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Jesus Power over Demons Matthew 8:28-34

Matthew 8:28-34, *When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. ²⁹And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*

³⁰*Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. ³¹So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."*

³²*And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.*

³³*Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.*

Synoptic Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, often record the same events but slightly differently.

This account is reported in

Mark 5:1-20, and

Luke 8:26-39.

Both of which are longer than Matthew's account.

Bible Study we need to compare the passages:

- To see if there are possible discrepancies that need to be addressed,
- To gather more information about the event to safeguard the interpretation,
- To be able to understand why one gospel writer used only the bits that he did.

Apparent discrepancies between the accounts?

There are two.

Two demon possessed men or One!

Matthew records that two demon possessed men met Jesus.

Mark and Luke records one demon possessed men.

Some interpreters rather quickly conclude that Matthew simply got it wrong or invented the second man.

Others think that it must be a different event, only remarkably similar.

But neither of these explanations is necessary or helpful.

The better solution is that Matthew, who was there, had full and separate knowledge of a second man.

There were two demon possessed men. But one of them spoke to Jesus and the other two gospel writers simply report what the conversation between Jesus and the demon-possessed man.

Their focus on one man was sufficient for their purpose. Matthew will do the same thing in **Matthew 20:30** where he reports two blind men who met Jesus.

Name of the Place:

Matthew says it was in the region of the Gadarenes.

Mark and Luke say it was in the area of Gerasa.

Gadara is about five miles to the southeast of the lake. Josephus, the Jewish historian from the first century, says that Gadara had village settlements on the border of the lake.

Remember that these men lived in the tombs, and they would most likely be outside the city area.

This is why Matthew says it was “in the region” of the Gergesenes not in Gadara.

Matthew with reference to the main town, and the other two with reference to the local village. The area where the miracle took place was in the tomb area outside cities and villages and could be located either way.

London has 5 airports. If I report, I landed in Heathrow, and someone say I landed London it is the same. So, we need to understand the history and the who it was reported.

So, my brothers and sisters understand that there are no errors in the bible at all. Don't ever buy that lie!

Since both Mark and Luke are longer, there will be a lot more information. All three accounts put this event at the same time in the sequence of events, and all three have the basic facts about the miracle and the pigs and the people from town.

- Matthew does not give the name “Legion,” which refers to the number of demons, nor the number of the pigs.
- Matthew does not give the details of the torment of the demon-possessed in the tombs.

- Matthew does not record how the demon-possessed sat, clean and healed and sane, wanting to follow Jesus.

When we interpret Matthew, we work with the material Matthew gives us, but knowing the details from the other accounts we may be precise in what we say about what Matthew actually gives us.

Matthew writes this Gospel to present Jesus as the Son of God, the King of the Jews, in full authority over all the powers in the world, both physical and spiritual.

Mark and Luke are interested in this too, but they also have an interest in Jesus as the perfect man, the Son of Man, who meets all the needs of mankind.

For them the descriptions of the wretchedness of a demon possessed person contrasted with his saneness after being healed are important to their audiences. Besides, since this miracle takes place in Gentile territory and not Jewish, they have added interest.

Matthew wants us to see that Christ is the one who can reverse the curse and set up the kingdom.

Matthew shows us samples of His power. One who is going to bring the kingdom of God must be able to do away with sickness.

- Jesus can handle the forces of nature, and Jesus did that when He calmed the sea.
- Jesus can deal with sin, and that will be the issue in the miracle in chapter 9.
- Jesus can overrule death, and that also will be illustrated in chapter 9.

Jesus must be able to conquer demons.

So, Matthew is giving us these nine miracles in chapters 8 and 9 to show all the facets of Christ's great, glorious power.

- Demon Possession,
- Power of Jesus,
- Response.

1. Demon Possession

Jesus has crossed the Lake of Galilee in a little boat with some disciples. There have been some other boats trailing along as they have come from Capernaum.

They left Capernaum after a busy day, the Sabbath day, a day of healing. By the time they were out in the middle of the Lake of Galilee, night had set in, and a storm arose, and Jesus calmed the storm. They had finished their journey to eastern shore.

