

Jesus – King of the Jews #20

Casting Out Demons

Matt 8:28-34

Introduction:

1. Matthew adds to the convincing evidence of Jesus' messiahship and divinity by showing His power over the supernatural as well as over disease, deformity, and the natural world.
2. In order to rescue fallen humanity He would have to be able to overpower the evil forces that hold men in physical, mental, and spiritual bondage.
 - a. In the gospels therefore, we repeatedly find accounts of Jesus' ability to cast out demons from those under their evil control
 - b. He exercised His power authoritatively, and with total success—often by the use of but a single word, as in the present instance.
3. In the wilderness Jesus demonstrated His power to resist Satan; now He demonstrates His power to overcome and completely subdue Satan.
4. When He comes again to establish His kingdom He will incarcerate Satan for a thousand years, at the end of which, after a brief freedom, he and his evil co-workers will be cast into the lake of fire, where "they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" ([Rev. 20:2, 7-10](#)).
5. By casting out demons during His earthly ministry, Jesus gave dramatic, powerful, and repeated evidence of His power over Satan.
6. Because Jesus cast out demons with such ease, some concluded that He must therefore be in collusion with the devil, and they declared, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons" ([Luke 11:15](#)).
7. In the account of the two demon-possessed men, Matthew first describes the possession by the demons, then the power of Christ over the demons, and finally the perspective of the people in regard to Jesus.

I. POSSESSION BY THE DEMONS – VS 28-31

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

A. Reception by the Demons – vs 28b

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

1. In their accounts of this incident, Mark ([5:2](#)) and Luke ([8:27](#)) mention only one demon-possessed man but do not state that only one was present.
2. For their particular purposes they chose to focus on the more dominant of the two men.
3. Possessed with Devils
 - a) *Daimonizomai (demon-possessed)*
 - (1) Simply means to be demonized, to be under the control of a demonic spirit, without regard to the kind or degree of control.
 - (2) Although its accounts of demonized people reflect many different conditions and degrees of control, Scripture does not clearly distinguish between being possessed, obsessed, or oppressed by demons.
 - (3) Demonization may be defined as a condition in which one or more demons inhabits and gains control over a human being.
 - (4) Demons can attack men spiritually, mentally, and physically.
 - (5) In the spiritual realm they promote false religions, demon worship, the occult, and innumerable kinds of immorality, including murder ([Rev. 9:20-21; 18:23-24](#)).
 - (6) In the intellectual and psychological realm they promote such things as false doctrines; insanity and masochism, as in this **demon-possessed** man, who gashed himself with stones ([Mark 5:5](#)); and inability to speak and suicidal mania (See [Mark 9:17-22](#)).
 - b) *It is significant that Jesus never blamed a person for being either diseased or demon controlled.*
 - c) *He recognized them as victims of powers beyond their own control and as in need of deliverance, not exhortation or condemnation.*

BYZ **Matthew 8:28** Καὶ ἐλθόντι αὐτῶ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γεργεσηνῶν, ὑπήντησαν αὐτῶ δύο δαιμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχύειν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκεῖνης.

Fierce (χαλεποὶ) - Originally, difficult, hard. Hence hard to manage; intractable.

The tombs (μνημείων) - Chambers excavated in the mountain, which would afford a shelter to the demoniac.

4. Dwelling of These Men
 - a) *These men lived in burial chambers that were hewn out of rock hillsides or cliffs on the outskirts of a town, and as they saw Jesus approaching they met Him as they were coming out of the tombs.*
 - b) *If they were Jews, then, their being forced by the demons to live in a cemetery was an additional humiliation and torment.*
 - c) *Sin causes people to abide in places of the dead /unclean (bars, gambling casinos all represent dead and unclean places).*
5. Danger of These Men
 - a) *They were so violent that no one could pass by that way*
 - b) *We learn from the other gospel accounts that at least one of the men wore no clothes and that he had such great strength that no chain could keep him bound.*
 - c) *He spent much of his time ranting and raving, "crying out and gashing himself with stones" [Mark 5:4-5](#); [Luke 8:27-29](#).*

B. Recognition by the Demons – vs 29

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

1. The Demons Recognized Jesus – “Jesus, thou Son of God”
 - a) *The demons' doctrine is most instructive.*
 - b) *They had better doctrine than many church denominations do*
 - c) *Though they had never before seen Him in human form, they instantly recognized Jesus as the second Person of the Godhead.*
 - d) *These words say Jesus is God.*
 - e) *The demons knew Who Christ was but would not submit to Him.*
2. The Demons Recognized Jesus' Power - "torment us"
 - a) *These demons knew that judgment was coming - it was "torment."*
 - b) *Many church denominations do not believe that.*
 - c) *The demons are smarter doctrinally than many apostate ministers.*
 - d) *"Before the time?" acknowledged that they knew there was a divinely appointed time, not yet come, when He would indeed judge them and punish them with eternal damnation.*
3. In light of their knowledge about His divine power and plan it seems strange that Satan and his fallen hosts bothered to tempt Jesus.
 - a) *The supreme deceivers are also self-deceived, and in their evil delusions they somehow hoped to frustrate Christ in His humanity*
 - b) *It is the nature of Satan and of those who belong to him to oppose God, no matter what the consequences or prospect for success.*

