

Gadara - continued

A Great Fear

And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.

In this story, the people of the area were in great fear of Jesus. They rejected him and begged him to leave them because they did not truly understand him (Matthew 8:33-34; Mark 5:14-17; Luke 8:34-37).

This great fear of Jesus is still present today among those who reject Jesus (Matthew 10:34-39; John 1:11).

A Great Work

And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee.

Finally, the healed man was given a work by Jesus to go tell others about the “great things” the Lord had done for him (Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:38-39).

This great work of personal evangelism is still commanded of us today (Matthew 7:5; 28:19-20; Acts 8:4; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; Jude 22-23). - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Before you say what you think, you should really THINK.
- People remember God in times of danger and then soon forget him later.
- Let's not neglect our duties while being concerned about our difficulties.
- Sometimes what we want the most, we need the least.
- Our God is a consuming fire.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Great Things From Gadara

The account of Jesus healing the Gadarene demoniac is found in Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, and, Luke 8:26-39.

Three questions often arise concerning this story: Why are two different place names mentioned?, Why are there two demoniacs mentioned in Matthew, but only one in Mark and Luke?, and, Why is there no apparent concern for the swine, or the livelihood of the herders? Let us consider these three questions.

First, why are two different places mentioned, Gadara (Gadarenes) and Gerasa (Gerasenes)? Answer: “Gadara” (Heb. G-D-R), modern-day Um Qeia, is the preferred reading because this town was located about 5 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee. “Gerasa” (Heb. G-R-S) was located about 35 miles from the coastline and was a leading city of Decapolis.

Second, why are two demoniacs mentioned in Matthew, but only one in Mark and Luke? Answer: Two demoniacs met Jesus, but only one was singled out for detailed discussion by Mark and Luke. The demoniac named “Legion” was more outspoken. This is the same situation as the two blind men that met

Jesus and one is named Bartimaeus (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). It is likely that two (two demoniacs) are found in Matthew’s account because Matthew is fond of referencing the Old Law of two or more witnesses (Matthew 18:16; Deuteronomy 19:15).

Third, why is there no apparent concern for the swine, or the livelihood of the herders? Answer: First, the purpose of animals in the 1st century was for food, work, or sacrifice. A romantic notion of animals as “pets” was not the emphasis at this time like it is today. Second, swine were unclean animals and less important compared to the soul of the man (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8). The story focuses on the unclean spirit, the unclean man, and the unclean swine.

Now that we have answered three common questions regarding this story, let us turn our attention to some “great things” (Mark 5:19) that are found herein and the lessons that we can learn from them.

A Great Tragedy

And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

In this story, the devil had made a tragedy of this man’s life. This man was out of control, self-afflicted, naked, and a loner (Matthew 8:28-29; Mark 5:1-5; Luke 8:26-29).

The great tragedy of life today is to let the devil possess us, enslave us, and ruin us in sin. He would like nothing more than to ruin us completely (John 6:70; 13:2,27; Acts 5:3; Romans 6:23; 7:21-23; Ephesians 2:1; 4:27; 1 Timothy 5:6,14-15; 1 Peter 5:8). Will you let him do that to you?

A Great Release

For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man.

In this story, the man possessed of the devil was released of his tragedy and torment by Jesus. This man was made so much better in mind and in body (Matthew 8:30-32; Mark 5:6-13; Luke 8:30-33).

The great release of Jesus is still available for anyone who will obey him today. Anyone today can come to Jesus and be freed from sin and possession of the devil (Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 4:18-19; John 8:32-34,44; Romans 1:16; 8:2; 2 Timothy 1:8). - *continued*