

A Lion on a Limb

The Gospels

Mark 5

Introduction

In our last session, we discussed the fact that the ancient world held the belief that demons existed. As a result of this belief, a host of superstitions had gripped the people to the point that they were afraid of many things.

The people of that day believed that a person was especially vulnerable to a demon if he was traveling by himself and if he was traveling at night. They believed that women about to give birth were especially vulnerable to the demon world, as well as couples who had just been married, and a list of others. They also believed that anyone who was a victim of the powers of a demon was literally, doomed forever – there was no hope or help for them.

Responses to a discussion of the underworld

Now there are two responses to a discussion of the demon world, or of the occult, or of Satanism or Satan himself. They may seem obvious, but let me give them.

1. One response to a discussion of the underworld is unbelief.

In other words, “I would rather not hear or talk about this because I really don’t believe all of that stuff about the demons and Satan and hell and the underworld and such.”

To respond in this way would be in opposition to the writings of scripture. The writings of scripture are literally true, correct, and authoritative, and they speak much of the underworld. In fact, they speak as much about the underworld as they do heaven above and the angels that follow God. A believer will not disbelieve the truth of their existence.

2. A second response is one that would fall into the category of preoccupation or exaggeration.

In other words, we begin to look for a demon behind every stone, behind every tree, in every dark room, or behind every closet door.

We do not want the result of this study to be a leading toward fear. If that is the result, I have not done a very good job of presenting the scriptural account of the underworld.

We dare not become preoccupied with the underworld. Let me tell a story that I read recently, written by Kent Hughes, who was the pastor of Wheaton College Church. He told the story of a couple that he knew that had started a Bible study. The Bible study soon filled with people who held various positions in society; such as, lawyers, doctors, and executive business people. They and their spouses and children came to the Bible study and it flourished.

Soon, however, they became preoccupied with a study of the demon world, as they began studying about the occult and Satanism. One Bible study session ended, in fact, with the group dismantling the dining room chandelier in the home where they were studying because they believed that it was possessed by a demon. They took individual pieces of that chandelier to different parts of the city and buried them.

The height of embarrassment to this group came when the children of the host family were seen by neighbors, running down the street shouting, “The devil is after us. The devil is after us.”

The neighbors, who knew this Bible study was taking place, went to the home and found the women of the Bible study in the back yard hacking a rosewood chest with an ax to get rid of the demons that were inhabiting it.

This type of situation is happening in this country. It is preoccupation; it is seeing a demon everywhere and in everything.

We do not want to come to this conclusion, nor do we want to ignore the reality of the existence of the demon world, especially as it relates to the believer, to the church, and to the world itself.

An Exposé on Satan

I want to first, do an exposé on Satan. Turn in your Bible to Isaiah chapter 14.

Who is Satan?!

Let us begin by answering the question, “Who is Satan?!”

1. First, Satan is a literal being.

Nineteen of the twenty-seven New Testament books refer to Satan by name. In the gospels, there are twenty-nine references to Satan. Of those twenty-nine, twenty-five come from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself, who speaks of Satan as being a literal, existent being. So Satan is existent, literal, and is literally alive.

2. Secondly, Satan is a fallen cherub.

“Cherub” is the singular Hebrew word of “cherubim,” with which we are a little more familiar – “cherubim” is the plural of “cherub”. Satan is a fallen cherub.

We learn from Job and other passages that angels existed and observed God and His glory, through the agent of Jesus Christ, create the world.

There are several classes of angels that God created, each of which had specific functions.

One class of angels was the seraphim. These were the created beings or “the beasts,” as it is translated.

The highest ranking class of angelic being, according to Ezekiel chapter 28, was the cherub, or the cherubim. We know, from this chapter, that Satan was a fallen cherub. Even more, Ezekiel tells us that Satan, or Lucifer, is,

. . . the anointed cherub . . . (Ezekiel 28:14)

He says of Satan,

. . . You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. . . . (Ezekiel 28:12)

The name Lucifer, by the way, which has such wicked connotations in our minds, was Satan’s original name. Lucifer means, “the shining one or the bearer of light”. He was the most magnificent, highest ranking, created angelic being that God had created.

