

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
X. Christ's Display Of His Divine Power Over Demons
(Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39)

I. Introduction

- A. If Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, true deity come in the flesh, that identity should have become evident in His encounter with the demonic realm that is so contrary to God and is under Satan's powerful control.
- B. Christ's display of His divine power and authority over demons is displayed in His exorcism of the extreme case of the demoniac in Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39. We view the event for our insight:

II. Christ's Display Of His Divine Power Over Demons, Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39.

- A. Jesus displayed His divine authority and power in saving the demoniac from strong demon possession:
 - 1. Having crossed the sea, Jesus landed on the shore of the area of Gerasa in which was the city of Gerash, one of the ten cities of Decapolis east of the Sea of Galilee that were mostly populated by Gentiles (Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 122; J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 221).
 - 2. Christ was immediately met by a demoniac who came out of the cave tombs of the area, Mark 5:2-3a. The man was in a terrible state: He had often broken chains others had put on him to restrict his violence, no one could tame him, and he dwelt in the hills and tombs, always crying out and cutting himself with stones as Satan sought to destroy God's image in him (Mark 5:3b-5; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 122-123).
 - 3. The demoniac ran and bowed before Jesus, revealing the demons' recognition of Christ's power and authority over them, and he cried out in a loud voice that he had nothing to do with Jesus, Son of the Most High God, Mark 5:6-7a. The demons in the man led him to implore Jesus by God for Jesus not to torture them before the final punishment, Mark 5:7b with Revelation 20:10; Ibid., p. 123.
 - 4. Mark 5:8 explains that Jesus was telling the demons to leave the man, revealing there was a "fluctuation between the personality of the man and the" demons "who possessed him" in this event. (Ibid.)
 - 5. Jesus asked the demon who spoke for his name, and the demon replied that his name was "Legion: for we are many," Mark 5:9. A legion was the largest unit in a Roman army that was composed of 3,000 to 6,000 men, what reveals that many demons possessed this man. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Mark 5:9)
 - 6. The demons all earnestly begged Jesus not to send them out of the region, "into a lonely exile where they could not torment people" (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.), but to enter a nearby herd of pigs, Mark 5:10-12.
 - 7. The area's large Gentile population made raising pigs a profitable venture regardless if pigs were unclean for Hebrews to eat (Leviticus 11:4a, 7). Thus, the demons' petition to enter the pigs that they might destroy them was meant to disrupt Jesus' ministry to Hebrews: (1) If He forbade the demons from entering the pigs, they could charge Him with the sin of violating the Law's prohibition of raising pigs for food, but (2) if He let them enter the pigs to kill them, that would offend area Gentiles, disrupting Jesus' ministry!
 - 8. Jesus would not condone the sin of violating the Law's dietary restrictions, so He gave the demons permission to enter the herd, Mark 5:13a. They left the demoniac, entered the herd of about 2,000 pigs and made them rush violently down a steep bank into the Sea of Galilee where they drowned, Mark 5:13b.
- B. Jesus displayed His divine authority and power in overcoming the demons' effort to disrupt His ministry:
 - 1. The herdsmen fled the scene and reported the herd's demise to the area people who then came out and saw the former untamed demoniac sitting, clothed and in his right mind, frightening the people, Mark 5:14-15.
 - 2. When the people understood the full story of the exorcism and what had happened to the herd of pigs, the people who were largely Gentiles began to beg Jesus to leave their area, Mark 5:16-17.
 - 3. Jesus then used the former demoniac to counter the effort of the demons to discredit His ministry among the area Gentiles: Jesus did not let the healed man go with Him but told him to return to his family and friends and testify of the great things God had done for him, Mark 5:18-19. The man left and testified throughout Decapolis the great things Jesus had done for him, and all who heard it marveled, Mark 5:20.
 - 4. Later after Jesus had returned to the region of Decapolis (Mark 7:31), He miraculously fed a large crowd of 4,000 people there, Mark 8:1-9. The transformed demoniac's testimony had eventually opened the door for Jesus' continued and effective ministry to that once closed area that was predominantly Gentile!

Lesson: *Jesus displayed His divine power and authority to exorcise the demoniac of Decapolis and to overcome demonic efforts to disrupt His effective ministry there.*

Application: *May we believe that Christ is God and rest in His sovereignty over demons and their harmful efforts.*