

Pentwater Bible Church

Gospel of Mark

Message 22

August 24, 2014

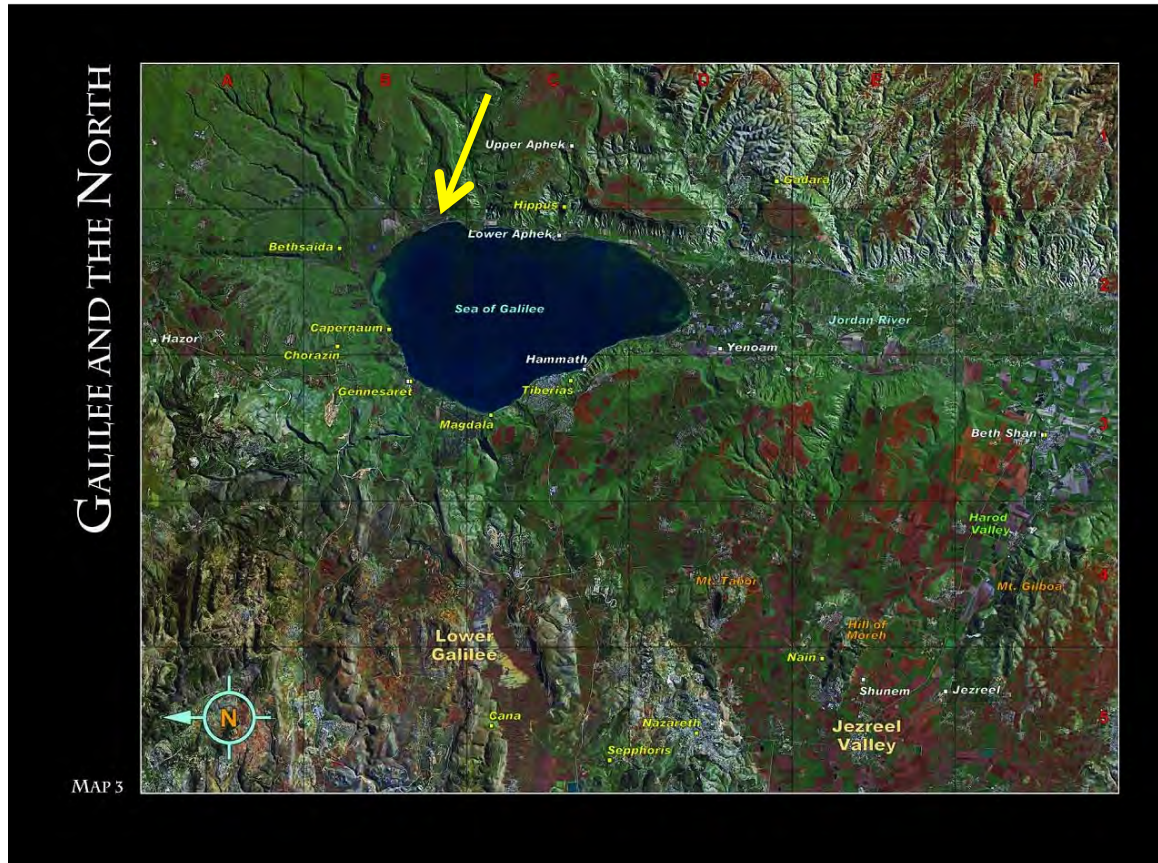


The Abyss of hell by Botticelli cir 1485

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark
Message Twenty-Two
Demonic Possession
August 24, 2014
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THE DEMONIAC

Mark 5:1-20

¹ And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. ² And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³ who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: ⁴ because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. ⁵ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. ⁶ But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, ⁷ and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. ⁸ For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. ⁹ And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. ¹⁰ And he besought

him much that he would not send them away out of the country. ¹¹ Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. ¹² And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. ¹³ And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. ¹⁴ And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. ¹⁵ And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. ¹⁶ And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. ¹⁷ And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. ¹⁸ And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. ¹⁹ Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ²⁰ And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel (KJV).

THE GADARENES

Mark 5:1

¹ And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes (KJV).

This event is important enough to be included in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 8:28; Luke 8:26-27) but Mark's account is the longest. After Jesus calmed the storm on The Sea of Galilee they all continued their journey to the eastern coast of the lake. Jesus had just calmed a wild storm and here and now He would calm a wild demon possessed man. The description of the eastern coast of Galilee is of the *Gadarenes*. This region is referring to a small town of Gersa, which is now called Khersa. Most of its inhabitants were Gentiles (Mark 5:11, 19). Khersa, situated on the eastern shore, about six miles diagonally (oversea) southeast of Capernaum, there is indeed a hill descending sharply to the edge of the water. There are still many caves evident even today which were used for tombs.

