Incarnation, but also the historical resurrection and ascension of the Lord.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

2. *They teach a works salvation.* This seems to be the point of 1 Timothy 4:3–4. By promoting asceticism as a good work, they replace the grace of God with a works program for salvation.
3. *They teach a libertine ethic.* The “deep things of Satan,” undoubtedly promoted by his demons, attempt to teach people that wrong is right (Rev. 2:20–24).

### IV. IN RELATION TO NATIONS

Daniel 10:13 relates that the prince of the kingdom of Persia resisted the coming of a good angel to bring Daniel a message. That prince was in turn resisted by Michael the archangel, indicating that the prince must have been a powerful demon. Just before Armageddon demons will be involved in moving the leaders of the nations to prepare for that military campaign (Rev. 16:13–16). Apparently there is warfare between the angels and demons that involves the affairs of nations of this earth. To deceive the nations is part of Satan’s master plan, and he uses demons in carrying it out. What this may mean in international politics staggers the imagination, for there is no reason not to believe that it is still going on today.

### V. IN RELATION TO PEOPLE

#### A. Affliction

Demons are able to inflict physical diseases (Matt. 9:33, muteness; 12:22, blindness and muteness; 17:15–18, seizures). They can also cause mental disorders (Mark 5:4–5; 9:22; Luke 8:27–29; 9:37–42). They can be involved in bringing death to people (Rev. 9:14–19). Of course, not all physical or mental problems result from demonic activity; actually the Bible distinguishes natural illnesses from demonic ones (Matt. 4:24; Mark 1:32, 34; Luke 7:21; 9:1).

#### B. Perversion

The fact that demons are also called unclean spirits shows that whatever they do perverts what is clean, noble, and right. Demons want to pervert people by having them turn aside from the plan of God to Satan’s plan. Sometimes they do this by promoting a perverted system of doctrine and lifestyle that may seem good to human beings (1 Tim. 4:1–3). Sometimes they do this by promoting evil and unclean activities (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37–39). The immorality of the Canaanites seems to be traceable to demon activity (Lev. 18:6–30; Deut. 18:9–14).

#### C. Possession

1. *Definition.* Demon possession is the direct control by demon(s) of an individual by residing in him. All people, believers and unbelievers, are influenced and affected by demon activity, but not all are possessed. To draw an analogy, demon influence is to demon possession as general providence is to special miracles. Possessed individuals are not capable of severing themselves from the control of the demon(s).

The term “to be possessed by a demon” or “to be demonized” occurs thirteen times in the New Testament, all in the Gospels (e.g., Matt. 4:24; 12:22; Mark 5:15–18; Luke 8:36; John 10:21). The same phenomenon is described by terms like “cast out” or “come out” (Mark 1:25–26; 9:25). After the Day of Pentecost demon possession and exorcism are mentioned only in Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16–18; 19:12. The spiritual gift of discerning spirits (1 Cor. 12:10) most likely refers to the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of supernatural revelation when that revelation was being given in oral form, and not to the ability to cast out demons from people.

2. *Characteristics.* The characteristics of demon possession can be as varied as the activities of demons, ranging from mild to severe and even bizarre. Not too many specific symptoms of demon possession are described in the accounts, but they include the following: physical abnormalities like muteness, blindness, and convulsions (Matt. 9:32; 12:22; Luke 9:39); tendencies to self-destruction (Mark 5:5; Luke 9:42); insanity (at least the people believed demons could produce this, John 10:20); superhuman strength (Mark 5:3–4); and occult powers (Acts 16:16–18). Though demons can do these things in people, this does not mean that all illness, for example, comes from demon activity. Dr. Luke clearly distinguished demon-induced diseases from illnesses due to other, more natural, causes (Acts 5:16).

Here is a description of voodoo possession in the country of Haiti:

The subject enters a trancelike state (usually after undergoing convulsions), during which one of the loa enters his or her body and “rides” it. The human personality is displaced by the superhuman, the human features take on the characteristics of the spirit’s (masculine or feminine, good or evil, old or young, crafty or honest), and the human throat utters the loa’s words, some of them in wholly unintelligible “tongues.” The possession may last minutes or hours or sometimes days, during which time the person invaded by the spirit is fed the spirit’s favorite food and drink (often quite impossible for unpossessed humans to consume) and offered his favorite diversions. Afterward, the human remembers nothing of his behavior as a god.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

3. *Responsibility.* The Scripture says very little explicitly on this point. The warnings to be on guard against and to resist the attacks of the devil imply that failure to do so exposes one to the possibility of control by Satan and his demons. Thus an individual may bear the responsibility for what eventuates in demon possession by giving in to preceding satanic attacks.

