

Who Do You Say That I Am?
Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**
72- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute
Authority- Part 10
The Strange Account of the Gadarenes

Church October 1, 2023

Matthew 8:28-34

28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

29 And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

30 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.

31 The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."

32 And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

33 The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

This is one of the *strangest* Accounts found anywhere in the Bible. And I have struggled with this Passage more than any Passage I can remember. I didn't struggle with the primary Purpose of the Passage- that was fairly easy to discern. But I struggled with several of the Details that the Holy Bible gave us concerning this Event. So, this Sermon is my "best shot" as to not only what this Passage *means*- but *why* the Apostle Matthew chose to put it in his Gospel Record.

Yet this Event is so very important to us- that we find this Account recorded for us in the Gospel Records of both John Mark (**5:1-20**) and Dr. Luke (**8:26-39**)- as well

as here in **Matthew**. So, we need to pay close attention to this inspired historical Event- because in this Account- we will see the absolute Authority that Jesus had over fallen Angels.

Now, to be honest with you- there are several Details about this Account that simply don't make any sense- at least not to me. But having said that- let me also say that the Fact that *some* Parts of this are beyond my Ability to comprehend does NOT in any way detract from its Truthfulness or its Importance. All it does is to illustrate how Shallow I am.

So, hear me when I say: This Account is true. It is Inspired. God the Holy Spirit "moved" on Matthew to write this down. And so, that also means that this Account is also fully Inerrant; as well as Infallible. So, this actually happened. This is an historical Fact. And we can trust what Matthew gave to us here. And the Fact that God the Spirit also "moved" on Dr. Luke as well as John Mark to write this same Account down- says to me that it is very Important.

But while there are very strange and even mysterious Parts surrounding this Account- there are also very concrete and very clear Parts as well. So, if God will be Good to us- I'm going to go over both the "Clear" as well as the "Unclear" with you.

But before I do that- let me remind all of us that **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** are called, the "*Synoptic Gospels*". And the word, "*Synoptic*" comes from a Latin word- *synopticus* (which came from a Greek word- *symnptikos*) that has to do with "*seeing all together*". So, to get a complete understanding of this Account here in **Matthew**- to "see it all together"- *requires* that I also consult the Gospel Records that the Apostle Peter had John Mark write; as well as the Record that the Apostle Paul had Dr. Luke pen down.

Now back in the previous Account where Jesus rebuked the Wind and the Sea- the *last* word in verse 18 is the word, "**Sea**". And because Jesus had just finished teaching what we call, the "*Sermon on the Mount*"- most people just *assume* that Matthew was talking about the "*Sea of Galilee*" or what the Romans would have called, the "*Sea of Tiberius*".

Now this word, "**Sea**" is also found in verse 24 and then again in verse 27. And this "**Sea**" also and has to do with the strange Event that we are looking at today- the Event that the Apostle Matthew *wanted* his Jewish audience to know about- that involved these two demon possessed men; and a group of people who lived in a place he called, the "**country of the Gadarenes**".

But since the Account that Matthew wrote here is true- we need to notice five things that **MUST** also be true- about this particular "**Sea**":

1. It had vicious and dangerous Weather
2. It bordered the "**country of the Gadarenes**"

3. It MUST have a “cemetery” (**Tombs**) nearby where the demon-possessed men lived
4. It MUST border a “**Region**”- where the *primary* Business of the inhabitants was raising pigs (at least back in the 1st Century)
5. It MUST have high Cliffs (**steep bank**)- where the pigs could run down and drown

... in addition- the Boat that Jesus and His Disciples were on- had to be *large* enough for Jesus to be asleep- until the Disciples woke Him up.¹

We should take note that the Storm did NOT wake Jesus up- all three Gospel Records of both the Apostle Matthew as well as John Mark and Dr. Luke- tell us that Jesus was sleeping so soundly that the men had to wake Him up. And that tells me that the more common boat that was used on the Sea of Galilee back in the 1st Century- for fishing- was NOT the kind of boat that Jesus and these men were on in this Account.