A new day dawns early in that part of the world, that it could be 5.00 am in the morning. The little boats come to the shore and immediately are confronted by an incredible situation.

V 28, *When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.*

Daimonizomenoous, means to be demonized.

What does it mean to be demonized?

Someone is demon possessed.

To be demonized means to be under the control of demons.

Now, demons can do a lot of things to people.
They can tempt. This is what they do to people.

Now, in a sense, in order to tempt, they have got to get into our minds to lure our thoughts.

They can bring about disease. Paul called the disorder that he had the thorn in the flesh “a messenger of Satan sent to buffet me.”

- Demons can attack the physical.
- Demons can attack the spiritual.
- Demons can attack the mental.

Because the Bible tells us that doctrines of demons are sent out to perversions of the truth to distract a way into idolatry and error.

In the physical, we have illustrations in the New Testament.

Bringing

- dumbness Matthew 9,
- blindness, Matthew 12,
- physical deformity, Luke 13,
- epilepsy, Matthew 17.

They can attack the physical.

They also can attack the mental, the mind.

- They can bring insanity **Matthew 8**.
- They can bring a suicidal mania, as in **Mark 9**, where the individual who was demon possessed continually attempts to kill himself.

- They can bring about self-harm, as in this case, where in **Mark 5** it says that the demoniac kept slashing himself, tearing and hacking at his flesh with sharp stones.
- They can cause murder, as they do in **Revelation 9th and 18th** chapters.

So, they can disable the body, and they can derange the mind.

They can attack the spiritual dimension.

They corrupt the truth, bring about false religion, occult practices, all kinds of immoral behaviours. They always produce evil, vile consequences.

If you ever try to understand the demon possession completely, you are going to be wasting your time, because you must realise this is a supernatural reality, and we are not able to go any further than the Bible takes us in comprehending it.

But a definition that might help, demon possession is a condition in which one or more demons inhabits the body of a human being. They can at will control that being. That's demon possession.

There may be all different degrees, all different manifestations, but that's basically what it means.

The Greek word **daimonizomenous** is used **12 times** in the New Testament. It means to be demonized.

Our Lord acknowledges it. The writers of the Bible acknowledge it as a reality.

In fact, in the early church the gift of miracles or the gift of **dunamis**, powers, was the ability to cast out demons. It was a major problem in human life.

In all the incidents of demonizing in the New Testament, none of them ever occurred, or recorded to have occurred in the city of Jerusalem.

None occurring in Jerusalem, and all the rest of them occurring in rural settings, that Satan sort of adapts himself to the sophistication of any given element of society.

Demon possession we have handled many in rural areas now we also see in the west but here they seem to us rather uncommon.

Satan works in other ways, but out in a less sophisticated, more earthy society, this seems to be much more common.

Where there is pagan religion there is fear, because all the gods of the heathen are gods who have evil elements to their nature. They must be appeased. When those gods manifest

themselves in evil ways, they put fear into the people, and they accomplish their ends.

In demon possession, the personality of the demon eclipses the personality of the one possessed.

Mark 5:9, *Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."*

The person can't even speak.

I had that occasion happen when I was talking to a little girl who had all these demons. When I would ask a question, I got answer from a 50-year-old male voice.

Demon possession means the automatic projection of a new personality, intensely evil, that eclipses the personality of the individual.

Now, it may come and go; it may be constant.

There are a lot of people in our society who are diagnosed as mentally ill who really are possessed.

Solution: The only one who can have power over the demons is the Lord Jesus Christ.

V 28, *"Coming out of the tombs."*

Can you imagine?

I am sure many of you will be scared to death to go near the graveyard at night.

Some of you get scared walk in the high street only in the night.

To a Jew, the number one defilement of all defilements was to touch a dead body.

How far have these poor souls been driven, that they should live in the tombs?

In this region the cliffs are high on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Toms were hewn out of the rocks naturally as tombs.

There they were living in the tombs.

V 28, *exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.*

They were wild and violent.