Yet the case of the lad who was demonized from childhood seems to indicate this was a condition over which he had no control (Mark 9:21). And certainly Paul's thorn in the flesh was not something he brought on himself, but was God using a demon to inflict the problem (2 Cor. 12:7).

4. *Extent.* Is demon possession restricted to unbelievers, or can it extend also to believers? In other words, can a Christian be demon possessed today? The argument against a believer's being able to be demon possessed is often based on the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart. In other words, since the Spirit indwells the believer, it is impossible for Satan or demons also to indwell and thus possess the believer at the same time. But do not the Spirit and the flesh war within the believer? (Gal. 5:16–17). If it be argued that the old man has been judged (Rom. 6:6), it may also be pointed out that Satan has been judged too (John 12:31). So if Spirit and flesh, the new and the old, can be present within the believer at the same time, why cannot the Spirit and Satan (or demons)?

Verses cited to support the view that believers can be possessed by demons are usually these: 1 Samuel 16:14; Luke 13:11–16; Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 11:4; and 12:7. But when these verses are examined, they do not prove that believers can be demon possessed. Perhaps the question should be restated. Instead of asking whether a believer can be demon possessed, we should ask whether or not Satan or demons can work from within a believer as well as from outside. In other words, can the base of operation for Satan or demons be inside as well as outside a believer?

The reference in 1 Samuel says that an evil spirit tormented Saul, but the base of operation is not stated. Nor do we know definitely Saul's spiritual condition before God. Luke attributes the woman's deformity to a demon, and the Lord calls her "a daughter of Abraham." Some understand this to be a clear case of a demon working within a believer. However, it is unclear whether "daughter of Abraham" indicated a believer or only that she was one of God's chosen people, Israel. Clearly she was not a Christian in the post-Pentecost sense of the word.

The punishment on the sinning brother in 1 Corinthians 5 involved delivering him over to Satan (see also 1 Tim. 1:20). But whether this meant that Satan and or demons would work from within his life or simply that he was now being put out of the fellowship and protection of the church into the domain of Satan, the world, is debatable. The "different spirit" of 2 Corinthians 11:4 is not a demon any more than "another Jesus" in the verse is. It is another gospel that brings bondage. The base of operation of the messenger of Satan (a demon) that God sent to afflict Paul is unstated in 12:7. Though the result was a thorn in the flesh, this did not mean that the demon had to reside in Paul.

Acts 5:3 clearly states that Satan filled the heart of Ananias to cause him to lie to the Spirit. The word "fill" is the same as used in Ephesians 5:18 of the filling of the Spirit. Since there is no reason not to believe that Ananias was a believer, here is a clear statement that Satan did fill the heart of a believer. Nothing is said about demons here, though presumably if Satan filled his heart, demons could have also.

How can this evidence be evaluated? Here are two suggestions. First, we should discard phrases like "demon possession" and "demon indwelling" when referring these concepts to believers, because we tend to read into these terms the same idea we have about Spirit indwelling (i.e., a permanent residence in the believer). Neither Satan nor demons can permanently indwell a believer or ultimately have victory over him, even though they may dominate or control a believer's life for some time. A believer may be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, but the spirit will be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5). Whatever Satan or demons can do to a believer, and whether from without or within as their base of operation, their control cannot be permanent and eternal. John clearly declares that the evil one cannot "touch" the one who is born of God (1 John 5:18). The word "touch" here involves the purpose of harming—Satan cannot harm the believer. John uses the word in only one other place, John 20:17 (KJV), and it means not a superficial touching but a grasping, clinging to, or holding on to someone. Satan can never hang on to the believer with the purpose of harming him, for that believer belongs eternally and irrevocably to God. Satan (or demons) may afflict and even control for a time, but never permanently or eternally.

Second, the indefiniteness of the New Testament concerning the base of operation of demons in relation to Christians coupled with the lack of direct commands (after Pentecost) to exorcise demons may give us a clue as to how to fight the enemy. Normally one should not look to exorcism as the way to attack demons, but rather one must use the normal weapons of our warfare against Satan and his demons. The Christian should treat demon molestation as he would resist temptation or fight against the activities of his flesh. He should examine himself to see if there are



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

any areas of rebellion against the law or will of God, confess any and all known sin, rely on the power of the indwelling Spirit who is greater than Satan (1 John 4:4), and use all the armor of God (Eph. 6:13–18).