But we also have to consider several more things. For example, there is no place anywhere within the Sea of Galilee that is further than 15 minutes to shore. And yet, the Storm- described in verses 23-26- was so violent that Jesus’ Disciples feared for their Lives- even though they were seasoned and experienced fisherman. But this Passage also says very clearly,

... the boat was being covered with the waves...

... even though Jesus was sleeping so soundly that the men had to wake Him up.

Now I have met some very “*sound sleepers*” in my Day- but for the waves to be rocking the boat- *violently*- as well as covering the boat- would mean Jesus was either a “world-class Sleeper” or they were on a much *larger* Boat.

So, after you consider all of these things- it is *possible* that the “**Sea**” they were in- was much *larger* and much more *dangerous* than the Sea of Galilee.

Now the traditional Area around the Sea of Galilee that most people say was where this Event happened 2,000 years ago- has many Problems associated with it. For example- that Area did NOT (and does not today) have any steep slopes or cliffs near the water. It did NOT (and does not) have tombs nearby. And, back then, the people of that Region were Jews who did NOT raise pigs. Now all of this is NOT my Opinion, dear fiends- these are all facts of the Geography and the History of the Area around the Region of Galilee.

¹ The Bible tells us that Jesus was asleep in the “stem” of the boat (**Mark 4:38**). But on the small fishing boats that sailed the Sea of Galilee- the stern is where the Rudder was- that a person had to stand there and maintain at all times. Those boats were usually no longer than 20-25 feet- which is simply not large enough to accommodate a sleeping man- while another man controlled the Rudder.

And besides that- the Boats used on the Sea of Galilee for fishing were small². So, it would have been very difficult for Jesus to lay down and go to sleep in one of those Boats- without being constantly thrown about by the waves as well as sprayed with water.

So, that *seems to eliminate* the traditional Area as being the one that Matthew was talking about- unless Jesus did some things- *supernaturally- which He very well could have done.*

For example, Jesus *could* have been asleep- in spite of the Wind and the Sea- because He was God; and so, He could have *stayed* asleep- *supernaturally*. And by doing this- Jesus was illustrating to those men (and us) that we must ALWAYS go to Jesus for Help in Time of Need. Also, the Storm *could* have been one created by Jesus *specifically* for that one Event.

All of those things are possible- but it could have also been possible that the “Sea” that Matthew was talking about here *could* have been the “Mediterranean Sea” and NOT the much *smaller* “Sea of Galilee”. And believe it or not- there are Reasons to accept that Version of this Event.

But *why* would Jesus desire to travel across the Mediterranean Sea? And *where* did He go?

In my Time of Study of this Passage- I came across several ancient Stories; Legends; and Reports that teach that Jesus actually visited the area that is called today, “Spain” while He was here on the earth. But *why* would Jesus go to Spain? I thought He came to earth to visit the Jewish people. Yes, there are two verses that give us the *primary* Function behind Jesus’ Mission on the earth- 2,000 years ago:

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Matthew 15:24

I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So, the *primary* Reason Jesus came to this earth was two- fold:

1. To seek and save the Lost
2. To go to the “lost sheep” of the House of Israel

And that means that EVERYTHING else that Jesus said or did was *subordinate* to those two Objectives; and was carried out to *facilitate* them. So, for Example,

² In 1986- Archeologists uncovered the ruins of a boat on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee (the “Jesus Boat”) dating back to the 1st Century. The Boat was 27 feet long and 7-1/2 feet wide.

performing Signs and Wonders; Miracles; physical Healings; and well as casting out Devils- was *subordinate* to Jesus “*seeking and saving the Lost*” as well as “*going*” to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And the ONLY “Way” that God has chosen; the ONLY “Means” that Almighty God has chosen to save the Lost- is through the full and correct heralding /preaching/teaching of the biblical Gospel. So, Jesus taught and preached infinitely MORE than He did anything else.

And this serves to prove that performing Signs; Wonders; Miracles; physical Healings; as well as casting out fallen Angels was NOT the *main* nor the *primary* Focus of Jesus’ earthly Ministry. And so, those things should NOT be the *primary* Focus of our Ministry either. Preaching and Teaching were the *primary* and the *main* Focus of Jesus’ earthly Ministry. And that should be true of our Ministry as well.

