

Mark 5:1-20 (cf. Mt 8:28-34; Lk 8:26-39)

¹ So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. ³ This man lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. ⁴ Whenever he was put into chains and shackles-- as he often was-- he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. ⁶ When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. ⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit." ⁹ Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. ¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them." ¹³ So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. ¹⁴ The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. ¹⁶ Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. ¹⁷ And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone. ¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been." ²⁰ So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them. (NLT)

¹ Cruzaron el lago hasta llegar a la región de los gerasenos. ² Tan pronto como desembarcó Jesús, un hombre poseído por un espíritu maligno le salió al encuentro de entre los sepulcros. ³ Este hombre vivía en los sepulcros, y ya nadie podía sujetarlo, ni siquiera con cadenas. ⁴ Muchas veces lo habían atado con cadenas y grilletes, pero él los destrozaba, y nadie tenía fuerza para dominarlo. ⁵ Noche y día andaba por los sepulcros y por las colinas, gritando y golpeándose con piedras. ⁶ Cuando vio a Jesús desde lejos, corrió y se postró delante de él. ⁷ —¿Por qué te entrometes, Jesús, Hijo del Dios Altísimo? —gritó con fuerza—. ¿Te ruego por Dios que no me atormentes! ⁸ Es que Jesús le había dicho: «¡Sal de este hombre, espíritu maligno!» ⁹ —¿Cómo te llamas? —le preguntó Jesús. —Me llamo Legión —respondió—, porque somos muchos. ¹⁰ Y con insistencia le suplicaba a Jesús que no los expulsara de aquella región. ¹¹ Como en una colina estaba paciendo una manada de muchos cerdos, los demonios le rogaron a Jesús: ¹² —Mádanos a los cerdos; déjanos entrar en ellos. ¹³ Así que él les dio permiso. Cuando los espíritus malignos salieron del hombre, entraron en los cerdos, que eran unos dos mil, y la manada se precipitó al lago por el despeñadero y allí se ahogó. ¹⁴ Los que cuidaban los cerdos salieron huyendo y dieron la noticia en el pueblo y por los campos, y la gente fue a ver lo que había pasado. ¹⁵ Llegaron adonde estaba Jesús, y cuando vieron al que había estado poseído por la legión de demonios, sentado, vestido y en su sano juicio, tuvieron miedo. ¹⁶ Los que habían presenciado estos hechos le contaron a la gente lo que había sucedido con el endemoniado y con los cerdos. ¹⁷ Entonces la gente comenzó a suplicarle a Jesús que se fuera de la región. ¹⁸ Mientras subía Jesús a la barca, el que había estado endemoniado le rogaba que le permitiera acompañarlo. ¹⁹ Jesús no se lo permitió, sino que le dijo: —Vete a tu casa, a los de tu familia, y diles todo lo que el Señor ha hecho por ti y cómo te ha tenido compasión. ²⁰ Así que el hombre se fue y se puso a proclamar en Decápolis lo mucho que Jesús había hecho por él. Y toda la gente se quedó asombrada. (NVI)

¹ Καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν ² καὶ ἐξεληθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου εὐθὺς ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ ³ ὃς τὴν κατοίκησιν εἶχεν ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν καὶ οὐδὲ ἄλυσαι οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι ⁴ διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλὰκις πέδαις καὶ ἄλυσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπᾶσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τὰς ἄλυσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετριπθῆναι καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι. ⁵ καὶ διὰ παντὸς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἦν κράζων καὶ κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν λίθοις ⁶ Καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ ⁷ καὶ κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγει τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν μή με βασανίσῃς ⁸ ἔλεγεν γὰρ αὐτῷ. ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ⁹ καὶ ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν. τί ὄνομά σοί καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ. λεγιῶν ὄνομά μοι ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐσμεν ¹⁰ καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν πολλὰ ἵνα μὴ αὐτὰ ἀποστείλῃ ἔξω τῆς χώρας ¹¹ Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πρὸς τῷ ὄρει ἀγέλη χοίρων μεγάλη βοσκομένη. ¹² καὶ παρεκάλεισαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες. πέμψον ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὺς χοίρους ἵνα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσελθωμεν ¹³ καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐξεληθόντα τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους καὶ ὤρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν ὡς δισχίλιοι καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ ¹⁴ Καὶ οἱ βόσκοντες αὐτοὺς ἔφυγον καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς καὶ ἦλθον ἰδεῖν τί ἐστὶν τὸ γεγονός ¹⁵ καὶ ἔρχονται πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ θεωροῦσιν τὸν δαμιονιζόμενον καθήμενον ἱματισμένον καὶ σωφρονοῦντὰ τὸν ἐσχηκότα τὸν λεγιῶνά καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν ¹⁶ καὶ διηγήσαντο αὐτοῖς οἱ ἰδόντες πῶς ἐγένετο τῷ δαμιονιζομένῳ καὶ περὶ τῶν χοίρων ¹⁷ καὶ ἤρξαντο παρακαλεῖν αὐτὸν ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν ¹⁸ Καὶ ἐμβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ὁ δαμιονισθεὶς ἵνα μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦ ¹⁹ καὶ οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ. ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε ²⁰ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρῦσαι ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον (NA28)