God, however, never created an angel or a human without a will to choose. He did not create puppets – and angels are not puppets. After the fall, some are

confirmed to righteousness and follow God. Some, because of their will and their pride, followed Satan and are now confirmed in their destructive bent – they will eventually end up in eternal hell.

The scriptures tell us that Satan is not only literal, but he is a fallen cherub. He is of the highest class or order and he was the highest in that class.

Reasons Satan fell

Satan fell, however, and Isaiah 14 tells the reason. Satan said five “I wills,” which you should underline in your text.

1. First, Satan says, “I will ascend to heaven.”

Look at Isaiah 14:12-13a.

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!

But you said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; . . .”

Now, Satan was already in heaven. In fact, we know that the cherubs occupied the privileged position of presence in the holy place of God.

You may remember that it was the cherubim that had folded wings looking over the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat in the holy of holies, the place in which God presided. It was the cherubim that were sent to the Garden of Eden to protect man from the awesome presence of God and the life-giving or the immortality-giving tree. It was the cherubim that had the special privilege of existing in the arena of God’s own majesty and presence.

So, when Satan says, “I will ascend to heaven,” he has to mean something other than being in the presence of God. He is, I believe, saying, “I want equal recognition in this throne room with God Himself.”

2. Secondly, Satan says, “I will raise my throne above the stars of God.”

Look at Isaiah 14:13b.

But you said in your heart, . . . “I will raise my throne above the stars of God, . . .”

Now, in Isaiah 14:12, as we read, Satan was called a “star”. The Old Testament refers to the angelic beings as stars. So, Satan is evidently saying that he wants the authority of God over the angelic world.

They angels receive the shots from God. Satan says, "I want my throne above the stars of heaven." In other words, "I want to rule the angelic world."

3. Thirdly, Satan says, "I will sit on the mount of assembly."

Look at Isaiah 14:13c.

But you said in your heart, . . . "and I will sit on the mount of assembly . . ."

The "mount" is a reference to the center of God's kingdom program. Satan says, "I want to be in the center of the kingdom, ruling."

It is easy to see the direction his pride had gone.

4. Fourthly, Satan says, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."

Look at Isaiah 14:14a.

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; . . ."

Perhaps this is a reference to the glory of God.

5. Fifthly, and finally, Satan says, "I will make myself like the Most High."

Look at Isaiah 14:14b.

". . . I will make myself like the Most High."

Satan covets the position of God. He says, "I want to be just like Him." In other words, "I want to replace the authority and the majesty and the sovereign power and place of God Himself."

Satan says, "I want what God has."

The creature is desiring the position of the Creator.

This happens today in a myriad of ways. Whether it is the person who believes that they are a little god and will one day reign supreme or the one who shakes their fist at God and says, "I will have the position of authority in my life." They are, in a sense, saying the same things that Satan himself said, "I will be *the* authority."

Because of this pride, Satan fell. Look at Isaiah 14:15a.

Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

What does Satan do?!

Now, what does Satan do? Let me give several things.

1. First, Satan is the ruler of fallen angels.

We know from Revelation 12:4 that one third of the angelic hosts followed Satan when he fell. In other words, the deceptive lure; the seductive ability of this being of light was so powerful; so magnificent that a third of the angelic world said, "We will follow Lucifer."

Let me add that when he fell, God changed his name to Satan – and Satan means, "adversary or opposer".

2. Secondly, Satan is the ruler of the world system.

II Corinthians 4:4, calls Satan,

. . . the god of this world . . .

This world is his domain, ladies and gentlemen. This is his, by delegated authority. God has given Satan enough authority to rule planet earth. He cannot do anything, except the authority and privileges given to him by God, but this is his domain. He seeks to create his own kingdom, but he is the god of this world.

3. Thirdly, Satan is active in heaven.

Job 1, Zechariah 3, and especially Revelation 12 tell us that Satan is active in heaven accusing the brethren. Revelation 12:10b says,

. . . for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Do you know what Satan is doing? He is up there saying, "God, do You see that person down there? Do You see Stephen? Do You see what he's doing? Do You see what I think he's going to do? Is he really worthy of Your grace? Listen, You're sending me to Sheol forever because I sinned, and there is the sin of pride. What about him? What about her? What about that person? Are they worthy of Your grace?"

The scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ intercedes for us eternally. I imagine this literally happens in heaven as Jesus Himself steps forward and says, "Yes, that's true, but that individual has come and received the gift of eternal life and My shed blood has forgiven him forever."

Then, God says, "Case dismissed."

However, we know that Satan is active in heaven trying to coerce God to violate His covenant with those who believe in His Son.

4. Fourthly, Satan is active on earth.

Satan is active to oppose and defeat believers and to oppose and defeat God's purpose in individuals and in the church. He thwarts the spreading of the gospel.

Let me give a couple things that Satan does to accomplish this.

- First, Satan counterfeits God's system of truth.

In other words, Satan replaces divine salvation with work salvation; he replaces creation with evolution; he replaces worship of God with atheism; relativism; existentialism; humanism; all of the other "isms". He is in some way trying to take our focus off who God is to worship something created by mankind.

The Bible tells us about false ministers, false Christs, false gospels, false doctrines, false followers. Satan has a network and it is alive and well on planet earth.

- Secondly, Satan counteracts God's sovereign rule.

In other words, Satan desires worship.

Satan's activity on earth in relation to believers

Now, what does Satan do in relation to believers? I did a survey in my research and came up with a number of things. This is in no way exhaustive, but let me give some of these.

1. First, Satan is active in waging warfare.

Now the trouble is that for those of us who live in America with all the freedoms that we have, we rarely observe; we rarely recognize the warfare in which we are involved – not that it is not happening. Certain things happen and we think it is the result of the flesh, or the world, or it is just the system, or it is the way politicians are, or it is the way our world is geared, or whatever.

Ladies and gentlemen, perhaps we all need to be reminded today that *we are at war!* For what other reason would we be told to don the armor of God? (Ephesians 6) For what reason do we need a sword, if we are not going to use it? For what reason do we need a shield, unless we are going to ward off something that attacks us? *We are at war!*

The problem is that we, as Americans, rarely recognize what war is all about. Satan, however, is involved right now and there are a number of ways he does it. Let me give some other thoughts.

2. Secondly, Satan accuses the believer before God and God before the believer.

Satan accuses and slanders the believer. The word "devil" literally means "slanderer". One way Satan accuses, as I have already mentioned, is that he slanders us, as believers, before God.

However, Satan wages war in another way that is very effective in the lives of believers. Satan also accuses God before the believer. It is Satan who whispers in the ear of the believer, "God cannot be trusted. God's not dealing a full deck. God's not fair. If God had been all-powerful, this would not have happened. . . ." Where do you think these thoughts come from? Satan accuses God before us, as believers. This is one of his chief objectives.

3. Thirdly, Satan plants doubt.

This goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 3, when Satan said, "Did God really say that? Does He really mean this? Does He really want this?"

Satan plants doubts today as well, about many things.

4. Fourthly, Satan tempts to sin.

We read:

- in Acts 5 that Satan tempts us to lie;
- in I Corinthians 7 that Satan tempts us to immorality;
- in I Timothy 3 that Satan tempts us to have pride;
- in I Peter 5 that Satan tempts us to experience discouragement.

Now I will stop at this because it is easy for us to start looking under every stone for a demon, right? Do not blame all sin on them. I have a feeling that we do a lot of it and we do not need any help.

I read recently, of a little girl who was pulling her brother's hair and kicking his shins. Her mother came along and pulled her off her little brother. Her mother asked, "Why did you let the devil put into your heart to pull your brother's hair and kick his shins?"

The little girl thought for a moment and said, "Well, maybe the devil put it in my heart to pull his hair, but it was my idea to kick him in the shins."

Let us not blame all of our sin on demons.

5. Fifthly, Satan incites persecution.

Satan is the engineer; the motivator behind the persecuting things that come into our lives – whether personally or corporately as a church.

6. Sixthly, Satan prevents service.

On one occasion, Paul talks about the fact that he was thwarted or kept from going to the Thessalonians. He does not tell how or why, but gives the idea that there was demonic warfare involved. (I Thessalonians 2:18)

We also know from Daniel 10 that Daniel had been praying and for three weeks, the answer did not come. Finally, it came and it is shocking to understand the implications of the angelic messenger who came and put a hand on Daniel, who began to tremble. The angel said, “I would have come three weeks earlier, but the prince of Persia detained me.”