Luke 8:27, *And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.*

They wore no clothes. Stark naked.

Sunshine Club.

In the Bible, the only people who went around naked were raving maniacs. They had no sense of social balance. They had no sense of modesty. They were wild maniacs.

Mark 5:4, *because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.*

They tried to bind them with chains, and no matter how strong the chains were, they broke the chains. They had a tremendous amount of strength.

The girl wouldn't sleep in spite dosing her with strong morphine. She would not pass any motion.

6 people from the hospital could not control her!

Mark 5:5, *And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

They were shrieking/ screaming.
Self-harming themselves.

Stark naked,

Cutting themselves with stones,
Screaming,
Racing down the hillside with incredible strength.

V 28, *so that no one could pass that way.*

No one would ever go down there.
As soon as they did, out of the tombs they would come,
screaming down the hillside.

These demons saw the little boats, and they were ready to do
their number. Out of the caves they came, screaming down
the hill.

Suddenly something happened.
The demon's recognition of Jesus.

V 29, *And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to
do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to
torment us before the time?"*

Mark 5:6, *When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped
Him.*

Greek word **Proskuneō**.
They prostrated themselves.

They worshipped. Incredible that they should worship Jesus. **Proskuneō** means to kiss the feet, to reverence on the knees with the head to the ground. It is a word of profound awe, reverence, respect, and worship.

Because they know exactly who He is. Demons are fallen angels. Once they were holy angels before they went into Satan's rebellion, and they were involved with God, and they know the second person of the Trinity. Nobody needs to help them with their Christology.

They knew that He was their judge, and He was their destroyer.

1 John 3:8, *"For this purpose, the Son of Man was manifest that He might destroy the works of the devil."*

Our Lord came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. Ultimately, when He establishes His kingdom, He will incarcerate Satan and all His demon hosts for a thousand-year millennium. At the end of which He will gather them up to be eternally tormented. He has come to destroy permanently the works of the devil.

In casting out demons throughout His ministry, He was giving samples of that great power.

Luke 11:20, *But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

So, Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil.

The Jews were involved in exorcisms. The Jews themselves were involved in efforts to cast out demons. They had formulas and things they went through, rituals and explanations.

Luke 11:19, *And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.*

We meet some such, in the book of Acts, who went around trying to cast out demons.

Now, they did it with fear.

They did it with frequent almost total failure.

V 29, *And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*

They had the right eschatology.

They said, "You are here too soon."

These beings are damned for all eternity, and they know it.

They despise Jesus.

They loathe Him.

They hate Him.

Yet they worship Him because they are forced to by His power.

They can't resist it.

Philippians 2:10-11, *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Jesus is to be worshipped, that every knee is to bow not only of things above the earth and on the earth, but things under the earth.

They knew subconsciously that they were standing in the presence of the second member of the Trinity. They knew intuitively that they were there with the Holy One of God, who had the power to destroy them.

They said, "The timing is wrong." They even know the redemptive plan.

They are better theologians than most people.

They know this is Christ, the Son of the Living God.
Some cults that don't even know what the demons know.
They knew what the eschatological plan was.
They knew that they were to be doomed and damned forever.
They bow the knee to Christ, their judge.

Sometimes demons, through mediums and others, seem to be able to predict the future. It may be that somehow, they have already been made aware of the divine plan. At some points, they can anticipate what's going to happen.

They were way ahead of even the Lord's disciples. The book of Revelation hasn't been written. The disciples weren't too sure when all these things were going to come to pass, but they knew.

V 29, *Jesus, You Son of God*

The title of Son of God is a term that is a synonym to Messiah!

Matthew 16:16, *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

It was revealed to Peter by the Father. God's revelation that the Messiah is the Son of the Living God.

So, when the demon said, “You are the Son of God,” they were saying,
“You are the King.
You are the Messiah.
You are the Anointed One.
You are the Christ.”

James 2:19, *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

They know what is going to happen.

Luke 4:41, *And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.*

They knew and they knew they were doomed to the torment of an eternal hell.

How are they going to escape?

They will ever think they could escape.

