

THE MAN OF GADARA

INTRODUCTION. There are three miracles in Mark 5. Involved were a man, a woman and a child. The miracles demonstrate the Lord's power over Demons, Disease and Death. Each of these people was beyond human help. No one could tame the man, doctors couldn't cure the woman, and the child was dead!

V.1 The Lord arrives at "the other side". He had said in ch. 4.35, "Let us pass over to the other side". He knew that there would be the storm. He knew that there would be a satanic attack. He knew that the people of the area would reject Him. However, there was a man there who needed Him, and so He went, just as He went through Samaria in John 4. See Phil. 2. 4.

The storm intervened, but He arrived safe. It couldn't be otherwise when He had said that they would go; hence His rebuke to the disciples, ch. 4.40. They were "fearful" because they hadn't taken Him at His word.

V.2 His arrival occasioned an "immediate" satanic attack. Satan was quick to defend his territory. So often the word "immediately" is used of the Lord Jesus in Mark's Gospel, but the devil is quick to move too, hence our need for constant vigilance. See. ch. 4.15, ch.6. 25, 27.

The man had an unclean spirit; it was evident to all that this was the case. Luke the doctor tells us that he had been like this for a long time, and that he wore no clothes and had no home. His environment and behaviour advertised to whom he belonged! The man with the unclean spirit in ch. 1 was in the synagogue. He was masquerading as a worshipper! Making the application, today there are those who are very evidently under the domination of evil forces, whereas many of the devil's devotees hide behind a mask of religion.

VV.3-4 Satanic energy gave him superhuman strength; see also Acts 19.16. Today, the same is true of people who, without injury, lie on beds of nails, or walk on red-hot stones and so on. Satanic power and protection comes into play. The fact that no one could tame him is a little reminder of another untameable thing in scripture, the tongue! See James 3.8.

V.5 He was restless, "always, night and day", hence the wonder of him "sitting" at V15. He was self-destructive, sharp stones inflicting his wounds. (God uses "smooth stones", 1 Sam. 17.40).

VV.6-8. He recognised the Lord Jesus, and the Lord's authority. He is well known among the hosts of evil! See Acts 19.15. The demons believe and tremble, James 2.19.

V.9 An admission of guilt and need. Contrast with Jacob, Gen. 27.18-19, then see ch. 32.27.

VV.10-13. Here we are given an insight into the fact that demons have a desire to be embodied. See also Matt. 12.43-45. The same spirit of self-destruction which had gripped the possessed man is now in evidence in the swine. “Choked” is used in a parable in Matt. 18, there translated “took him by the throat”, V. 28.

VV.14-17. The attitude of the people. They saw the evidence of the Lord’s power, V.15. Three things are said about the man. He was sitting, the restlessness had gone. He was clothed, an illustration of the “robe of righteousness”, and the “garment of salvation”. He was in his right mind, an indication that involvement with the spirit world has an adverse mental affect on people, hence the importance of avoiding séances, ouija boards and such like.

The people were afraid when they saw the transformation, an indication that the natural man is very often pushed out of his comfort zone when confronted with the evidence of God at work.

They rejected the Saviour. They seemed more concerned about the pigs than the welfare of the man! Cf. Ahab, 1 Kings 18.5. People must always take precedence over animals.

VV.18-20. The Man. He had a request which was turned down, but see ch. 10.52. The word “prayed” is also used in VV. 10,12 and 17, sometimes translated “besought”.

He was told to “go home”. Witness for Christ commences at home. Illus. Samson, Judges 13.25. See also Neh. 3.28. Note the recurrence of the word “go” in Mark; 11.2, 14.13, 16.15.

For the “great things” that the Lord has done, see also, 1 Sam. 12.24 and Ps. 126.2-3. The man’s obedience resulted in the Lord encountering a warmer attitude when He was next in the Decapolis region, ch.7.31-37. The impact of one man’s testimony can never be measured!