This is the spiritual demon in charge of that geographical location. The angel said, “I was on my way and he got hold of me and wouldn’t let me go.”

God, however, dispatched Michael, who was evidently bigger than the demon. Michael came along and let the angel go to Daniel. The answer came from God.

When was the last time you and I thought that perhaps, the reason we have not received an answer is because of demonic activity? What happens during the delay? We think, “Well, I guess God doesn’t care about me.”

Satan then, does what? He thinks, “I won.”

Satan will thwart, deceive, and stop, in any possible way he can, the ministry of Jesus Christ. He will prevent service.

7. Lastly, Satan promotes division.

In the church, as we are told on numerous occasions, this is one of Satan’s chief objectives. He comes into the body of Christ, in his divisive ways, and creates division. When he does, the church, in many ways, loses effectiveness; it loses joy; it loses anticipation. The church loses its potential because of this.

An Exposé on Demons

Now let us look at demons. Let me give two points.

1. First, demons are the extension of Satan’s power.

Whatever Satan does, the demons do. They are receiving their direction and guidance from him. They are the extension of his power.

2. Secondly, demons are the expression of Satan’s philosophy.

The demons, or fallen angels, are those who lure men into worshiping Satan; into worshiping the things that contrast with the things of God; into worshiping things that create the setting where people focus, not on God, but on themselves, their flesh, the world. The demons are behind this, wringing their hands with glee.

Are the demons doing a good job? Absolutely. They are very effective.

There is, in fact, in America, a growing fascination with the demon world; with the underworld. Teachers are asking their directors questions such as, “How do I respond when my students turn in essays on death and Satan?” Parents are wondering what to do when they discover in their teenagers’ rooms, a pentagram drawn underneath a rug, or a skull, or a diary entitled *The Book of Shadows*. How do they respond to these things?

Noted authority on this subject Arthur Lyons, writes these words, “The United States harbors the fastest growing and most organized body of Satanists in the world.”

In Los Angeles alone, sixty-four preschools and twenty-seven neighborhoods, in the last two years, have reported satanic activity.

Though largely unnoticed, and I say unnoticed because we are not aware of the warfare that is going on, the tentacles of Satan’s underground reach around the world – in the booming metropolises and in the smallest of towns.

Several months ago, I went with a police officer to two abandoned homes in our town and we walked through them. I was stunned to see the debris and to see covering the walls, satanic graffiti showing allegiance to Satan; worship of Satan in this little town.

Levels of the satanic movement

One individual, who is a veteran of the Chicago Police Department, gives four levels of the satanic

movement. Let me give a brief description of these levels.

1. The first level of the satanic movement is called, “teenage dabblers”.

This is done through suggestive heavy metal music, drugs, séances, and a quest for power.

These are teenagers who will study or dabble with *The Satanic Bible*, which, by the way, has been a best seller for twenty years. This past year, it sold over 618,000 copies.

This is, sort of, the curious crowd, categorically referred to as, “teenage dabblers”. They are teenagers who want power; who want authority; who want a sense of significance. As a result, they go to séances, they burn a candle and hold hands, and they dabble – dangerous as it is.

2. The second level of the satanic movement is called, “satanic covens”.

These are groups that meet to worship. They are all over the country. This is like a group in Greeley, Colorado that meets in abandoned schools or churches and includes an age range of between twelve and thirty.

3. The third level of the satanic movement is called, “public Satanists”.

These are rather commercial and flamboyant; such as, Anton Lavey, who formed the first Church of Satan. You may have heard of or read about him.

Unfortunately, that church has tax-exempt status, just as our Christian church does. They are recognized by the military. They are a church in this country like any other church or synagogue. Their writings sell in the millions every year.

4. The fourth level of the satanic movement, and the bottom rung of this ladder, is called, “hard-core satanic cults”.

This involves sacrifices to Satan – animal and human. Dr. Al Carlyle, of the Utah State Prison System, says these words, “In the Las Vegas metropolitan area, 600 people meet their deaths in satanic ceremonies every year.”