Even if exorcism may be called for in some extreme instances, the exorcist cannot prevent demons from attacking the same person again, for no human being can guarantee to bind demons or send them into the abyss. Paul reminds us that we struggle against the powers of darkness all our lives. Therefore, the Christian must be alert (1 Pet. 5:8), be clothed in God's armor, and use all the things that contribute to healthy spirituality (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8). A note of caution: Not all problems are initiated by demons, not all physical illnesses, not all emotional problems, not all sins. Some arise from natural causes, some from the flesh. Casting out demons would do no good in such instances, but fighting the good fight of faith will benefit in all things.<sup>9</sup>

### THE NATURE AND ACTIVITY OF DEMONS

The passages in the Gospels reviewed in this chapter provide the Bible's major contribution to our understanding about the nature and the activity of demons. We can summarize those teachings as follows.

#### DEMONS ARE PERSONAL BEINGS RATHER THAN MERE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

The Gospels use personal pronouns when reporting dialogues with demons (see Luke 8:27–30); individual demons apparently have personal names, and groups of demons have "team" names (see Luke 8:30). Demons can communicate and hold conversations (see Luke 4:22–26; 8:28–30). Demons also have intelligence (see Mark 1:23, 24; Luke 4:34; 8:28), emotions (see Luke 8:28), and a will (see Mark 1:27; Luke 4:35, 36).

#### DEMONS ARE MORALLY PERVERTED AND EVIL BEINGS

Demons are called "evil spirits" (see Luke 7:31). The Greek word for evil, *ponēros*, indicates an active, virulent wickedness that expresses itself in doing harm to others. Demons are also called "unclean spirits" (see Matt. 10:1; Mark 1:23), which also has a moral connotation. These evil characteristics are described further in the Epistles, where demons are among the "spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12) who infest our world and who inspire false teachers and false doctrines (1 Tim. 4).

#### DEMONS CAN ENTER AND INFLUENCE HUMAN BEINGS

Demons have the ability to control, or to influence, human beings. The Gospels report incidents in which demons caused mental derangement, including full-fledged insanity (see Luke 8:27–29) and suicidal mania (see Mark 9:22).

The Gospels also report that demons cause a variety of physical disabilities. These include muteness (see Matt. 9:32, 33; Mark 9:17–29), blindness (see Matt. 12:11), deformities (see Luke 13:11–17), and severe seizures (see Matt. 17:15–18; Luke 9:39).

Today believers are eager to admit the existence of angels and their active ministry in the world. It is clear from the Gospel accounts that dark angels are just as active in their efforts to thwart God's plans and harm God's people. We have no reason to doubt that demons are as active today as they were in New Testament times. In the next chapter we will look more closely at demon possession and Christian exorcism.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (pp. 184–192). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

<sup>10</sup> Richards, L. (1997). *Every angel in the Bible* (pp. 248–249). Nashville: T. Nelson.





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

### Johannian Signs that are in the other Gospels

Other Miracles in John and the Synoptic Gospel: (Is there a meaning when the miracle is in all four?)

9/2<sup>nd</sup>

### WONDERS AT CALVARY

Mt 28, Luke 24, Mark 16, John 20

Jesus performed no miracle while on the cross, but his death was accompanied by wonders.

It is appropriate to note several wonders associated with the death of Jesus on the cross. These, like his miracles, were extraordinary events with a religious purpose caused by God.

**The cross is one focus of fulfilled prophecy.** It is a wonder indeed that hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, his crucifixion was described in great detail.

Psalm 22 was acknowledged to be messianic long before Christ was born. It contains the following verses:

“My God, My God, why have  
You forsaken Me” (22:1).

They shoot out the lip, they shake  
the head, saying,

“He trusted in the LORD, let Him  
rescue Him;

Let Him deliver Him, since He  
delights in Him” (22:7, 8).

They pierced My hands and My feet (22:16).

They divide My garments among them,

And for My clothing they cast lots (22:18).

As we read the Gospels, we discover that each of these verses describes something that was said or something that happened at Calvary.

