

## Jesus Saves the Gadarene Demoniac

Mark 5:1-20 (also Luke 8:26-39 / Matthew 8:28-34)

The present account immediately follows that of Jesus calming the tempest that threatened to sink the boat in which He and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:34-41 / Luke 8:22-26 / Matthew 8:23-27). “Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes” (Mark 5:1), “which is opposite Galilee” (Luke 8:26).

The name *Gadarenes* is generally thought to mean “reward at the end” (*Thayer’s Greek Definitions*). This proved to be the case in the present instance: When Jesus reached the end of His journey across the Sea of Galilee and set foot on the shore of Gadara, He mercifully and graciously bestowed the greatest reward – the deliverance and salvation of its most pathetic citizen.

Mark and Luke speak of but *one* demoniac, but Matthew speaks of *two*. Here is no contradiction. Mark and Luke probably speak of the more prominent one; what happened to him apparently happened to the other (Matthew 8:33). Neither Mark nor Luke say there was *only one* demoniac.

Consider these points regarding this man who was saved and the Lord who saved Him.

### I. This Gadarene was a pathetic man.

1. *He had an “unclean spirit”* (v.2). Indeed, he “had demons” (Luke 8:27) and was “demon-possessed” (Matthew 8:28). He who was “demon-possessed” did indeed have an “unclean spirit”. The demons controlled not only his actions but also his words until after Jesus saved him (vv.7, 9).

(Thankfully, demon-possession is not manifest today as it was prior to Jesus casting out Satan and disarming his demonic hosts [John 12:31; Colossians 2:15]. While it is true that Satan and his demons yet today exercise certain powers over men [e.g., Ephesians 2:2f; 2 Corinthians 4:4], this is only to the extent that Jesus permits, “angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” [1 Peter 3:22]).

2. *He had possessed this unclean spirit “for a long time”* (Luke 8:27).

3. *“He wore no clothes”* (Luke 8:27) – being unashamed of his shame.

4. *“He had his dwelling among the tombs”* (v.3) – among the dead!

5. He dwelt away “from the city ..., nor did he live in a house” (Luke 8:27).

6. *He was “exceedingly fierce”* (Matthew 8:28) – “so that no one could pass that way.” He was a peril to all who came close to him.

7. *“No one could bind him”* (vv.3f) – “not even with chains, 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.”

8. *“Neither could anyone tame him”* (v.4). Moral persuasion from men to him was as useless as their physical force.

9. *He was miserable and self-destructive* (v.5): “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out [in *misery*, not *joy*] and cutting himself with stones.”

10. *He was helpless to remedy his plight*. He was under Satan’s control, and his diabolical master would not release him. His will was subject to Satan’s will, and his own will could not go contrary to his diabolical master’s will.

II. *Jesus went to this pathetic man* (v.1): “Then they [Jesus with His disciples] came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.”

Why? “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). They are both unwilling and unable to come to Him (John 5:40; 6:44, 65). Jesus goes to sinners. May He come to us!

III. *This pathetic man “saw Jesus from afar”* (v.6). Nevertheless, when Jesus stepped out of the boat and onto the shore, this Gadarene *immediately* met Him (v.2).

These two facts raise these questions:

- “When he saw Jesus *from afar*”, was it while Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee during the event recorded in the immediately preceding passage (Mark 4:34-41 / Luke 8:22-26 / Matthew 8:23-27)?
- Had he seen the miraculous stilling of the storm raging on the sea?
- Did he see the boat approaching the shore, and assumed that the man who miraculously stilled the storm was in it?
- Did he believe that the man who miraculously stilled the storm raging on the sea could also still the storm raging in his being?
- Is this why that, although “he saw Jesus *from afar*”, he was *immediately* in Jesus’s presence as soon as His boat reached the shore?

We can only guess at what all is implied in the statement “he saw Jesus from afar”.

But I can tell you what such a statement means in your case. When you first see Jesus, it will be “from afar”. For you in your depravity have wandered as far from Him as you can. But from the moment you begin to desire His deliverance and salvation you will find yourself in His presence *immediately*! When you come to Jesus *from afar*, it will be the longest journey you ever take. But you will complete the journey in one step – *immediately*!

IV. *This man came to Jesus “out of the tombs”* (v.2) – “coming out of the tombs” (Matthew 8:28). He therefore

came to Jesus after departing the place of his residence, for “he had his dwelling among the tombs” (v.3). This was due to his pathetic condition. He had more in common with the dead than with the living.