New categories of ritualistic oriented crime are being established by police forces all the time. It is the only way they can categorize crimes related to the underworld.

Is it a tragedy? What about the victims?

Think of Michele Kimball, that I read about recently. On January 6, 1988, as a sophomore in high school, she killed herself. She and her boyfriend had a suicide pact, although he survived. The note she left behind said that she was worshiping Satan and her parents would not understand.

In Roy City, Utah, a youth’s suicide sparked incredible interest because of the note that he left behind. He wrote, “In the name of Satan and all the demons, named and nameless, walkers in the velvet darkness hearken to us, so dim and shadowy things welcome a new and worthy brother.”

I think of the interview that I read this past week, of Sean Sellars, by Jerry Johnson in his book *The Edge of Evil*. Sean Sellars was the youngest man on death row in Oklahoma. He was there because he killed his parents while he was worshiping Satan. The courts did not buy that he was worshiping Satan, obviously, and he was executed.

The demonic underworld is alive and active and is doing a rather phenomenal job of turning people away from the true God to a false god – whether it is for the pursuit of pleasure or power or authority or whatever.

I have learned in my research, however, that the buzzword is “power”. People want power. They want to get back; to vindicate; to be authoritative; to stand up for themselves; to be in a position of authority. If they cannot get this sense from God, who wants them to be a servant, they will turn to this one who promises that they will be a god with all power.

A true story of demon possession

Now, I want to take you to a true, live story of demon possession in the book of Mark. I could tell a lot of stories and we could leave white as ghosts, so afraid. I have read some that are going to mark me for a while. However, I would rather go to the text of scripture and glean from this the principles of the character of demons and the authority of Christ. Let us look at a true story of demon activity that is found in Mark chapter 5.

Look at Mark 5:1-2.

They [Jesus and His disciples] came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes [or Gadara].

When He [Jesus] got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

Characteristics of demon possession

Let me give six characteristics of demon possession.

1. The first characteristic of demon possession is isolation.

A person who is dabbling in the demonic world will be pulling himself away from friends, family, and society at large. Isolation is a key quality of one who is being obsessed by the demon world.

Mark 5:2 says,

. . . a man from the tombs . . .

This is where the man lived – in isolation.

Mark 5:2b-3a says,

*. . . with an unclean spirit met Him,
and he had his dwelling among the
tombs. . . .*

We know from geographical history that the coastline of Gadara was dotted with limestone caves. In these caves, the people would bury their dead. They were open tombs. This was a desolate place, deserted by people who knew about the tombs of Gadara. The people obviously stayed away, but they also knew about this fellow.

Matthew refers to this as actually being two men. (Matthew 8:28) One was obviously active and this is the one that Mark records.

These were “wild men of Gadara,” as they were probably called. I imagine, if a child got out of line, they were threatened that if they did not straighten up, they would be taken down to the coastline to the wild men of Gadara.

People stayed away in droves, except on certain occasions, and I will show what these occasions were. The first characteristic of demons is isolation.

2. The second quality of demon possession is strength.

Look at Mark 5:3b.

*. . . And no one was able to bind him
anymore, even with a chain;*

An inhuman type of strength or power is exerted by the demon that is possessing or demonizing this individual.

This lets us know that at some time in this town, some of the people got together and said, “This man is causing fear and terror. Let’s make a chain and go

chain him. We’ll bring food for him, but let’s chain him so he can’t run wild.”

They get together and create a chain and go, as a group, to chase down this madman and wrap the chains about him. What does he immediately do? We are told that the chains could not hold him. He snaps them with inhuman strength.

I imagine some blacksmith trying again, and holding up a link and saying, “This is definitely big and strong enough to hold that madman. This will do it.”

So, they take it and bind him, and then, he snaps it again. Demons exhibit inhuman strength.

3. The third characteristic of demon possession is restlessness.

Look at Mark 5:4-5a.

because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.

Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, . . .

Note that he screamed constantly. Perhaps he is doing this with his own voice; it is his own lament of his tortured body and soul, crying out in torment. Demons are restless.

4. The fourth quality of demon possession is destructiveness.

Look at Mark 5:5b.