Isaiah 53 describes Jesus’ death in the company of criminals (Isa. 53:9, 12), predicting that he would be buried in a rich man’s tomb (Isa. 53:9). Psalm 34:20 predicts that none of Jesus’ bones would be broken. This is a striking prediction, for the legs of the thieves with whom he died were broken to hasten their deaths (John 19:32, 33).

These and other prophecies fulfilled at Calvary on the day Jesus died are one of the wonders of God’s Word. They remind us that the Cross was always a central element in God’s plan and that the death of Jesus was decreed by the Father, not by human beings.

To find the meaning of the Cross, we must understand it not as a tragedy, but as the key to God’s triumph over Satan, sin, and death.

**The wonder of the torn veil.** Matthew reports that at the moment of Jesus’ death the veil of the temple was “torn in two from top to bottom” (Matt. 27:51). The same event is reported in Mark 15:38 and Luke 23:45.

The veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the temple was a thick, woven tapestry of multiple colored strands. No known force could rip it apart.

The veil was also spiritually significant. Only once a year could the high priest go behind this veil—and then he carried sacrificial blood to sprinkle on the cover of the sacred ark of the covenant as an atonement for Israel’s sins.

The writer of the book of Hebrews reveals that the veil which separated the two inner rooms of the temple indicated that “the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest” (Heb. 9:8). The veil cut off not only the people but even the priests from direct access to God. It was a symbol of the reality that no avenue of approach to God existed in Old Testament times.

But with the death of Christ, a radical change took place. He took our sins upon himself and opened the way to God through his sacrifice. And so the writer of Hebrews declares, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

The wonder of the torn veil symbolizes the end of one age and the beginning of another. In this new age, all believers can enter the holiest of all boldly and with confidence, knowing that God’s throne is a throne of grace for all.



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

**The wonder of the opened graves (Matt. 27:52, 53).** Matthew alone reports this extraordinary event. He indicates that an earthquake struck the area at the moment of Jesus' death, opening a number of graves. Many of the saints were restored to life and seen in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection.

The implications of this wonder are clear. Jesus' death brought life to some who had been dead. What a symbol of victory over death, and of the resurrection life that Jesus offers to all who trust him as Savior. Richards, L. (1998). [\*Every miracle in the Bible\*](#) (pp. 246–249). Nashville: T. Nelson.

### **John 20** ESV

#### **The Resurrection**

**20** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." <sup>3</sup> So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to their homes.

#### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." <sup>14</sup> Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, <sup>17</sup> "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>18</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>19</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

#### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

<sup>20</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, <sup>21</sup> Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." <sup>24</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>25</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

#### **Jesus and Thomas**

<sup>26</sup> Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, <sup>27</sup> was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>28</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

<sup>29</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>30</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." <sup>31</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>32</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

#### **The Purpose of This Book**

<sup>33</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>34</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

JOHN 20. NLT

#### **The Resurrection**



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

**20** Early on Sunday morning,<sup>[a]</sup> while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. **2** She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” **3** Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. **4** They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. **6** Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, **7** while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. **8** Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—**9** for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. **10** Then they went home.

### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

**11** Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. **12** She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. **13** “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

**14** She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. **15** “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

**16** “Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

**17** “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

**18** Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples

**19** That Sunday evening<sup>[b]</sup> the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. **20** As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! **21** Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” **22** Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

### Jesus Appears to Thomas

**24** One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),<sup>[c]</sup> was not with the others when Jesus came. **25** They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

**26** Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

**28** “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

**29** Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

### Purpose of the Book

**30** The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may continue to believe<sup>[d]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

## Mt 28

### The Resurrection

**28** Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.<sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. **4** And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. **5** But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he<sup>[a]</sup> lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” **8** So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.<sup>9</sup> And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

### **The Report of the Guard**

<sup>11</sup> While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup> and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

### **The Great Commission**

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[b]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

### **Luke 24**

#### **The Resurrection**

**24** But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

#### **On the Road to Emmaus**

<sup>13</sup> That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles<sup>[a]</sup> from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup> but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" <sup>33</sup> And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

#### **Jesus Appears to His Disciples**



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

<sup>36</sup> As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” <sup>37</sup> But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” <sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate before them. <sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for <sup>[c]</sup> the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

### **The Ascension**

<sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple blessing God.

### **Mark 16**

#### **The Resurrection**

**16** When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” <sup>4</sup> And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. <sup>5</sup> And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup> And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

[Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9–20.]<sup>[a]</sup>

#### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

<sup>9</sup> [[Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. <sup>11</sup> But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

#### **Jesus Appears to Two Disciples**

<sup>12</sup> After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. <sup>13</sup> And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

#### **The Great Commission**

<sup>14</sup> Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

<sup>19</sup> So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.]]