But what does it mean when Jesus said He was,

... sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

First of all, by “*seeking and saving the Lost*”- Jesus was referring to ALL of the Lost- even the lost Gentiles. So, by using that phrase- Jesus was telling the world that it was their Sin and NOT their Ethnicity nor their Nationality that separated them from God.

And that means that the Goal in Jesus’ earthly Ministry was NEVER to create more Jews; nor was it to *reestablish* the Nation of Israel. The Goal was to bring the Old Covenant to a decisive End by fulfilling the Law perfectly; as well as completing the Old Testament Prophecies by establishing the New Covenant on the earth through His Life; Death; and Resurrection.

So, Jesus was bringing to a decisive End- that God had only ONE people- the Jews; and ONE Nation- Israel. Now, under the infinitely superior New Covenant- the “*people of God*” would not be those who could simply trace their genealogy back to Abraham- but would be ALL who believe; ALL- EVERYONE- who, by God’s Grace- turn from their Sin and put their Hope and Trust and Faith in Jesus and in His finished Work! And those people would be from EVERY Nation; EVERY Genealogy; EVERY tongue; and EVERY Tribe.

The Reference here to the “Lost” was to *emphasize* the Reality that God is glorified the MOST and the BEST- by radically transforming guilty Sinners into those who genuinely love God and into people who delight to do His Will. And that Transformation is carried out by what God alone does for them; and in them; and to them- through the Life; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And in doing that- Jesus is building His Church- one soul at a time.

But the Reference to the “*Lost Sheep of the House of Israel*” is the frightening Reality that Jesus went FIRST to the Jews- the people who *should* have recognized

Him; the people who *should* have worshipped Him. But they categorically *rejected* their Messiah; and to sin even further- they assigned, not merely “sinister Motives” to how and why He did what He did- but these people said Jesus performed His Miracles through satan. So, instead of celebrating the Coming of the long-awaited Messiah- the Jews of that Day found no Joy and no Hope in Jesus. And thus- they found NO Salvation.

And so, Jesus gave the Parable of the “*King and the Wedding Feast*” in **Matthew 22:1-14** as the Reason behind WHY He was going to judge unbelieving Israel- with utter Annihilation in the near Future.

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying,

2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

3 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

4 "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'"

5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,

6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.

7 "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

8 "Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

9 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'

10 "Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,

12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.

13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

... and in this Parable:

- **“Those who were Invited”** represents the Jews of the 1st Century (v. 3&4)
- The **“Slaves”** who called **“those who had been invited to the wedding feast”**; and who were mistreated and killed (by those who were invited) were the Old Testament Prophets as well as those Christians who preached the Gospel to the Jews prior to 70AD (v.6)
- The phrase, “[the King] **sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.**” refers to the Judgment of God in the complete Destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by the Romans
- **“those who were invited were not worthy”** in verse 8 are the unbelieving Jews
- Verse 9 is about the “Great Commission”
- The **“Slaves”** of verse 10 are the faithful Ministers of the Gospel
- The **“good and evil”** who were gathered into the “Wedding Feast” in verse 10 are the Gentile converts
- The **“man”** of verse 11 represents the Jews who think they have access to God- without Jesus
- The **“wedding clothes”** of verses 11&12 is the Righteousness of Jesus Christ
- Verse 12 represents the fallacy of believing that because their natural Father was Abraham the Jews have access to God- even though they reject Jesus
- Verse 13 gives us the Judgment of every Jew who does NOT trust in Jesus
- Verse 14 teaches that even though there is the “General Call” to EVERYONE on earth to repent and trust in Jesus- ONLY those chosen by God for Salvation from eternity Past will actually be saved- Jew or Gentile.

So, in order for the Old Covenant to be fulfilled as well as bringing about the New Covenant on the earth- Jesus HAD to go to the Jew FIRST. And it was their total and complete Rejection of Jesus (which was also their refusal to let the Old Covenant go)- that opened up the Gentile *“Nations of the World”* to the Gospel!