C. Request of the Demons – vs 30-31

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. 31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

1. In desperation the demons looked around for a way of escape, and they spotted a **herd of many swine feeding** in a pasture.
2. The great size of the herd, 2,000 animals ([Mark 5:13](#)), indicates that the number of demons was also large (see also [Mark 5:9](#)).
3. **If You are going to cast us out** was not a statement of uncertainty or mere possibility.
4. The idea is, "In light of the fact that You are about to cast us out,..."
5. Knowing Jesus' compassion for men and His divine plan to destroy the works of the devil
6. They knew that He would not let them continue to inhabit and torment the two men.
7. Even inhabiting pigs would be immeasurably better than that because swine were the most unclean of all unclean animals to the Jews.
8. Perhaps Jesus would be killed for killing the pigs.

^{Y2} **Matthew 8:29** καὶ ἰδοῦ, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ; Ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς;

Thou Son of God (huie tou theou). The recognition of Jesus by the demons is surprising. The whole subject of demonology is difficult. Some hold that it is merely the ancient way of describing disease. But that does not explain the situation here. Jesus is represented as treating the demons as real existences separate from the human personality.

^{BYZ} **Matthew 8:30** Ἦν δὲ μακρὰν ἀπὸ αὐτῶν ἀγέλη χοίρων πολλῶν βοσκομένη.

ἀγέλη noun nfs from ἀγέλη - a group of animals kept by people for domestic use *herd* (of pigs), *drove*, *flock*
χοίρων noun gmp from χοῖρος - young pig, porker; more generally *swine* (MK 5.11)

βοσκομένη. verb ptc pres pass nfs from βόσκω - (1) active, of herdsmen tending flocks or herds *feed*, *pasture*, *tend while grazing* (MT 8.33); (2) passive, of grazing animals *feed*, *be feeding* (MT 8.30)

^{BYZ} **Matthew 8:31** Οἱ δὲ δαίμονες παρεκάλουν αὐτόν, λέγοντες, Εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς, ἐπίτρεψον ἡμῖν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων.

ἐπίτρεψον verb imper aori act 2ps from ἐπιτρέπω - *allow*, *permit*, *let someone do something* (MT 8.21)

II. POWER OF CHRIST – VS 32

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

1. When the disciples cast out demons it often required considerable time and persistence as well as prayer and fasting ([Matt. 17:21](#))
 - a) *But Jesus cast the entire legion of demons out of the two men with but a word: **Begone!***
 - b) *He gave a command which they were powerless to disobey, and immediately **they came out, and went into the swine.***
2. We can only wonder at the demons' reason for doing what they did.
 - a) *Whether they directed **the whole herd to rush down the steep bank into the sea**, or whether that was simply the animals' frenzied response to being inhabited by the evil spirits, it seems likely the demons knew the outcome in advance.*
 - b) *But we do not know why they did what they did or what happened to them after the pigs drowned*
3. Demons have superior intelligence ([Ezek. 28:3-4](#)), superior strength ([Mark 5:4](#); [Acts 19:16](#)), superior supernatural powers to perform "signs and false wonders" ([2 Thess. 2:9](#)), and the superior experience of having existed long before the creation of the world, first as holy angels and then as fallen.
 - a) *They not only have great knowledge of God's nature and power but also great knowledge of man's nature and weaknesses.*
 - b) *As spirit beings they are not limited by time, space, or form.*
 - c) *Only the Lord Jesus Christ has the power to bruise Satan's head and it will only be by the Lord's power that he will be bound and cast into the abyss and eventually into the lake of fire and brimstone ([Rev. 20:3, 10](#)).*
 - d) *It required tremendous power to cast out so many demons as Jesus did in the country of the Gadarenes, yet He did it in an instant.*
4. Why would Jesus allow so many animals, even unclean pigs, to be destroyed just to cater to the bizarre request of a bunch of demons.
 - a) *But animals were created for man's use and consumption, and those pigs were destined for slaughter anyway.*
 - b) *Their being drowned brought considerable financial loss, but if the owners were Jews—as they may well have been—they had no business raising pigs in the first place.*
 - c) *But the souls of the two possessed men were of infinitely greater value than the two thousand animals, and Jesus did not hesitate to permit such a relatively small sacrifice to be made on the men's behalf.*
5. The primary lesson of this passage, however, does not have to do with the right to raise or eat pigs or with the relative value of pigs and human beings.
 - a) *The Lord's supreme purpose in casting out the demons and Matthew's purpose in reporting it were to demonstrate Jesus' authority and power over Satan and his forces.*
 - b) *The fact that the demons **went into the swine** and the swine reacted in the frenzy they did was dramatic and convincing evidence that they had left the two men.*
 - c) *Their fierceness and violence was transferred to the pigs and there could be no doubt in the minds of observers as to what had happened.*