*. . . screaming . . . and gashing himself
with stones.*

It is interesting that if we look back into the Old Testament and study the false priests, do you remember when they took on Elijah at Mount Carmel? They were trying to get the attention of their demon god, Baal. What did they do to try to get his attention? They slashed themselves with stones and knives. They were literally, using their own bodies as a living sacrifice to their false god. (I Kings 18)

In a very twisted way, Satan counterfeits all that the Christian is to do. Christians are to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice and allow the Holy Spirit to indwell and to control them. The demons have, in their twisted way, counterfeited everything that the believer experiences in a beautiful way with the Holy Spirit of God.

This demon-possessed man was destructive; was cutting himself.

5. The fifth characteristic of demon possession is that of being dangerous.

Matthew 8:28 tells us that,

. . . no one could pass by that way.

If the people wanted to get into trouble, all they had to do was go down to the seashore of Gadara. No one could ever get by this man without being attacked or tormented. So, the people stayed away.

6. The sixth quality of demon possession is being totally mastered.

The text tells us that there was a storm and the ship carrying Jesus and the disciples pulled up on shore at this particular place. It was nighttime. The twelve disciples and Jesus get out of the boat and as soon as they do, according to Mark 5:6-7a,

Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; and shouting with a loud voice . . .

Let me stop at this point because the tense indicates that the man first, gave a howl or a scream. This man – naked, gashed, bleeding, with long wild hair and beard – comes down from the mountain, running toward the disciples and Jesus, and falls down and lets out a scream.

Do you know what I see? I see Jesus standing there. Perhaps His hands are behind His back in quiet authority. I also see the twelve disciples heading for the boat! They are probably clawing all over each other to get away from the wild man! Maybe they are yelling, “He’s alive! We’ve heard stories about him. He’s here!”

This is not the way Jesus is behaving, however. We never read of Jesus being frightened in any way. He has commanding authority.

This demon-possessed person was totally mastered. His voice was literally being captivated by the voice of the demon. Look at Mark 5:7b-9.

. . . he said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”

For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion . . .”

This was the voice of the demon that had complete mastery of this man’s will, emotions, and even his voice. This man was totally under the control of these demons.

Now, he says,

. . . “My name is Legion . . .”

When he says this, I would be running to swim out into the ocean – because a legion is a 6,000 member Roman garrison! We know that these demons will enter the swine and verse 13 tells us that there were about 2,000 of them. Somehow the demon world is not incapacitated by space. This man was perhaps, overruled or overrun by as many as 2,000 or more demons, if not 6,000.

He said, in Mark 5:9,

. . . “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Continue to Mark 5:10-13a.

And he began to implore Him [Jesus] earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Now there was a big herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”

Jesus gave them permission. . . .

Characteristics of demons before Christ

Let me give you three characteristics of demons before Christ.

1. First, the demons were discerning.

In other words, the demons were capable of seeing that Christ was who He was. They had not been formally introduced. As far as we know, they had never seen Him. However, they, being of the spirit world, saw in the eyes of this Man of Nazareth, the Spirit of God. They knew exactly who He was and, though they leered at Him through the man’s eyes, they saw reflected in the eyes of Christ, the authority of God and the majesty of Christ. The demons were discerning.

2. Secondly, the demons were fearful.

The demons were begging. They were not telling Jesus to allow them to do anything. They were not saying, “We will do this and You will have it this way.” They were saying, “Will You please allow us to do this?”

3. Thirdly, the demons were obedient.

Jesus simply said something that in our English text is a whole phrase, but in the Greek is one word, literally, “Go.” He said no ritualistic incantation, as we studied last week; no formula. The demons simply obeyed the authority of who He was. In one word, He said, “Go,” and in a snap, they were gone.

Let us look at the text and finish this story of demon possession. The demons went out and entered the swine. Look at Mark 5:13-16.

Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.

Note that the response of the people was fear.

Continue to Mark 5:17.

And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

Do not think for a moment that they asked Jesus to leave just because they lost their black market business in pigs. By the way, they were not supposed to be eating pigs. This was an act of authority, if not judgment itself on that city.

