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How a Maniac Became a Missionary

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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HOW A MANIAC BECAME A MISSIONARY

SURVEY

Upon stepping ashore in the land of Gadara, Jesus is confronted by and speaks to the leader of a band of demons who were possessing a violent and uncontrollable maniac. The Savior orders them to leave the victim, and, at their request, permits them to enter a herd of nearby pigs, which results in the death of those animals by drowning as they plunge into the Sea of Galilee.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is perhaps the most graphic and terrifying account of demon possession in all the Bible. Note the recorded facts regarding this man:
 1. His home— "*Who had his dwelling among the tombs*" (Mark 5:3).
 2. His helplessness
 - a. He was naked (Luke 8:27)
 - b. He was "exceeding fierce" (Matt. 8:28)
 - c. He was totally unmanageable (Mark 5:3-4)
 - d. He was constantly crying and cutting himself with stones (Mark 5:5)
 - e. He was seized upon and driven about by a legion of demons (Luke 8:29; Mark 5:9) The usage of the word *legion* here may indicate the man was possessed by as many as 6000 demons.
- This shows just how many fallen angels there may be if Satan could afford to spare 6000 on a worthless madman!
- It is the only recorded extended conversation between Jesus and a demon.
- This is the first of two occasions on which Jesus performed a miracle in a way that had destructive results (the death of the pigs). The other miracle was the withering of the fig tree (Matt. 21:19)
- This is the only miracle where Jesus instructed the recipient as follows:
"Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

This is in stark contrast as seen in the other healing miracles where Jesus commanded the healed **not** to tell anyone!

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- What a contrast is seen in this wretched demoniac following his glorious conversion: He now is:

1. Sitting, not screaming.
 2. Praising, not cursing.
 3. Dressed, not naked.
1. In his right mind, not insane.
 2. A convert of Christ, not a captive of Satan.
- This account might well be entitled, *"How A Madman Became a Missionary."* We have previously observed Jesus' instructions that he should tell others what had been done, which he did.
"And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel" (Mark 5:20)

Decapolis (literally, *"ten cities"*) was a league of ten cities characterized by high Greek culture, allied together for purposes of trading. All but one city (Scythopolis) were east of the Galilean Sea and Jordan River. This convert thus became the greatest missionary to Gentiles since the preacher to Nineveh, Jonah the prophet.