Notes:

- A. Orientation & Narrative Context Reminder—Recall: Jesus is performing miracles¹ (4:35-5:43)².
- Over nature (4:35-41).
 - Over the demonic realm (5:1-20) ← This is where we are.

¹ We will notice these are much more detailed and longer than is typical of Mark.

² The placement of these miracle stories after the teaching block is natural: "for word and deed go hand in hand... Jesus both announces the coming of the kingdom of God in his teaching and demonstrates his authority and power by his actions (1:27; cf. 1:21-22, 25-26)." (Stein 2008).

- c. Over disease and death (5:21-43)³.
- d. In each of these events the audience (and the reader) is forced to make a judgement regarding Jesus⁴—the possibility of neutrality or apathy is thrown out the window, never to be recovered. “In each event the presence of Jesus constitutes an affirmation of life and the defeat of death. Confronted with his word of power, the man of faith finds himself in the presence of the Lord of Life.” (Lane 1974).
 - i. We will see more mixed reactions by those who witness these events.
 - ii. The disciples (*insiders*) will be forced to consider closer the overarching question: “Who is this Jesus?”.

B. Jesus’ authority over the demonic realm/powers (5:1-20)⁵:

a. The *other Side* (vv. 1-5)

- i. **The voyage and arrival:** Capernaum (teaching the crowds) → the Sea of Galilee (the storm) → The region of the Gerasenes⁶—specifically Gergesa (El Kursi), which is on the Eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and is located near a steep bank/cliff⁷ and some old tombs (cf. Map 3).
 - 1. After Jesus calms the storm, they [Jesus & the disciples] arrive on the other side of the lake/sea.
 - a. The *other side* is the region known as the Decapolis⁸ (cf. Map 2).
 - b. This region is predominantly Gentile, i.e., not Jewish⁹.
 - c. Jesus will resume His gentile ministry in 7:24-8:10 (and revisit the Decapolis in 7:31-37).
 - 2. As soon as Jesus gets out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit comes to meet Him¹⁰.
- ii. **The demoniac** [man possessed by an evil/unclean spirit]:
 - 1. Summary (v. 2):
 - a. Possessed by an evil/unclean spirit¹¹.
 - 2. Residence (vv. 2-3):
 - a. Came out from a cemetery,
 - b. Lived among the burial caves¹².
 - 3. Description (vv. 3-4):
 - a. He was very strong (cf. 4:37; note the emphasis on the storm’s strength),
 - i. Could not be restrained—even with chains!
 - 1. Often, he was restrained with chains and shackles.
 - a. He would snap the chains and smash the shackles.
 - ii. No one was strong enough to subdue him.
 - b. No human effort succeeded in binding him.
 - 4. Activity (v. 5):
 - a. Day and night he:
 - i. Wandered through the burial caves and in the hills,
 - ii. Howling,
 - iii. Cutting himself with sharp stones¹³.

³ “These [nature, realm of the demonic, and death] were seen in antiquity as the gamut of nonhuman forces that most threatened human life.” (Witherington III 2001). Modernity would agree (with the exception of the demonic realm, in some circles).

⁴ “The right judgment of Jesus cannot be made by following convention, for Jesus supersedes the powers of nature, demons, illness, death, and family influence. Confining Jesus within such categories and stereotypes is to misunderstand him; acknowledging his supremacy to such categories is the first act of discipleship.” (Edwards 2002).

⁵ Cf. 3:27.