Do not think for a moment that they were just upset that one day these farmers were wealthy and the next day they were bankrupt. The people were fearful because they knew something had happened. Everyone knew about the wild man of Gadara. And yet, this Man had had the authority to rid him of the demons in an instant.

Whenever sinful man is confronted with the authority of Christ; whenever you and I are brought

into the realization of the holiness of God, we respond like Isaiah – with fear and trembling.

These people, at that moment, came in contact with the authority of God in Christ, and they were terrified. They would rather have a demon-possessed man than Christ. They would rather have a wrong business than the Son of God. So, they asked Him to leave.

When they did this, we read, in Mark 5:18, of the demon-possessed man, who now was free,

As He [Jesus] was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

“Lord, let me follow You,” he was saying.

Continue to Mark 5:19.

“And He [Jesus] did not let him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”

Responses to the Underworld

There are three responses that I want to briefly give, in relation to this type of subject; three responses to the reality of Satan and the demon world. Two of these responses are wrong and one is right.

1. The first response is to live without acknowledging the demon world or demon activity.

This is to go through life naively thinking that the demon world really does not exist or that it will never knock on your door. This is to think demons will never bother you; never tempt you; never lure you. This is a wrong response to live without acknowledging the existence of the demon world.

2. The second response is to acknowledge the demon world without respecting it.

In Jude 1:8, Michael, the powerful archangel, and Satan were disagreeing over the body of Moses, which is another study. It is interesting that Michael dared not bring an accusation against Satan. Instead, he simply said,

... *“The Lord rebuke you!”*

In other words, even though he is an archangel, he was hiding behind the Lord, saying, “The Lord rebuke you!”

It terrifies me, ladies and gentlemen, to see the almost obnoxious attitude in our day, of Christians who, as if they had the authority of Christ, bind the demon world. The only thing we can say, if we say anything at all, is, “The Lord rebuke you. I’m not big enough.”

We are to live with a healthy respect that the demon world has supernatural discernment, power, and strength. Even more than that, they have studied us long enough to know our weaknesses and our strengths.

This past week, I read about a family who was picnicking one afternoon in the San Isabel National Forest in Colorado. They had spread their blanket underneath the beautiful branches of a tree and were enjoying the scenery and the day. They picnicked on their blanket, laughed and played, and finally, as they were ready to leave, decided to take a picture. The dad set up their timed camera exposure, ran to join the group, and they all faced the camera and smiled.

A few weeks later, when this family got their developed pictures, their blood ran cold. They could see through the leaves of the tree above them, resting on a limb, a mountain lion.

This family had not been aware of the great danger they were in because they were not aware of the lion on the limb. However, had they been aware, it would have been foolish not to move their blanket.

This is what is happening today. The lion – the roaring one that seeks whom he may devour – is on the limb. People are aware, but do not move their blanket.

3. The third, and right, response is to respect the demon world without despairing.

We can live without acknowledging the demon world, we can acknowledge the demon world without respecting it, or we can respect the demon world without despairing. Perhaps we can confront, but we can never be defeated in Jesus Christ.

You may be thinking to yourself, “You don’t know the chains that bind me. You don’t know the habit that has clutched my soul. You don’t know the difficulty that I have and the temptation that I am so helpless against.”

I may not know your situation, but I know who Jesus Christ is. I know that He has all authority and all power and all glory.

Perhaps you are scarred. You might say, “You don’t know what he uses against me. You don’t know the past.”

I may not, but I know the blood of Jesus Christ and its power.

The tragedy is that these people asked Jesus Christ to leave. As recently as a hundred years ago, in this same region, on the same coastline, dwelling in the same tombs, were the Troglophytes – the descendants of the people of Gadara. They were a wild and savage people who lived unrestrained in the tombs.

The danger is even greater, ladies and gentlemen, when you have been exposed to the lion and know that your life is not under the authority of Jesus Christ and in a relationship with the only powerful God who can protect us, who can lead us, who can guide us. We all must come to this point and say, “Jesus Christ, I want to give my life to You. I want to give You the rightful place of authority in my life. I want You to lead me and guide me for Your glory.”

Then, put on the armor and go to battle. The victory will not be ours; the victory is already won – in Christ.