Okay, but what does that have to do with Jesus maybe going to Spain? Back before Jesus was born- the Tribe of Gad left the Land that God gave them through Moses. Now *why* they left is a Mystery (at least to me). They *may* have left simply because they were *forcibly* taken Captive (along with nine other Tribes) when God raised up Assyria to come and take the 10 northern Tribes away (721BC). But in any Event- some of the Jews from the Tribe of Gad- settled in an area on the far western side of the Mediterranean Sea- that, today is called, “Spain”.

And those Jews started Settlements and even built cities in that Country. Okay, so what? Interestingly, those Spanish cities meet ALL of the Details that Matthew, John Mark, and Dr. Luke wrote down about the “country of the Gadarenes”. For example, in Spain- there are Tombs located near the water- one of which was

carved to have several rooms- where somebody actually lived there. Also, back in the 1st Century- one of the primary Ways that those people made money was through the raising of pigs. And the Mountains of that Area are very steep- as they empty out into the Mediterranean Sea. Also the Mediterranean Sea is infinitely more violent and dangerous than the Sea of Galilee.

But what is fascinating to me- is something I never knew about until I began to study this Section of the **Gospel of Matthew**. And that is the Issue of a “*Spanish Shrine*”- in that Country.

Now the Bible teaches that we are to have the *Reality* of God and the *Reality* of Jesus and the Reality of Salvation and of Heaven- but the New Covenant is NOT about Symbols; Signs; and Types. Symbols, Signs, and Types are an Old Covenant Tool to help us understand about Jesus. But now that the New Covenant is in force- we don’t *need*; and we shouldn’t *want* Symbols and Signs and Types. And that is why we don’t *need* Shrines. Now the Definition of a “*Shrine*” is:

A building or other shelter, often of a stately or sumptuous character, enclosing the remains or relics of a saint or other holy person and forming an object of religious veneration and pilgrimage.

... and Shrines are very famous and very popular- even to supposedly technologically advanced people.

So, Shrines are as popular in 2023- as they were back in the 1st Century. And so, people, who number in the millions- visit Shrines all the Time. As we sit here in this Church this morning- there are literally *thousands*; maybe *tens* or even *hundreds* of thousands of people visiting; walking into; and praying in- a Shrine- somewhere on the earth.

There are Shrines in just about every Country on earth today- representing most of the major Religions of the world- including Buddhist; Hindu; Muslim; Shinto; and Jewish. For example, there is a limestone Wall in Jerusalem that King Herod had built around 19BC. It is thought that this Wall was originally part of an *expansion* of the Temple in Jerusalem that was standing in Jesus’ Day called, “*Herod’s Temple*”. But it is also thought that, back in the 7th Century AD- the false Prophet, Muhammed supposedly tied his winged horse (*al-Buraq*) to this Wall before he supposedly ascended into “*Paradise*”.

So, today- Jews, Muslims, as well as those who lay claim to be “Christian”- will stand in line for hours to be able to just lean against this Wall and pray. And so, they have named it- the “*Wailing Wall*”. And that Wall is filled with people this morning.

And even Christianity- that *supposedly* clings to the 66 Books of the Holy Bible as its Guide and governing Document (that clearly and repeatedly teaches *against* physical and historical Places having any spiritual Significance)- has Shrines. And so, for example, every year- Christians from all over the world- from almost every Denomination- go to Israel; and they are baptized in the river Jordan- thinking that the water from this River holds special Significance- because Jesus was baptized in it- 2,000 years ago.

Many believe that by going into the Place where Jesus was supposedly born- they will be healed; or receive some spiritual Blessing. And, of course, because people are people- there are many modern day “*snake oil Salesmen*”- who take advantage of these people’s Superstition and wayward Beliefs and sell trinkets and other items that come with the Promise of some physical; financial; or spiritual Blessing attached to it.

For example, if a person will give a generous financial “Gift” to the Ministry of John Hagee- they will receive a framed page from an original King James Version of the Bible (which nobody can even read). And there are Testimonies of great Blessings that have come from having this page hanging on their Walls at home. And people testify that by touching the page- they are blessed or even healed. For years, the Roman religious “System”³ used the natural tendency of people to be “religious” (even if they weren’t saved) against them. So, they raised money to build some of their most famous Shrines. For example, from 1506-1626- St. Peter’s Basilica was built with the money from the Poor throughout Europe- as they were promised that their dead loved ones would immediately be set free from Purgatory- if they gave their money to build it.⁴ And the Pope at that Time (Julius II)- went so far as to *commanded* Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the “*Sistine Chapel*”- with the Promise that he would receive eternal Life- as well as be paid with money.