⁶ Within the Gospels’ MSS tradition, three different locales are present: (1) **Gerasenes—Gerasa** was a city ≈ 35 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee (Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26; cf. Map 2); (2) **Gadarenes—Gadara** was a city ≈ 5 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee (Mt 8:28; cf. Maps 2 & 3); & (3) **Gergesenes—Gergesa (El Kursi)** is on the East side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Map 3) and is located near a steep bank [cliffs] (cf. Origen (Oden and Hall 1998); Eusebius (*Onomasticon*); and other MSS. The NT MSS tradition is beyond the scope of our discussion, but if anyone is super curious, we can talk Sunday; we will first have to generally discuss the making, copying, and transmitting of texts in antiquity. The only reason I bring up MSS at all, is due to the differing designations within the Synoptics). Both Gerasa & Gadara can function as a city or territory/region (*The territory of the Gerasenes* may function as a loose term for the entire Decapolis). For textual discussion (Mt/Mk/Lk) cf. (Metzger 1994); for discussion on the likelihood of Gergesa as the site cf. (Edwards 2002). In sum: (1) Gergesa best fits the Synoptic geographic description, and seems the likely specific location; (2) both Gerasenes and Gadarenes are functionally appropriate designations (Ex: *San Juan* can/does functionally denote the city, the municipality, or the entire NE metro area).

⁷ “About two miles south of Kursi/Gergesa a ridge extends from the eastern slopes of the Decapolis practically to the lake. The ridge terminates in a steep embankment and fits the description of 5:13.” (Edwards 2002).

⁸ “[The Decapolis] for Jesus was that area east of the Jordan [River] comprised of hellenistic Gentile cities loosely linked by various alliances and political associations. A Jewish minority lived there as well.” (Green, Brown and Perrin 2013). The Decapolis functioned more as a geographical designation (the Greek cities east of the Jordan River, from Damascus in the north to Philadelphia in the south), rather than a strict political entity.

⁹ Recall: Capernaum was in Galilee (predominantly Jewish).

¹⁰ “Jesus has just calmed a violent storm at sea (4:35-41); he now meets a man with an equally violent storm inside him. In both cases the power of Jesus prevails over chaos and destruction.” (Edwards 2002).

¹¹ Recall: For Mark, “unclean spirit” serves as essentially a synonym for “demon” (both terms are used in Mark ≈ the same frequency), and they are occasionally used interchangeably, e.g., 3:22, 30. Recall: the focus of Scripture is never on the demonic, nor is there enough information to develop an overly detailed systematic demonology—the focus is, and should remain, on God. However, we can infer two important pieces of information about demons from the descriptive title: *unclean spirit*. (1) They are spirit, i.e., supernatural—not things that we would classify with a *genus and species* (for *spirit*, don’t automatically think of them being necessarily invisible or smoky, ghost-like forms); (2) they are evil/unclean, i.e., opposed to God, opposite of God, and contaminate God’s good creation, including humanity. This passage in its entirety, also provides qualitative insight as to demons: their ultimate purpose is destruction of all that is good; and misery, pain, isolation, and delusion are their definitive characteristics and net effects (cf. 9:22, 26).

¹² There would be room to stand up and walk around in these.

¹³ “...attempting to destroy himself and bring to an end the torment of an unbearable existence.” (Lane 1974).

5. Note: how vv. 3-4 emphasize the demons' strength, while v. 5 emphasizes the man's (who is possessed by the demons) sad, pitiful, and ultimately self-destructive condition¹⁴—"The unending tragedy of the demoniac's situation ("night and day")—his unclean and death-filled residence ("among the tombs"), his lonely(?) existence ("among the tombs and on the mountains"), and his continual crying for help and/or in anger—is vividly painted for the reader" (Stein 2008).

iii. **Summary of the other side: Unclean**

1. Recall (briefly): Clean/Unclean¹⁵:

- a. "Purity" ritual and otherwise, was an important and meaningful aspect of 1st century Judaism in a number of ways—foundationally it was rooted in the OT¹⁶, e.g.:
- i. God commanded Aaron to (and teach the people how to): "distinguish between what is sacred [Holy] and what is common, between what is ceremonially unclean and what is [ceremonially] clean." (Lev 10:10).
 - ii. We can observe two sets of terms in this verse; each set contains a relatively **neutral term** and a **more loaded term**:
 1. **Holy & common**
 - a. Common—the ordinary spaces and things of the world that are accessible to human beings.
 - b. Holy—special spaces or things that have been "set apart" from the common as belonging in some special way to God.
 2. **Clean & unclean**
 - a. Clean—refers generally to a person or thing in its "normal," proper state.
 - b. Unclean—denotes that something has crossed the line from the normal state into a dangerous state of pollution.
 3. One term from each set could jointly describe any single object or person at a given time, e.g., food:
 - a. Common & clean, e.g., bread,
 - b. Common & unclean, e.g., pork,
 - c. Holy & clean, e.g., tithes & offerings,
 - d. Holy & unclean is generally an incompatible combination¹⁷.
 4. Objects or persons could (and did) change states, e.g., an Israelite (common & clean) who came into contact with an unclean item, would then be common & unclean¹⁸.
- b. Purity issues and regulations may seem to us petty, legalistic, and shallow (and sometimes the interpretations and applications of them were) but they were fundamental to, and essential for, the continued presence of a Holy God dwelling in the midst of an (unholy) Israel.¹⁹ They also affected both the collective's and the individual's ability to maintain positive religious and social standing and interactions with God and God's covenant people.