They knew the power of God.

Why did they tempt Christ?”

They probably thought they could drag Christ maybe with them into the abyss. If they could just get Him to sin. They hated Him so much. Maybe they could drag Him into the abyss. They couldn't touch Him in His divinity. Maybe they could get Him in His humanity. But they couldn't.

Demons plead:

V 30-31, *Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. ³¹So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."*

They make a request!

They knew His tenderness and His love and compassion for one who was a captive.

What a strange request?

A demon-possessed pig!

A pig is a pig.

How do you tell a demon-possessed pig from any pig?

Maybe demons need to be in something.

We don't really know why they requested that.

Maybe they like to have a home somewhere.

Maybe they thought that was a nice concession.

They fear Christ.

They were in awe of Him.

They didn't want to go to the abyss.

The least precious thing that they could think of would-be pigs, because frankly, they aren't kosher, and they shouldn't have been keeping pigs in that part of the country anyway.

The region is part of the Jewish standard, up until this time. It had not been abolished. Very likely that some Jewish people owned those pigs.

If that was the case then that was in disobedience to the law of God.

Mark 5:13, *And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.*

There were 2,000 of them in the herd. It was a large herd of pigs. So, there must have been a lot of demons.

We can only speculate about what they were thinking. Maybe they thought they would go into the pigs, and they would sort of evade the pit.

Maybe they thought they'd kill the pigs and get everybody mad at Jesus, and they would kill Jesus for killing their pigs.

But whatever, they had their little plan.

2. Power of Jesus

Most interesting is Jesus's response.

V 32, *And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.*

Jesus said to them, 'Go.'

When men try to cast out demons, they got to work hard to get the demons to cooperate. When Christ comes, they want to go. All they want to know is where they are allowed to go.

They all went right off the cliff, down the sea, and all drowned.

Two thousand pigs.

Now, some people get upset about this miracle, because they think that Jesus has been cruel to animals.

I don't know if they have thoughts like that while they are having a ham sandwich or not.

But animals basically created for consumption sooner or later.

But anyway, the whole herd committed mass suicide.

How did Jesus cast out all these demons?

“Go”

He said, “Go.” When He appeared, they wanted to leave.

He commanded them to leave.

This is the thing that shocked everybody. It wasn't that He did it but it was how He did it. Instantaneously and totally.

These demons are powerful beings. Men cannot deal with them. We can't deal on the supernatural level.

2 Peter 2:11, *whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.*

Psalm 103:20, *Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.*

The demons are as powerful as the holy angels.

They must be, in one sense, because in **Daniel 10th Chapter** that a holy angel came with a dispatched message from God to Daniel, but a demon held him up for three weeks, and God had to send Michael to let him go. They are powerful.

Demons are powerful.

2 Kings 19:35, *And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.*

One Holy angel slew 185,000 Assyrians in one shot.

So, they far surpass men.

They have superior intelligence. That's obvious from Ezekiel 28. They have superior strength.

Mark 5, who kept breaking the chains.

Acts 19, Matthew 17. They have superior power.

They can do signs and wonders according to **2 Thessalonians chapter 2**.

- They have a superior scope.

- They have superior experience.
- They have lived from before the creation of man.
- They have been living through all the annals of human history.
- They have been around a long time, and they know what they are about, and they understand how men function and think.
- They have superior nature.
- They are spirit beings.
- They are not bound by any form.

So, these are incredible creatures.

- ✓ Only the Lord Christ could bruise the serpent's head.
- ✓ Only the Lord Christ can cast them into the pit in Revelation 20.
- ✓ Only He can deal with them here.

Jesus gives them their request. But not for their sake, but for His. He sends them right into that herd of pigs.

Why did He do that?

The things is not pigs and growing them.

The lesson here is that Christ can cast out demons.

When Jesus says, “Go,” how are they going to know they went anywhere?

Send them into somebody else?

Then you have another demon-possessed person.

How are you going to demonstrate they left?

Just look at a normally peaceful herd of pigs. Pigs don't usually swim. 2,000 of them race toward a cliff, go off the edge, and all dive in the water and drown.