THE DEMONIAC

Mark 5:2

² And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit (KJV).

Interestingly the demon possessed man confrontingly approaches Jesus immediately as He leaves the boat. The terminology unclean spirit refers to demonic possession. This means that the man was possessed with a *mean evil spirit* as stated in the other accounts (Matthew 8:28; Luke 8:27). Some who do not take the text of the Scriptures in a literal, grammatical manner with consistency of terms throughout the entire Bible deny any demon activity. They usually refer to this event as occurring to an insane man. This is

hardly Jesus' view. Unclean spirits are morally filthy, and a source of harm and evil for those over whom they exercise control. As the text of this event moves forward it is apparent that violence is another attribute of the demons. Matthew mentions demoniacs (plural) but both Mark and Luke only mention one. Matthew might be referring to the number of the demons possessing the individual who confront Jesus for many were within the man. Only non-Christians can be demon possessed as we see in this story. Jesus drives out the demons and frees the man of possession. Without Jesus there is no possibility that this could occur.

THE DEMONIAC'S BEHAVIOR

Mark 5:3-5

³ who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: ⁴ because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. ⁵ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones (KJV).

Mark vividly describes the pathetic condition of this individual in this account. This behavior clearly demonstrates that demon possession is not a form of illness or insanity. It is a desperate satanic attempt to distort and destroy God's image in mankind. The tombs are traditionally the haunt of demons and were treated this way by the Jews who rendered them permanently unclean. The *unclean spirit* he has, are actually numbering in the thousands. He can't control himself as evidenced by the shackles and chains that he has been bound with. This testifies to the danger he was to the town people. The demons exercised massive strength through him which we see as he tears the chains with which he is bound. Even though he tries he is not able to escape the evil grip of his tormenters. They are much stronger than him and clearly demonstrate their strength in that they are proving stronger than his restrainers. While possessed he howls which conjures up images of a demented animal howling in the night. Characteristic of demonic involvement in a human's life is the desire to mutilate oneself. The use of stones to bruise and cut perhaps indicates attempted suicide as he feverishly tries to rid himself of the evil demonic spirits. Finally we see him completely naked in the public. It is important to retain these characteristics in our minds because of the presence of demons in the earth as they seek to influence us. Those characteristics are:

1. They have an unnatural desire for death and the dead (*dwelling among the tombs*).
2. Greater in number than anyone can imagine since they are one third of the angelic host that were led into following the anointed cherub who became Satan. He is a king with a kingdom (Matthew 12:26) and a portion of that kingdom consists of demons (Matthew 12:24). Scripture does not give us the exact origin of the demons. The New Testament tells of the angels who defected with Satan and "*kept not their first estate*" and "*are reserved unto judgment of the great day*" (II Peter 2: 4; Jude 1:6; Revelation 12:4). Most competent conservative Bible teachers view the demons as the fallen angels. Some refer to them as disembodied spirits.
3. They wrest control from an unsaved person. They cannot inhabit a saved person but they can lead a person into moral depravity and corruption. This is especially

true of individuals who dabble in the occult, engage in drug use, over drink alcohol and have loose morals.

4. They have super human strength, *the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.*
5. They initiate an inhuman desire to screech and wail as an animal in torment.
6. They will urge self-mutilation in individuals that are being encouraged by the demons.

The demons have keen and supernatural knowledge. It is not as powerful as God's holy knowledge or our saving knowledge. They are confirmed in evil, never seek forgiveness and never plead for purity. They know that Jesus is the Lord of the spirit-world but don't have a trust in Him or submit to Him. They worship Christ but not in adoration or joy in Holy Communion. They bend to His will in resentment and hate. They, like Satan, have limited knowledge and ceaselessly attempt to thwart God's plans and purposes. They are depraved and completely morally corrupt. These evil beings have a desire to corrupt and are frequently called unclean in the Bible (Matthew 10:1; Mark 1: 27; 3: 11; Luke 4: 36; Acts 8:7; Revelation 16: 13).

THE DEMONIC RECOGNIZES JESUS' DEITY AND POWER

Mark 5:6-9

⁶ But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, ⁷ and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. ⁸ For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit ⁹ And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. (KJV).

This man who was possessed *ran and worshipped* Jesus. It was the demons speaking through him that said in a very loud voice, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." The demons were forcing the man to kneel and acknowledge Him as the everlasting God of all creation. They knew His power but they did not worship Him as a follower in submission and lovingly trust, but in deference to His deity and power. The demons did not want Jesus to torture them by sending them to their final destiny, which is the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41). Matthew's account adds the extra detail of the demons stating, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time (Matthew 8:29)?" Immediately after this fear of entering their final demise in the Lake of Fire, Jesus said unto him, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Clearly Jesus is demanding a single wicked spirit to leave the man. Jesus then asks the spirit to identify himself asking, "What is thy name?" By doing so Jesus is revealing to the possessed man and those watching the utter seriousness of this possession. It clearly reveals evil personages in the spiritual realm. It is only then that the demons state their number embodied in the name of *Legion*. In ancient Roman occupied Israel a Roman legion had about 6,000 men. The wicked spirits might have been making reference to this or even a larger number. To the people watching this it gave insight of the demon's great strength and oppression.