2. **The scenario Jesus and His disciples find themselves in: unclean as it can get!**

- a. Setting: Gentile territory²⁰—unclean by definition & large herd of pigs²¹ (v. 11)—unclean.
- b. Encounter an unclean man²²; possessed by a legion of unclean spirits; who lives in burial caves—comes into contact with the dead (unclean).

¹⁴ "[This is] one of the most lamentable stories of human wretchedness in the Bible. He is a terror to himself and others..." (Edwards 2002).

¹⁵ Primarily summarized and paraphrased material from (Green, Brown and Perrin 2013).

¹⁶ Also: numerous expressions, implications, and applications of purity regulation, ritual, and status arose from tradition and interpretation, which were active in Jesus' day.

¹⁷ With the exception of special circumstances (cf. Num 19).

¹⁸ The 'rules and regulations' involving the movement between categorical states is involved and detailed to say the least. I will attempt to highlight them on an as needed basis.

¹⁹ "It was the duty of Israel to preserve the "holy" from being profaned and used as "common," or from being brought into contact with the impure (the "unclean"), so that the source of holiness, God, would continue to show favor toward Israel and would not be provoked either to withdraw from the people or consume them... God's holiness would not tolerate the presence of defilement or abomination in the holy land that God had chosen for himself and for his people as a dwelling place. God's presence thus also brought significant danger, lest Israel affront the Holy God with defilements and uncleanness, resulting in disasters for Israel (Lev 26:14-33)... The law of Moses, the Torah, essentially was instruction about how to live as a holy nation in the presence of a Holy God." (Green, Brown and Perrin 2013).

²⁰ and Hellenistic (cf. the following note). Without diverging into the history, of the previous few centuries, of the Decapolis region, I will summarize (from Josephus): the cities were reestablished as showcase cities of (pagan) Hellenistic culture and ideals.

²¹ The pig as food was unclean (cf. Lev 11:7-8, 24-26; Deut 14:8); also, "the pig, domestic or wild, was forbidden to Jews. This made it not only useless, but a nuisance as a threat to agriculture." (Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III 1998) (cf. Ps 80:13); Jews were not even allowed to raise pigs for others. Pigs (and dogs) are also associated with negative connotations in a variety of ways (cf. Prov 11:22; Mt 7:6; 2 Pet 2:22). Pigs (and dogs) are often symbols of filth and paganism (cf. Is 65:4; 66:3, 17). By Jesus' day the association of pigs with the memory of the Seleucids, particularly Antiochus Epiphanes, was vivid (they were forced to sacrifice and eat pigs, and were subjected to terrible tortures)—Antiochus was seen as one of the more evil men in the history of the world by many Jews in Jesus' day (cf. 2 Macc. 6-7).

²² If he was Gentile (which is likely) he was by definition unclean. If he was Jewish his dwelling in the tombs and contact with the dead rendered him unclean and possibly/probably 'cut off from Israel' (cf. Num 19:11-16, 20-22).

b. **Jesus encounters the demoniac and casts out the demons (vv. 6-13)²³.**

i. *The man saw Jesus from a distance and ran to meet Him.*

1. Did the man initiate the approach, contrary to the demons' desire?²⁴

Possibilities:

- a. The man has heard of Jesus' power to exorcise demons (1:23-27, 32-34, 39; 3:7-11, 22-27).
 - b. Because the demons knew Jesus was "the Son of the Most High God" (v. 7), the man knew as well, and knew that Jesus could help him.
 - c. The man senses that Jesus might be able to help him.
 - d. The man was desperate and simply hoped Jesus might be able to help him.
2. Did the demons initiate the approach, contrary to the man's desire?
- a. The maneuver was defensive. The demons knew Jesus was "the Son of the Most High God" (5:7; cf. 1:23-24, 34; 3:11) and that He would "interfere" with them and had the power to "torture" them (5:7; cf. 1:13, 23-26; esp. 3:27), and they falsely hoped to delay and minimize their fate (cf. below) by begging and pleading with Jesus.
3. Did the man and demons both desire to approach Jesus? If so for similar or different reasons?
4. It is hard to tell; Mark doesn't inform us. Regardless, the man possessed by demons sees Jesus and runs to meet Jesus. This happens immediately after Jesus gets out of the boat.