### **EASTER MIRACLES—AND BEYOND**

Each Gospel devotes much of its space to the story of Jesus’ trial and crucifixion. Yet each Gospel account ends on a note of triumph. Jesus has been falsely accused and foully murdered. Yet death cannot hold Jesus. In an unmatched exercise of the power of God, Jesus is raised from the dead!



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

The account of events on and beyond the first Easter focus our attention on a number of wonders associated with the Resurrection, which is the greatest wonder of all. As we look first at the associated wonders and then at the Resurrection itself, we realize how utterly central the bodily resurrection of our Lord is to authentic Christian faith.

### WONDERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESURRECTION

**The tomb's stone seal was rolled away (Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1-2).** The tombs of wealthy first century Jews like Joseph of Arimathea, where Jesus' body was placed, were hewn into rock cliffs. Such tombs generally had several niches carved into the rock, where the bones of several generations of the family could be stored. These tombs were sealed by large stone "wheels," which would be rolled along a track cut into the rock to seal the tomb. When on the first Easter morning several women set out for Jesus' tomb to wrap His body in linen strips interwoven with sweet-smelling spices, they worried. How could they roll away the heavy stone that sealed the tomb?

When they arrived at the tomb, they discovered the tomb already opened! Matthew tells us that an earthquake had jolted the stone from its track, and an angel had moved it away from the tomb's opening!

**The guard posted at the tomb was unconscious (Matt. 28:4).** The Jewish leaders had asked Pilate, the Roman governor, to put a military guard at the tomb. They remembered that Jesus had promised a return to life, and while they did not believe Him, they thought His disciples might try to steal the body.

But the appearance of the angel and the earthquake shocked the military guard into unconsciousness. Later, when they awakened, some of the guard reported what had happened to the chief priests. These religious leaders who had conspired to see Jesus executed then bribed the soldiers with "a large sum of money" to say that the disciples stole Jesus' body while they were asleep.

The leaders must also have promised the soldiers protection, for the penalty for a Roman soldier who slept while on guard was death. And, of course, if the disciples had actually stolen Christ's body while the soldiers slept, the soldiers could hardly have been credible witnesses. How would they know *what* happened, if they were asleep? Like most political cover-ups, this attempt to confuse the population about Christ's resurrection was destined to fail.

**Angels informed visitors to the tomb that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matthew 28:3; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:12-13).** This is a third wonder associated with the Resurrection. One or more angels appeared to groups of women who came to the tomb, and testified to Jesus' resurrection. In each case the angels appeared in their natural, radiant state, rather than as ordinary persons. There could be no mistaking the supernatural character of these witnesses to the raising of Jesus.

**The undisturbed graveclothes (John 20:2-10).** When Peter and John heard that Jesus' tomb was empty they ran to see for themselves. Peter stooped and stepped into the tomb and was stunned by what he saw.

In biblical times bodies were loosely wrapped in strips of linen, and a cloth was placed over the head of the deceased. What Peter saw was the cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped, still in the shape of the body around which they had been done up! But there was no body inside! Jesus had somehow passed through the grave cloths, leaving them as an empty husk!

The apostle John tells us that when he saw this, he believed (John 20:8)!

**Mary saw Jesus Himself (John 20:12-18).** Even after Mary had seen the angels at the tomb, she wept uncontrollably. She was still convinced that "they" had taken Jesus away.

Then through her tears Mary saw a figure standing nearby. Supposing him to be the gardener she asked the figure where the body of Jesus had been placed. Jesus then spoke only one word to Mary: her name. Immediately Mary recognized His voice.

**Jesus appeared unrecognized to two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-35).** Another striking incident is reported in Luke. As two disciples return to their home in Emmaus from Jerusalem they are joined by an unknown man. The man questions them, and when they share their vanished hopes that Jesus might have been the Christ, the man leads them through the Old Testament prophets, showing from Scripture that it was foretold that the Christ would suffer as Jesus had!

On arriving home the two travelers invited the stranger to take a meal with them. As the stranger broke the bread and gave thanks for it, in the traditional Jewish table blessing, they suddenly realized that their companion was Jesus Himself, raised from the dead. Jesus then disappeared, and the two hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.