THE SWINE DESTINATION

Mark 5:10-13

¹⁰ *And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.* ¹¹ *Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.* ¹² *And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.* ¹³ *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea (KJV).*

The demons did not want to be sent away from the immediate area of the dead. They inhabited the tombs, which is their desired domicile with its death and decay. Jesus affirmed this.

Matthew 12:43-45

⁴³ *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.* ⁴⁴ *Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.* ⁴⁵ *Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first (KJV).*

In the presence of Jesus they knew they could not immediately embody another human. So they asked, “*Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.*” Swine (pigs) were ceremonially unclean to the Jews and still are (Leviticus 11:7). So we see here a two-fold meaning to their desire to enter the pigs. *One*, the Jews would not be affected by this since they avoided pigs. The chosen people would have known this and generally followed the dietary components of the Levitical Law which probably also means that they were mostly immune from demon possession, and *Two*, the region of the *Gadarenes* was inhabited by Gentiles who used the pigs as livestock and were not at this time under the protection of the Jewish Law. They were probably more subject to demonic possession than the Gentiles. The Jews viewed the Gentiles as unclean and referred to them as dogs instead of actively evangelizing them. After Jesus allowed the demons to leave the man they went and entered a herd of swine. Without Jesus permission they could not move anywhere. Satan and his demons have no divine authority and must do what God permits. Once entering the herd (2000+) they manifested an additional characteristic, which is destruction and death. The demons knew that Jesus would not let them go into another human so they asked to enter the pigs. As they entered the swine *the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.* So the demons destroyed the swine by forcing them off a cliff and causing them to be drowned in the Lake of Galilee.

UNSAVED GENTILES REACT

Mark 5:14-17

¹⁴ And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. ¹⁵ And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. ¹⁶ And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. ¹⁷ And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts (KJV).

The keepers of the pigs fled from the scene because it was such an unusual event. Spiritual events are difficult for many to accept and it caused the feeders to run and related the incident to many people living both in the city and the countryside. This was so unbelievable an event that the people who heard the story came to see what had happened. Surely with their positions of responsibility to manage the herd the keepers did not want to be held responsible for the loss of 2,000 head of swine. This was a significant financial loss to the owners. They wanted to investigate this incident for themselves since it was unbelievable. They saw the 2,000 pigs destroyed and floating in the water by the Sea of Galilee. They saw Jesus and His disciples on the shore of the lake and the demoniac in his right mind. They saw the man who had been a demoniac no longer rushing naked down the hill screaming but sitting down, right at the feet of Jesus. No longer was he naked (Luke 8:27) but clothed. And no longer was he acting like a madman, screaming night and day and gashing himself with the sharp edges of stones, but in his right mind. All these views caused them to believe the story the herdsmen told them and they became afraid at this experience into the supernatural. Their only concern was for Jesus to leave the region for out of their fear and lack of understanding they wanted to distance themselves from this Jesus who cause so much turmoil and financial loss for them. Similar reactions occur today when Jesus is perceived to cause loss to someone who is considering the claims of Jesus. When faced with loss of some perceived earthly valuable practice, Jesus is disregarded and the things of the world take a precedent. So they strongly (*pray*) that He and His disciples leave the region.

THE FREED DEMONIAIC

Mark 5:18-20

¹⁸ And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. ¹⁹ Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ²⁰ And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel (KJV).

Jesus returned to the ship and was followed by the man who had been possessed asking if he could join His company. Instead Jesus said no but he should go and tell his friends what the God of all creation had done for him. This would be the first evangelistic outreach to the Gentiles in the Upper Galilean region. Jesus had compassion on this man

who was so thankful for what had happened to him and the blessing that Jesus had given to him. The man did just as Jesus said and when to the ten-city region of the Decapolis and told all who would listen what *great things Jesus had done for him*: The result for that *all men did marvel (KJV)*. This is the same situation we see when one accepts Christ as his savior. He or she begins to tell others of the wonderful transformation that has occurred to them because of Jesus. People are initially frequently eager to listen to the story of Jesus and his love ... just so the Gospel's just so long as their daily life and conduct (Matt. 18:23–35; 25:31–46; John 13:14, 15; 2 Cor. 8:7–9; Eph. 4:32–5:2) are not altered, for that would be upsetting.

NEXT WEEK: MARK: JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

E-mail info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com Toll Free 877-706-2479