BYZ **Matthew 8:32** Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ὑπάγετε. Οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων· καὶ ἰδοὺ, ὤρμησεν πᾶσα ἡ ἀγέλη τῶν χοίρων κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι.
ὤρμησεν verb ind aor act 3ps from **ὀρμάω** - of swift and violent forward motion uncontrolled by reason *rush* (AC 7.57); of a herd of animals in panic *rush headlong, stampede* (MT 8.32)

III. PERSPECTIVE OF THE PEOPLE – VS 33-34

- This report, as is seen in the reaction of the people of the city, was not a complimentary report.
- It was a complaining report.
- You would think that the people would have been overjoyed that the demon possessed man was now normal and no longer a threat
- But that is not how most people react.

A. The Report – vs 33

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

1. When the herdsmen saw what happened to their pigs, they ran away.
2. The fact that they reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs, indicates they realized the connection between the two demon-possessed men and what had happened to the animals.
3. The pigs' mass suicide proved that Jesus had indeed cast the demons out of the men.
4. Further evidence, which the herdsmen and the others discovered when they returned to the scene, was that one of the men—and presumably the other as well—was clothed and sat in his right mind at Jesus' feet ([Luke 8:35](#)).

B. The Rejection – vs 34

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

1. Popularity of the Rejection – “the whole city”
 - a) *The townspeople, probably including the owners of the pigs, were so amazed by the report that **the whole city came out to meet Jesus**.*
 - b) *This was not just a dissident or two but the entire town.*
 - c) *Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount that the popular way is the evil way ([Matthew 7:13](#)).*
2. Priority in the Rejection – “Depart”
 - a) *The people of the **city** (probably Gerasa) did not even give Him the reluctant reverence shown by the demons.*
 - b) *That they came specifically **to meet Jesus** shows that He was the focus of attention.*
 - c) *He was of greater concern to them than either the pigs or the two previously possessed men.*
 - d) *The people were upset because Christ hurt their hog business. They were more interested in pigs than people, in hogs than humans—like many whacky environmentalists of our day.*
 - e) *They were also more interested in profit than people—like gambling casinos, who care little about the destruction they are to people but only about their profit. Evil people do not want Christ around, for He hurts their evil business. That is why there is so much anti-God attitude in our country—God opposes evil.*
 - f) *Though they were possibly present, the owners of the pigs are not mentioned in any of the three gospel accounts.*
 - g) *The issue was not the demons, the pigs, or the two men, but **Jesus**.*
 - h) *They did not seem the least interested in finding out who He was or why He had come to their area.*
3. Fear in the Rejection
 - a) *Mark tells us that the people saw the man sitting and in his right mind and they were afraid.*
 - b) *They saw One who could control demons, who could control animals, and who could restore shattered minds to sanity—and they wanted nothing to do with Him.*
 - c) *When Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples were more afraid of Jesus than the storm, because they realized that God Himself was in the boat with them.*
 - d) *The sinner who knows he faces God can only see his sin, and the result is fear.*

4. Opposition in the Rejection
 - a) *Here we find the first opposition to Jesus recorded in the gospels*
 - b) *The people did not ridicule or persecute Jesus; they simply asked Him to leave them alone.*
 - c) *Perhaps they resented His righteousness exposing their sin, His power exposing their weakness, or His compassion exposing their hardness of heart.*
 - d) *These people showed no interest at all in who Jesus was or in His teaching or work.*
 - e) *They seemed totally indifferent to His person and ministry. They did not care if He was the Messiah.*
5. Indifference towards Christ
 - a) *Their rejection of Jesus was in the form of great indifference, the same indifference to God shown by most men throughout history*
 - b) *Indifference that wants to let God alone and to be left alone by God.*
 - c) *The Lord was an intrusion with whom they did not want to be bothered.*
6. The Great Contrast
 - a) *In great contrast to the attitude of those people, one of the men who had been demon-possessed begged Jesus "that he might accompany Him" ([Mark 5:18](#)).*
 - b) *He was so grateful to Jesus for deliverance and so drawn to Him in love and adoration that he could not bear to be separated from Him.*
 - c) *But Jesus had other plans for the man, and "He did not let him, but He said to him, 'Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.'" ([v. 19](#))*
 - d) *Jesus sent the man back to his own people—quite probably the very people who had asked Jesus to leave—to testify to them of the Lord's love and mercy.*
 - e) *The man was to be an evangelist and missionary to his own people, living testimony that the One whom they had rejected nevertheless loved and sought to redeem them.*
 - f) *Even to those who entreat **Him to depart**, Jesus extends His grace.*