ii. **The power and authority of Jesus over the demons (vv. 6-13):**

1. *Jesus says: "Come out of the man, you evil spirit". (v. 8)*
- a. Similarly, as with the calming of the storm (v. 39), Jesus simply speaks²⁵—He doesn't just know how to calm storms & cast out demons; or possess knowledge that allows Him to manipulate them into submission; or call upon God; rather, the authority and effectual power is Himself (cf. 3:27).
 - b. Similarly, as with the calming of the storm, Jesus again does something only God can do (cf. 3:22-30 & recall our corresponding study—notes will eventually be available).
2. *[upon encountering Jesus, the demoniac] bowed low before him [Jesus].*
- a. Bowed/knelt down (προσεκύνησεν, *prosekynēsen*) is here: an act of concession on the demons' part, knowing who Jesus really is and the superior power He therefore has, i.e., the demons know that a showdown *vis-à-vis* Jesus is a no-contest²⁶. Bowing down is an act of submission before a superior authority²⁷, in this case their conqueror.
3. *With a shriek, he screamed:*
- a. *"Why are you interfering²⁸ with me..."*
 - i. Recall: Mark highlights the fact that Jesus' mission is not just a call to morality or a revival and/or religious or political movement; rather, He [Jesus] is continually engaged in an assault against the root enemy: supernatural powers opposed to God [evil powers], i.e., Satan and the demonic realm (cf. 1:12-13, 23-28, 34, 39; 3:11-12, 15, 27 thus far—more to come).
 - b. *...Jesus, Son of the Most High God²⁹?...*
 - i. Recall: the demons' supernatural knowledge causes them to recognize Jesus as "Son of the Most High God", and to recognize His authority over them. The confession is accurate, but it is not salvation seeking faith, i.e., they correctly identify Jesus but do not appropriately repent and orient themselves accordingly (cf. Jas 2:19). For a similar reluctant confession, cf. Phil 2:10-11.
 - c. *...In the name of God³⁰, I beg you, don't torture³¹ me!"*
 - i. They recognize Jesus has the power and authority to do what He desires with them, and that His intentions are ultimately to their destruction.
 - ii. Their only option is to **beg**, notice the frequency of this action!
4. *Jesus demanded, "What is your [the demon(s)'] name³²?"*

Recall: our discussions in the past where we went into more detail. Unfortunately, this was before notes were available...I'm working on that!

²³ V. 2's narrative is continued in v. 6, after being interrupted by the description of the demoniac (vv. 3-5).

²⁴ Cf. (Stein 2008).

²⁵ "He speaks and the demons are expelled; his word is deed." (Edwards 2002).

²⁶ Not "worshiped", *contra* KJV, NKJV, & RSV. "It is too early in the relationship for [worship]." (Stein 2008).

²⁷ For a diverse sampling, cf. Gen 17:3; Dan 3:5; Mt 2:11; 4:9; 18:26; Phil 2:9-11.

²⁸ Recall: this idiom connotes: *we have nothing in common, so go and leave me/us alone*; or more contemporarily & colloquially: *mind your own business*.

²⁹ "In Judaism, "Most High God" is an epithet emphasizing the transcendence and exaltation of Israel's God over pagan gods and goddesses and rival powers...designating Jesus as the Son of the one true God" (Edwards 2002). "...is not a messianic designation but a divine one" (Lane 1974).

³⁰ "He [the demon] senses that he is to be punished and employs the strongest adjuration that he knows. He invokes God's protection, but the adjuration is without force, for Jesus is the Son of God." (Lane 1974).

³¹ This can refer to (1) their final judgement and destruction; which is how Matthew and Luke appear to understand it (Mt 8:29; Lk 8:31; cf. Mk 1:24; Rev 20:10); (2) present torture of exile from their habitation, i.e., the man; (3) both 1 & 2—"The binding of the strong man in 3:27 indicates that we should see no sharp distinction between the present binding and the final destruction of the demons." (Stein 2008).