The conclusion is something supernatural just happened. At the same split second, you turn around, and the two demonized individuals are sitting, clothed and in their right minds, having a wonderful conversation with Jesus.

The connection is easily made with the saviour.

Mark 5:15, *Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.*

What Jesus did was give a living demonstration of the deliverance of those two men that no one would ever forget.

At the same time, it did demonstrate the destructive nature of demons. For when demons hit those pigs, instantly they were all destroyed.

It gave to the demons a preview of their own coming destruction.

If you're concerned about the pigs, you have missed the point.

We can sacrifice a few thousand pigs for Jesus to maintain this demonstration of incredible power. Jesus wanted a living proof that those demons came out of those men. He sent them into those animals, that those animals might put on a demonstration that nobody would ever forget.

3. Reaction of the people.

How did they react?

V 33, Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

They aren't the owners.

They were caring for the pigs like the shepherd care for the sheep.

When they saw that their pigs had all committed mass suicide, and they had run down that hill like maniacs into the water, they went their ways into the city.

They fled. They sped. They blew out of there as fast as they could go.

They went and told everything.

They did not say only about the pigs and also what happened to the demon possessed man.

In other words, they got the message.

The pigs weren't the issue.

The issue was the men were delivered from the demons.

The pigs were only the proof!

V 34, And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

Great revival?

When they came, they could see the demon possessed men were sitting clothed and in their right minds, having a conversation with the Lord.

How did they react?

When they saw Him, they worshipped Him?

No.

They were frankly one step behind the demons.
they begged Him to depart from their region.

Get out.

Why did they say that?

The text doesn't say a word about the owners of the pigs. None of the three records says anything about the reaction of the owners of the pigs. These are not the owners of the pigs. This is the whole city.

The whole city came out and when they saw Him, they said, "Get out of here."

Why?

Mark 5:15, *"They were afraid."*

They were not angry.

They were scared to death.

Luke 8:37, *Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.*

When unholy men face a holy God, they are in terror.

Isaiah 6, "Woe is me." The word of a curse.

Isaiah, the best man in the land, pronounced a curse on himself when He saw God, because his unholiness was exposed.

Peter, when he saw Jesus Christ and the majesty of His power.

Luke 5:8, *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*

Last week we saw when the storm came, they were afraid. When Jesus stilled the storm, they were exceedingly afraid. They were more afraid of the calm than they were of the storm because they knew God was in their boat, and they were in awe of God.

- They saw the supernatural and it panicked them.
- They saw one who could control the demons.
- They saw one who could control animals.
- They saw one who could take the soul of a man and give it back to him as white and pure as the driven snow.

They were scared.

They saw God!

Men can handle pigs, but they can't handle God.

The mystery of the supernatural they can't handle.

This is the first recorded instance of open opposition to the Messiah. All just mounts from here on. He exposed them. They despised Him. He was better than they, greater than they, purer than they, more powerful than they, more holy than they.

And they resented that. And they felt dirty and inadequate in His presence because He was so holy. And they felt impotent.

They couldn't tolerate Jesus because of His perfection. They couldn't tolerate Him because of His absolute holiness. He was so far beyond them that He unmasked them, that He showed the stupidity of their own lives. That's why they had to kill Him.

- They saw Him.
- They saw the power.
- They were absolutely panicked in awe of God.

Instead of falling at His feet in worship, they said, "Get out. We don't want you."

The people who saw the miracles didn't believe. They nailed Him to a cross.

They had seen miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle, and they still didn't believe. It just made them hate Him more and more.

People think today if they can just show everybody a pile of miracles, everybody will believe. No, because some people, when exposed in the presence of the awesomeness of holy God will literally run because they love their darkness.

Mark 5:19-20, *However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."* ²⁰*And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marvelled.*

What He did?

Those hating people who wanted Jesus out of their country never did break Jesus' compassion or mercy for them.

So, Jesus left them this one, lone missionary and his friend as living proof, in their midst, of His mighty power.

A missionary.

What would be your response?