Now it is perfectly acceptable for Believers to travel to Israel and to take tours of the Country to see where Jesus walked; and to try to gain a physical attachment to a Place that the Bible says has significance. That’s fine, because in many cases- that helps people to understand the Bible better. That’s NOT what I’m talking about. What is NOT acceptable is for genuine Believers to fall into the false Belief that by going to a city or area that is listed in the Bible- that this has any spiritual Significance. It doesn’t. That kind of Superstition *degrades* and *minimizes* the Importance and the Beauty and the Glory of God and the Bible.

³ Since the “Council of Trent” (1545-1563)- this religious Organization has pronounced an “*Anathema*” (an eternal Damnation with no Hope of Repentance) on anyone, “who believes or teaches” that Justification is “*by Faith alone*” (*Sola Fide*) and NOT through the Sacraments- which is the biblical Gospel. Since that Time- those who agree with Trent’s Anathema’s- have ceased to be a Christian “Church” and have now isolated themselves from the Authority of Scripture. We must now pray for their Repentance.

⁴ Johannes Tetzel was personally commissioned by the Pope to raise the money to build St. Peter’s Basilica. And he would tell people, “*When the coin rings/ the soul from Purgatory springs*”.

Sinners- who are “**dead in Trespasses and Sins**” (Ephesians 2:1) are given new, spiritual Life (the New Birth) by a sovereign Act of God. Period. And those people, who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth, are then forgiven (of ALL Sin) and “made Righteous” by Faith alone- and NOT by participating in the Sacraments; NOT by touching a Statue; NOT by contacting dead Saints; NOT by praying to Jesus’ Mother; and NOT by visiting a Shrine.

And even though Christians give “Lip-Service” to this Truth- many times- their fallen human Inclination to be “Superstitious” rather than “Spiritual” *overrides* their Knowledge of the Truth- and, far too many times- they will fall right in line with pagans (who are not saved)- and they will begin to believe that by visiting a Shrine- something “Good” will happen to them. It is truly very sad.

Now, the most commonly visited Shrine in all of “*Christendom*”⁵ is Israel- *especially* the City of Jerusalem and its many places that are listed in the Bible. Millions of people- saved and lost- go there every year. The *second* most loved and visited Shrine that dares to call itself “Christian” is in Rome. And people visit those pagan Shrines and are wowed by their opulence and their massive size.

Right now- as we are sitting here in this Church- there are literally thousands of people, from all over the world, are on their knees on the “Scala Sancta”- the 28 marble steps that Jesus supposedly climbed on His Way to face Trial before Pontius Pilate. Those Stairs are said to be covered with the Blood of Jesus. And back in the 4th Century- the Emperor Constantine’s Mother (Helena) went to Jerusalem; had those Steps dismantled and brought to Rome. The Legend is that if they pray hard enough- their loved ones who are now supposedly in Purgatory will be set free- earlier and can finally go to Heaven.

Now that should make you furious. It should trouble you to no End that lying Leaders have deceived those poor pitiful people into believing that they can somehow assist their dead loved ones by obeying what Rome teaches. Those Leaders do NOT have the Right to deceive people like that.

Genuflecting and kissing each step as they go up- does NOT forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. It is blasphemy- pure and simple. And Rome should be ashamed of allowing that to go on. That doesn’t glorify God at all- it *dishonors* Him!

Now, to their Credit- the Leaders of the Roman religious System- during my Lifetime HAVE publicly and formally repented of many of their pervious Crimes; and Wickedness’s; and false Teachings they have perpetrated on the peoples of this World. And so, in response to their Repentance- I NEVER bring up those Issues.

⁵ The term, “*Christendom*” used to mean those Nations that supposedly had a “christian” Ruler; and that held its Citizens accountable to a biblical Standard of Morality. Today it has to do with those Areas (Churches, Tribes, Regions, States, and Nations) that are dominated by people who strive to adhere to the Teachings of the Holy Bible.