³² It is common knowledge (and often emphasized—which is the only reason I bring it up) that in ancient "exorcism formulae" as recorded in a vast array of literature from antiquity, to *know the name* of the one being exorcised, or the one doing the exorcising, provides advantageous power to the party in the *know*. This is **not** what

- a. *he [the demon(s)] replied, “My name is Legion³³, because there are many of us inside this man.”³⁴*
 - i. Jesus has full authority—when He asks a question, He gets an answer.
 - ii. Those with Jesus (and Mark’s readers) get an insight as to the quantitative magnitude and strength of the possession, i.e., a multitude of demons³⁵, and of course the corresponding witness to the superior strength of Jesus.
5. *Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place... “[but to] send us into those pigs (≈2,000 pigs (v. 13))”, the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.”*
 - a. Much is unclear and/or left unexplained, e.g., the reason the demons’ request to enter the pigs(?)³⁶.
 - b. What is clear, and is the primary point, is that: all the demons could do is **beg** Jesus, as they are utterly under His authority.
6. *Jesus gave them permission³⁷.*
 - a. Jesus is in complete charge and command.
 - i. The demons **beg**; they do not negotiate—they have no negotiating weight.
 - ii. “There is no “war” or “battle” between Jesus and the demons. From beginning to end, the scene envisions the surrender and judgment of a vanquished enemy.” (Stein 2008).
 - b. The demons leave the man³⁸ → enter the pigs → destroy the pigs³⁹.
- c. **The reaction of the Gerasenes (vv. 14-17):**
 - i. The news of this event naturally spread!
 1. The herdsmen fled/ran (in fear) and spread the news from the site of the event to, and in, the nearby town⁴⁰ and the countryside.
 2. People then, rushed out to see what had happened, and a crowd soon gathered around Jesus⁴¹.
 - a. They came to see Jesus—the cause of the observed and reported two-stage effect (the cause of the effect: the demons cast out of the man—the cause of the effect: the destruction of the pigs).
 - ii. They saw, i.e., what caught their attention, and caused their fear was:⁴²
 1. NOT the 2,000 dead pigs in the water,
 2. But rather: the cause (Jesus) of the new sane state of the man who was formerly possessed⁴³.
 - a. He was fully clothed (which implies he was formerly scantily clad or nude).
 - b. He was perfectly sane, as opposed to his former state: living in a cemetery amongst dead bodies; being restrained by chains and shackles (the cause for restraint was probably due to his proneness to hurt himself and others(?)); breaking those chains and shackles; day and night wandering among burial caves and in the hills (an existence outside of community, family, and friends—probably very isolated and lonely) and howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.
 - c. Visibly not possessed by demon(s) anymore

Jesus is doing—He is not employing the demons’ name in an exorcistic formula. Rather, as we shall see by the ‘name’ given, it is to highlight and demonstrate Jesus’ power and authority over the demons—vastly plural.

³³ A legion was a famed and feared Roman military unit consisting of ≈5,000-6,000 men (primarily infantry and some cavalry), and the wild boar was the emblem of the Roman legion stationed in Palestine, so it is natural to see an allusion here to the Roman occupation—the control and domination of the demons over the man resembles the control and domination of the Romans over the region. The literature is divided on this, with solid arguments both ways. Whether this is an actual allusion or not, is an interesting question, but it is not Mark’s primary point—the primary point is that the man was possessed by not one, but a multitude of demons (as Mark’s comment: “because there are many of us inside this man” highlights), and Jesus possesses unquestionable authority and strength over the demonic legion.

³⁴ *Legion*, probably serves as both a name and a description.

³⁵ Vv. 3-4 provide a qualitative emphasis as to the strength of the possession.

³⁶ Numerous explanations or speculations can be found in the literature, all beyond the scope of our discussion. There are some other parts of scripture and Jewish literature that could potentially help us arrive at more informed speculation, but I think this rabbit trail may prove to lead us farther astray, rather than help us with this immediate passage. Mark, Matthew, and Luke don’t provide much as far as insight into how/if they understood the request.

³⁷ Again, why Jesus grants the demons’ request is not explained by Mark, Matthew, or Luke—all we can do is speculate. Two possibilities worth noting are: [1] Jesus judged this to be a teachable moment—the destruction of the pigs provided a tangible and graphic experience of—(1) the destructive nature of the demonic (everything not aligned with God)—the fate of the pigs was the eventual fate of the man if the demons remained in him; (2) the vast number of demons under the authority of Jesus (if there existed a one-to-one correspondence between demons and pigs, then there were ≈2,000 demons!)—all of which was experientially rooted firmly in history, for all who witnessed the event and/or the effects of the event. [2] Timing within salvation history: “...the permission to enter the pigs is an admission that the last judgment is not yet taking place. The demons are still free to do their destructive work. Nevertheless, wherever the King is present he brings the kingdom and frees people from the power of evil.” (Ryken, Wilhoit and Longman III 1998).