**Jesus appeared in a locked room (Luke 24:36-43; Mark 16:14).** The text tells us that Jesus came to His disciples and spoke with them personally shortly after the Resurrection. Luke adds a fascinating detail. The room where the disciples had gathered was a locked room, where the disciples were hiding for fear of the religious leaders who had manipulated Jesus' death.

The sudden appearance of Jesus in the room is one of the proofs that the resurrection body is not limited in the way our mortal bodies are limited. Jesus appeared and disappeared at will, most likely freely crossing the barrier between the material and spiritual universes which no mortal can cross.





## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

**Jesus' resurrection body bore the marks of crucifixion in its hands and side (John 20:24–31).** The disciple Thomas had not been present the first time Jesus appeared to the gathered disciples. He would not believe the report of the others that Christ had shown Himself to them, alive. Thomas bluntly stated that he would not believe unless he touched Jesus' hands and side, and confirmed that the One who now lived was indeed the same One who had been crucified.

Yet when Jesus did appear, and invited Thomas to touch His wounds, Thomas found he did not need this confirmation after all. Thomas knew Jesus, and fell down before him, confessing "My Lord and my God."

These events, each closely linked to that first Easter morning, were wonders indeed. Yet they pale in comparison to the event with which they are associated: the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION: *Romans 1:4;*  
*1 Corinthians 15*

Some contemporary "theologians" have argued that it doesn't matter whether the resurrection of Jesus was literal and historical or not. They claim that a "spiritual" resurrection is all that is required. What mattered is not whether or not Jesus' body was raised and transformed. What mattered is that the disciples *believed* that Jesus was raised. What mattered is that they experienced Him in a different way than when He lived among them.

But the Bible makes it very clear that the resurrection of Jesus was a literal resurrection of the material body, and that the Resurrection took place in space and time as a true historical event. Romans 1:4 reminds us that by His resurrection Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power." The Resurrection is the capstone miracle, which confirms once and forever Jesus' claim to be God the Son and Son of God.

The apostle Paul provides a thorough discussion of the Resurrection in chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians. Tracing that discussion we gain some insight into both the nature of Jesus' resurrection, and its significance to our faith.

**Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are all historical events prophesied in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).** This is significant, as prophecy which has been fulfilled has invariably been fulfilled literally. We can conclude from this that the death of Jesus was a real death, and the resurrection of Jesus was a real, historical resurrection.

**Christ was seen alive after His resurrection by many witnesses who knew Him, and who could not have been deceived (1 Corinthians 15:5–11).** Paul not only mentions the Twelve, but also some 500 others, most of whom were alive when Paul wrote the Corinthian letter.

**Christ's was raised as the first of many (1 Corinthians 15:12–20).** Christian faith promises resurrection to all who believe in Jesus. If Christ was not raised, this critical promise is an empty one. On the other hand, because Jesus did experience a bodily resurrection, our own future resurrection is assured.

**The Resurrection is a critical element in God's eternal plan to destroy death itself (1 Corinthians 15:21–28).** Adam's sin introduced death. Biblically "death" is not only the cessation of biological life; it is also that corruption of human moral nature which separates human beings from God and brings them under divine judgment. In dying Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. In His resurrection Jesus provided eternal life for those who believe in Him. When God's plan reaches its culmination believers will be resurrected also, and the last taint of sin and death will be forever done away.

The dynamic power of Jesus' resurrection life will accomplish the resurrection transformation of believers, that once again God may be all in all.

**While mortal and resurrection bodies are related, the resurrection body is of a different order (1 Corinthians 15:35–48).** The great apostle struggles to find analogies that will help us understand resurrection. In a real sense, we will never understand the glorious prospect God holds up to us until the final resurrection comes. Yet Paul does suggest a series of contrasts which helps us sense something of the transformation that took place when Christ was raised, and that will take place when we are raised from the dead.

**Corruption vs. incorruption (1 Cor. 15:42).** The natural body is subject to dissolution. The resurrection body is not.

**Dishonor vs. glory (1 Cor. 15:43).** The contrast is explained in the verse. Our natural body is weak and subject to all sorts of disabilities. The resurrection body is infused with power.

**Natural body vs. spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44).** This contrast points out that our mortal body is governed by principles implicit in the material universe. In contrast, the resurrection body operates on principles that are supernatural, i.e., "spiritual."