But they have never asked Forgiveness from God or anyone else- for the Crime of stealing what little Money the people of Europe had back in the 16th and 17th Centuries to build St. Peter's Basilica. If they had an ounce of Integrity at all- the Leaders of Rome would tear it down and refund that money to the Poor.

People ask me all the time if I have ever want to go see that monstrosity in Rome. Of course NOT! I condemn it! Why would I ever want to see the greatest financial scam in the History of the world that was *forced* on the people in the Name of Jesus? I don't want to see it- I weep over it!

But the *third* most visited and revered Shrine that attracts people from all over the world who say they are saved- is surprisingly found in... Spain! And it is found in a place I had never heard of. And tens of thousands of people from all over the world travel to Spain every year to go see the City that Jesus *supposedly* traveled to- while He was on the earth. And there is even a concrete slab there that *supposedly* has the very Footprint of Jesus in it! And people come to see the Footprint and touch it- so they can get some Benefit from it!

But the Legend is that that Place is *supposedly* the "country of the Gadarenes"- where the Tribe of Gad settled. And this is *supposedly* the Place where the demon possessed men lived. It is *supposedly* the Place where the demons were sent into the pigs and drowned. And this is *supposedly* the Place where the people asked Jesus to leave and to never come back.

The Legend is that Jesus traveled to Spain to reach to the *descendants* of the Tribe of Gad (hence the "country of the Gadarenes")- who had settled there many Centuries before. Why? Because He said He was,

... sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

... even to the Point of traveling across the Mediterranean Sea to find them!

But aside from that- the Apostle Matthew (as well as Peter and Paul) wanted their readers to understand the *significance* of the people of this Region *rejecting* Jesus and asking Him to leave after He had cast the demons out of the men. And the Significance is this: Even though those people were physically separated from Israel (through Exile or voluntarily)- they had the very SAME hard heart; the very SAME unwillingness to believe in Jesus; and the SAME hostile Reaction to Jesus- that the Jews in Palestine had!

Now I have no idea if any of this is true. I DO know from **Romans 15:24&28**- that the Apostle Paul WANTED to go to Spain. But I don't know if he ever actually went. And I also know that James- *supposedly* went to Spain; and is *supposedly* buried in northwestern Spain; in the City of *Santiago de Compostela* which is in Galacia. But I am very suspicious of things like this; so, I'm leaning toward the Position that, like all Shrines, this one- is also a fraud.

But I will say this- I never even heard about any of this- until I started studying **Matthew 8**. And I also didn't know that the City where Jesus' Footprint supposedly is in (*Majorca*)- is the 3rd most popular "christian" Shrine in all the world!

But I will say this: Jesus traveling to Spain fits in with every single Detail of the three Accounts that we find in **Matthew; Mark; and Luke** about this Event. The City (*Gadara*) over near the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee- that is the *traditional* Site where this Event supposedly took place- has several Problems with the Details. Now those Problem can be overcome- but of the two- this City in Spain has the *fewest* Problems with the Details- except for one glaring one. In **Luke 8:26**, the good Doctor wrote:

Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

... where the English word, "**opposite**" in this verse comes from a Greek word (*antiperan*; Strong's #495) which means: *over against; on the opposite shore; or on the other side.*

So, this would seem to settle the matter. When Jesus and His disciples sailed to the "country of the Gadarenes"- they went to the "*other side*" of the Sea of Galilee and NOT the Mediterranean Sea.

Now you may think that this Exercise is simply a colossal waste of Time. But I see it as a perfect Example of the Time and Attention to detail that EVERY Church Leader *should* expend in the preparation of what he teaches.

So, my Conclusion is that (even though I may be wrong)- I do NOT personally believe that Jesus went to Spain. And even though several Details of this Account here in **Matthew 8** have to be "*worked out*" in order to be true- they CAN be worked out! But I thought it was Good to let you all in on the degree to which I honestly *agonize* over the Bible; and how hard I am trying to "Get the Gospel Right". And I hope this has been edifying to you all.