³⁸ “Jesus is sufficiently powerful that the demon at once understands that it must now leave its victim. An explicit command is scarcely necessary, and comes almost as an after-thought. It is put in the form of a subordinate clause...” (Lane 1974).

³⁹ Again, much is unknown, e.g., were the demons destroyed with the pigs(?). Whether they were or weren’t at the moment, the event, at the least, vividly foreshadowed the demons’ (and all of evil’s) ultimate defeat/fate under the authority of Jesus/God.

⁴⁰ Most likely Gergesa (§ B.a.i. above; cf. Map 3).

⁴¹ “And they came to Jesus” (5:15 ESV); “When they came to Jesus” (5:15 NIV).

⁴² “Their fear was no doubt caused by the presence of one with power to perform such a miracle.” (Wessel 1984).

⁴³ “The stark contrast between the present condition of the man and his former pathetic existence, as described in 5:3-5, reveals that something great has happened. A “great calm” (cf. 4:39) had come over his former, stormy existence.” (Stein 2008).

3. Result: **“they were all afraid.”**⁴⁴
- iii. The crowd after seeing the man, and being told more about the pigs⁴⁵, in fear, pleaded with Jesus to “go away and leave them alone.”⁴⁶
1. The dead pigs & the now clothed and sane man were not what primarily and greatly troubled the crowd.
 - a. They do not attempt to regain what was lost with the pigs (which would have been a substantial economic loss). They are concerned with what caused their destruction—the casting out of the demons from the man.
 - b. While they are significantly more shocked with the now non-demon possessed man than they are with the dead pigs, they don’t plead with him to leave. They are more concerned with what caused his current state, i.e., the cause of the demons being cast out—Jesus.
 2. Jesus is terrifying (v. 15) and amazing (v. 20) to them⁴⁷, and they plead with Him to not just spatially go away, i.e., distance Himself, but to interactionally leave them alone, i.e., have nothing to do with them⁴⁸.
 - a. Like the disciples fearing Jesus’ actions more than the fierce storm, the crowd fears Jesus’ actions more than a fierce demoniac.
- d. **The reaction of the formerly demon possessed man & his relationship with Jesus (vv. 18-20):**
- i. *He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane*⁴⁹
 - ii. He begged to go with Jesus.
 - iii. Jesus denies his request⁵⁰ to come with Him⁵¹, but Jesus gives Him a different (and new) way to be a follower of Jesus:
 1. Go home to your family⁵²,
 2. And tell them:
 - a. everything the Lord has done for you⁵³,
 - i. The man proclaimed what Jesus⁵⁴ had done for him.
 - b. And how merciful he has been.
 - iv. The man immediately obeys Jesus,
 1. And everyone (throughout the Decapolis⁵⁵) was amazed⁵⁶ at what he told them!
 - a. In Mark, this man was the first missionary to the Gentiles.
- e. **Conclusion: Jesus has authority over the demonic realm.**
- i. Subplots:
 1. Jesus (the Messiah of Israel) is for Jews and gentiles, i.e., everyone!
 - a. In Mark, this is the first clear encounter between Jesus and gentiles.
 - b. Jesus’ command to the former demoniac both foreshadows Jesus’ subsequent mission in gentile territory (7:24-8:10), and the commission to the gentile world (cf. 13:10; 14:9; Mt 28:18-20).
 2. Those with Jesus once again face danger but witness epiphany—Jesus doing what only God does.
 3. We see the demonic (broadly: anything opposed or not aligned with God) for what it really is: utter destruction⁵⁷.
 4. The function of demonic possession⁵⁸: we get a graphic case study of mankind “without Jesus”, i.e., the man possessed by the demons & mankind “with Jesus”, i.e., the man free of the demons.

⁴⁴ “...such fear is not respect for God, but a debilitating and paralyzing dread.” (Bock 2005).

⁴⁵ “Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man-- and told about the pigs as well.” (5:16 NIV).

⁴⁶ “There are some interesting similarities between the reaction of the townspeople and that of the demons. Both come to Jesus (5:6 and 14-15), react in fear (5:7 and 15), and plead with Jesus to do something (5:7, 10, and 17).” (Stein 2008). Both reactions stem from the realization of Jesus’ authority and result in fear.