**Earthly source vs. heavenly source (1 Cor. 15:47–49).** The first man, Adam, was molded from the earth, and his material body was infused with life by God. But Christ's origin is heaven itself, as is the origin of the transformation that produced His resurrection body. In the same sense the essence and origin of our resurrection bodies will be heavenly. In the resurrection "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."



## When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing) When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is most certainly one of the three Grand Miracles of our faith, as described on pages 15 through 17 of this book. The literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus also serves as a miraculous confirmation of our own destiny, and as such is foundational to authentic Christian faith.<sup>11</sup>

### Ephesians 1

#### Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>15</sup> For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love<sup>[a]</sup> toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

#### NLT

#### Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

<sup>15</sup> Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, <sup>17</sup> asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom<sup>[b]</sup> and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. <sup>18</sup> I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>19</sup> I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power<sup>20</sup> that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. <sup>21</sup> Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

Jesus Turns Water into WineNature [Jn 2:7-8](#)

Jesus Heals an Official's SonHealing [Jn 4:50](#)

Jesus Heals a Lame ManHealing [Jn 5:8](#)

Jesus Feeds 5,000 PeopleProvision [Jn 6:1-13](#)

Jesus Walks on WaterNature [Jn 6:19](#)

Jesus Heals a Man Born BlindHealing [Jn 9:7](#)

Jesus Raises LazarusResurrection [Jn 11:43-44](#)

Jesus Rises from the Dead [Jn 20:1-10](#)

Jesus Appears in a Locked RoomNature [Jn 20:19-23](#)

Jesus Appears in a Locked Room for ThomasNature [Jn 20:26-29](#)

Jesus Provides a Miraculous Catch of FishProvision [Jn 21:4-6](#)

### Small Group: 4 Perspectives from the Participants

**Jesus.** Jesus' revealed his deity by creating bread, as if in answer to the usual mealtime prayer. He was not irritated with the following crowd. Even though He left the shore to find some rest with the Disciples. **He could sense and see their hunger.**

**WHAT DID JESUS SENSE? WHAT DO YOU THINK HE SAW/NOTICED? HUNGER FOR WHAT?**

<sup>11</sup> Richards, L. (1998). [Every miracle in the Bible](#) (pp. 238–243). Nashville: T. Nelson.



When Jesus Speaks: Through His Miracles, Week #10 (Nine is missing)  
When Jesus Heals The Demoniac

**Jesus' disciples.** The disciples showed sensitivity to the needs of the crowd for food and shelter (Matt. 14:15). But their solution, to “send them away, so they can buy bread,” was not acceptable to Jesus. The disciples were stunned when Jesus ordered, **“You give them something to eat”** (Mark 6:37).

**WHAT WOULD YOUR FEELINGS/INNER REPLY/RESPONSE HAVE BEEN?**

**The crowds.** Great crowds had followed Jesus into a “deserted” (uninhabited) area. **They had come hastily**, without bringing food to eat on the way. Jesus saw them as sheep, wandering aimlessly, helpless without a shepherd.

**THEY WERE IN A HURRY TO CATCH HIM. HASTILY = WHY?**

**The boy.** The boy who provided the food Jesus multiplied is mentioned only by John (6:9).

**WHAT DOES THIS STORY SAY ABOUT THIS BOY?**

- D. What is being communicating about Christ in this Miracle?** (About Jesus’ Divinity and His unique Mission). “Special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus.”

**SELF REFLECTION:**

Asking the people to concentrate on what Jesus is saying to them in **this** Miracle.

Once we can answer what He is saying, we can move on to whether our beliefs and actions need to change.

- E.** Which one of the participants can I relate to the most?
- F.** Which one is the most difficult for me?
- G.** What is Jesus speaking(revealing) to ME through this miracle?

What is Jesus saying to me in this Miracle? Do my beliefs about Jesus and His power need to change?

How, then, should my actions change?

**Disciples:** *It would take 8 months wages to buy enough food to feed them all. Add that up from your income. What would 8 months of your income buy? Would you be able to offer that for ministry? (most of us = no). Is that what Jesus is asking us to do? He is asking us to offer what we have...and have faith for what we do not have that is needed to accomplish His will.*

- H.** ?TRUSTING Jesus with **BIG** needs.
- I.** ?Do not underestimate the small offering.
- J.** ?Stepping out in faith – the offering of the lunch by the Boy, the Disciples **DOING** what Jesus asked

**Jesus is more concerned for our growth than our comfort.**