Likewise, men who come to Jesus in salvation will be found “coming out of the tombs”. This is because by nature we are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), and our spiritual residence is in the graveyard of sin. By nature we dwell among the dead.

**V. He “ran” to Jesus** (v.6). Some surmise he did so intending to inflict upon Him physical harm, as he undoubtedly had done to others already. But this does not appear to be the case. His physical actions had been controlled by the demons within him. It is quite doubtful that they would want him to approach the One who delivered the helpless from their diabolical powers. They would instead want him to run *away* from their Master.

It is more likely that He ran *to* Jesus because the heavenly Father was drawing him to Jesus in salvation. Jesus declares that “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). This was the case in the present instance. And this is the case with every sinner who comes to Jesus in salvation. God draws us to Jesus, and we run to Him.

**VI. He “worshiped” Jesus** (v.6). The Greek word here translated “worshiped” (*proskuneō*: from *pros*=“towards” + *kuneō*=“to kiss”) means “to make obeisance, do reverence to”. This man ran to Jesus and fell prostrate before Him, acknowledging Jesus as his Lord and rendering to Him the homage Jesus’ deity deserves.

If you ever run to Jesus, you will cease worshiping “the god of this age” (as Satan is called in 2 Corinthians 4:4) and worship your new Master.

**VII. He was afterward found to be “sitting and clothed and in his right mind”** (v.15). What a change was wrought by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ upon this man! Jesus did what Satan and his demons refused to do, and what men had failed in their attempts to do, and what cannot be done by manmade religion or ethical morality, and what this man could not do for himself. Let us consider separately all three of these changes.

1. He was “sitting”. No longer was he running through the tombs and after passersby. Rather, he was “sitting”, in the posture of one who is at rest. Luke adds that he was “sitting at the feet of Jesus” (Luke 8:39) – like a pupil before his teacher, like a congregant in a worship service, like those who rule and reign with Jesus (Revelation 11:16).

2. He was “clothed”. No longer was it true that “he wore no clothes” (Luke 8:27) – exposing the shame of his nakedness to all.

More important than his *physical* clothes were his *spiritual* clothes. He could now say, “I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has

clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10). Jesus was now this man’s *Salvation*: he could sing “Jehovah is my salvation” (Psalm 27:1). And Jesus was now this man’s *Righteousness*: he could confess Him as “Jehovah Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6). For these “garments of salvation” and “robe of righteousness” are Jesus Himself.

3. He was “in his right mind”. No longer was he “out of his mind” as an insane person, nor “in his *wrong* mind” through being under the mental control of Satan. Rather, he was now of those who confess that “we have the mind of *Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16). He was now endowed with Christ’s disposition, thoughts, and intentions.

Therefore, he was now sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed in Jesus, and possessing the mind of Jesus. Jesus is *before* him, *upon* Him, and *within* him. What a glorious change had been wrought!

**VIII. “He who had been demon-possessed begged Jesus that he might be with Him”** (v.18). Here was a token of his great gratitude to his Savior, and of his great devotion to his Lord, and of his great desire to ever remain in Jesus’ presence. Here also is evidence that he did not wish to abide in the place ruled by Satan and overrun with his demons.

We have no confidence in the profession of those who claim to be Christians but have no overwhelming desire to ever be by His side, and are content to return to the evil from which they claim to have been delivered.

**IX. But Jesus had a greater purpose for this saved man** (v.19): “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.’”

Here is the duty of every sinner saved by Jesus. Be a witness of God’s compassion on you when you were in your miserable and pathetic state. Be a witness of God’s mercy and grace to you in delivering you from your sins and all their effects.

**X. The saved man witnessed of His Lord and Savior** (v.20): “And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”

Jesus told him to “tell what great things *God* has done for you” (Luke 8:39 / Mark 5:19). He obeyed by telling “all that *Jesus* had done for him”.

If Jesus saves us, we will be heard saying: “Come and hear, ... and I will declare what He has done for my soul” (Psalm 66:16); “My soul shall make its boast in Jehovah; the humble shall hear of it and be glad” (Psalm 34:2; also Daniel 4:2f).

Lawless men boast of what they have done for the Lord (as in Matthew 7:21-23). But saved men boast of what the Lord has done for them.

– Daniel E. Parks