⁴⁷ “Again notice that amazement and fear do not equal full or true faith in Jesus...But the ability to impress a crowd and the ability to call out and make disciples are not one and the same.” (Witherington III 2001).

⁴⁸ “As exciting as this should have been however, those in the Decapolis wanted nothing to do with such an unpredictable divine presence or its consequences, so they asked Jesus to leave.” (Bock 2005).

⁴⁹ “That is a picture of discipleship and salvation: a restored individual sitting at the feet of Jesus.” (Edwards 2002).

⁵⁰ Notice how Jesus’ denial of a request (the man’s to come with Him (v. 18)) does not necessarily imply that the request was *wrong*, nor does it necessarily imply that Jesus automatically grants all *right* requests. Similarly, when Jesus accedes to a request (the demons’ request to enter the pigs (vv. 10-12)), this does not necessarily imply that the request was *right*, nor does it necessarily imply that Jesus automatically disallows all *wrong* requests (or their consequences).

⁵¹ “Due to the similarity in language with 3:14, this is a request to join the Twelve...He is commissioned instead to be a missionary to his own people.” (Stein 2008).

⁵² Jesus restored the man’s ability to live amongst his family and friends; contrast this with his former existence: living amongst the dead, uncontrollable, screaming, and hurting himself.

⁵³ This is the man’s primary task.

⁵⁴ Jesus is Lord (cf. 1:3; 2:28; more to come in Mark; & Lk 8:39 where Luke has “God” instead of “Lord”)! Recall: previous discussions on “Lord”.

⁵⁵ Jesus will return to the Decapolis (7:31-8:10).

⁵⁶ As we have seen and will continue to see, “amazement”/“to marvel” is a typical response to Jesus’ miracles. However, this initially uniform response diverges into very different reactions (recall the ‘soils’ in 4:1-20).

⁵⁷ “The fate of the swine demonstrates the ultimate intention of the demons with respect to the man they had possessed. It is their purpose to destroy the creation of God, and halted in their destruction of a man, they fulfilled their purpose with the swine.” (Lane 1974).

⁵⁸ “This account, more graphically than any other in the Gospels, indicates that the function of demonic possession is to distort and destroy the image of God in man.” (Lane 1974)

Or stated another way: mankind in the state [reality] it was created for—in relation with God & mankind in the state [delusion]—separated from God.

- a. I encourage you to go back and reread the account focusing on this aspect.
- ii. Mark has introduced Jesus' power over the demonic throughout his Gospel thus far via exorcism accounts and summaries (cf. 1-23-28, 32-34, 39; 3:7-12) and explanation (cf. 3:22-27), and we will continue to see Jesus' power over the demonic; this account however, functions as a detailed and vivid climax in some ways to the topic. Mark highlights the demons':
 1. Great strength (vv.3-4),
 2. Great quantity (vv. 9, 13),
 3. Destructive character (vv. 3, 5, 13).
 4. Mark also highlights that Jesus doesn't have 'home-court advantage', in fact the opposite—the Jewish Messiah (1:1) is in the most unclean Jewish setting possible; the Son of God (1:1) is in conflict with a powerful demonic Legion—despite all of this, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God has complete authority and power⁵⁹—at this point, the portrait of Jesus has certainly moved past the initial sketch of a prophet and/or miracle worker, and even the rounded shades of the messiah(s) of expectation; we now, can't ignore the unmistakable tones and brush-strokes of the monotheistic God of Israel (these will of course become more pronounced) not just *with* Jesus, but intrinsic to Jesus.
- iii. Jesus has authority over, and is Lord of: powerful storms [forces of nature] and powerful legions of demons [forces of the supernatural]—things mankind is subject to—things only God has dominion over—Jesus of Nazareth has dominion over⁶⁰.
 1. The question the disciples asked and were left with after the calming of the storm (the night before): “Who is this man? Even the wind and waves obey him” is answered in part: Jesus is the mighty Lord and conqueror of demons, and is also compounded: “Who is this man? Even the wind, waves, and legions of demons obey him.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ “Yet this strong man, possessed by the Strong Man's Legion, was about to be dispossessed by the Stronger Man.” (Witherington III 2001).

⁶⁰ “Jesus had demonstrated his power over the forces of nature by stilling the winds and waves. Now he demonstrates his power over the forces of evil by casting out demons from a possessed man. The two stories go together. They reveal that Jesus is truly divine.” (Wessel 1984).

⁶¹ And they [at least the former demoniac at this point...others to follow] must reflect and ponder an additional emerging concept: “Everything the Lord has done for you, and how merciful he has been”.