But WHY did Matthew include this Account in his Gospel Record? Aside from the fact that this really happened- Matthew did NOT include EVERYTHING Jesus said and did while He was here. So, why this? Remember this Apostle wrote this Record to reach his Jewish brethren- and NOT the Gentile world. I understand why both **Mark** and **Luke** contain this Event- they were trying to reach the Gentiles. And so, if the "**herdsmen**" of **Mark 5:14** and **Luke 8:34** were the herdsmen of the swine- then the people of the "**country of the Gadarenes**" were probably Gentiles- since swine were "*unclean*" to the Jews.

But *why* was it important for Matthew to record this Account- if these people were Gentiles? Now it is possible that the "**swine**" in this Event may have actually been "*wild pigs*" and NOT domestically raised animals. And that would mean that

the “**herdsmen**” that are mentioned in all three Gospel Records were raising *other* types of animals and NOT these swine. My Problem with this- is that I am NOT aware of any Account- anywhere in all of human History (I checked) where 2,000 wild pigs all gathered together in one place. Usually, wild pigs don’t like each other and so, their “Gatherings” are no larger than around 30 animals to each “Group” or “Family”.

So, *why* did Matthew include this Event? I think it was to simply show his Jewish readers (and us) that, because He was fully God- Jesus possessed absolute Authority over the demons. We need to remember that, by the 1st Century- the Jews had fallen into many false Teachings and had developed a very elaborate System of Angels that controlled every aspect of their Lives. Many Jews even prayed to the Angels and some worshipped them. This Problem was so prevalent among the Jews that God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the writer of **Hebrews** to spend two Chapters teaching that Angels actually worship Jesus.

So, it is possible that since the Jews had a very bad Understanding of Angels that they also had a bad Understanding of Demons as well. And that would explain why Matthew included this Event in his Gospel Record.

But Matthew also wanted his Jewish readers to tremble in Fear- because after the people of the “country of the Gadarenes” saw this Miracle first-hand- instead of *worshipping* Jesus and *thanking* Him- they wanted Jesus to leave them alone!

Now in the Accounts of both **Mark** and **Luke**- one of these two demon-possessed men actually spoke with Jesus. **Mark 5:1-10** says,

- 1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.**
- 2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,**
- 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;**
- 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.**
- 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.**
- 6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;**
- 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"**
- 8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"**

9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

... so, Jesus *commanded* them to go into the swine.

But the animals couldn't tolerate being possessed by demons and so, all three Gospel Records tell us that the 2,000 pigs all ran down a "steep slope" and drowned in the "Sea" or the "Lake".

So, if we are to be "Bible-believing" Christians- we **MUST** believe that demon-Possession is very real. But we **MUST** also believe that Jesus has absolute Authority over **ALL** of the demons and even satan himself!

We also **MUST** believe that the fallen Angels (demons) understand that there is a Time coming- when they will be cast into the "Lake of Fire" where they will spend all of Eternity- being tormented Day and Night. So, even though they absolutely believe their Day is coming- they have **NOT** been gifted with the Ability to repent and trust in Jesus.

So, they know their Future is Certain- but they can't change anything about it. They **WILL** be damned forever! And **THAT** is why satan and his demons are so angry! And since they can't get to God- they wage War with us!

But in the New Birth- we have been given the Gift of being both "able" and "willing" to repent! And we have been given a new, soft heart that desires to trust in Jesus and is able to do so! So, even though we are **NO** match for demons or satan- in the Natural- we have been given many things that they will **NEVER** have- and among those many things are:

- We can love God
- We can glorify God
- We can believe God
- We can trust in Jesus and in His finished Work
- We can be forgiven and made Righteous
- We can hope in God
- We can have Fellowship with God
- We will be with God- forever

... yet neither satan nor his demons have **EVER** experienced **ANY** of these things!

So, let us read this Account of the demon- possessed men. And let us believe that it is true. And let us also be in Awe at the Power of this Account. And let us tremble- so we will **NEVER** want Jesus to depart from us. But let us also rejoice- **NOT** that the devils are subject to us- but let us tremble and rejoice- that our Sins are forgiven; and our Names are written down in Heaven!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

