

## The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Two-Demon Possessed Men Healed (Part Two)

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Of the references in the gospels to miracles performed on demon-possessed people, only a few are personal, such as the exorcism found in the parallel accounts of Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; and Luke 8:26-39. In this case, it is emphasized that it was an actual demonic possession, not just demonic influence. Mark and Luke describe one of the demon-possessed men quite graphically, while Matthew includes a less prominent companion who was similarly afflicted. With a word of command, Christ was able to deliver these two men from the terrible uncleanness that demons cause.

The working of this miracle by the Word of God should give us a deep respect for and submission to God's commands. Divine commands are not, as the world believes, to take the joy out of life, but they are the means by which we can gain great blessings and escape great burdens. The apostle John clarifies, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are *not* burdensome" (I John 5:3).

1. Why are both the men and the demons unclean? Mark 5:2; Luke 8:29.

**Comment:** Christ was met by the unclean men coming out of the tombs. These rock-hewn tombs were repulsive to the Jews and to dwell in them was deemed a sign of insanity. Because of the remains of the dead they contained, they were shunned by the Jews as unclean (Matthew 23:27). Under the Old Covenant, one could be physically defiled by touching a dead body. Even when a person died in a tent, the whole tent was regarded as unclean (Numbers 19:11, 14).

*Unclean* in Scripture means "to be defiled, polluted, unhealthy, or unfit," and refers to foods that are unfit, defilement of religious character, and moral or spiritual impurity. The word "defilement" describes a sinful and unfit condition (Isaiah 6:5). The Old Testament distinguishes between what is clean and helpful and what is unclean and unacceptable (Leviticus 10:10). The New Testament deals more with the spiritual application and lists uncleanness or moral defilement along with fornication and other sins as "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21).

In the gospels, "unclean" describes those who are possessed by demonic spirits through constant submission to evil. Uncleanness represents sin, and sin separates man from God. Because of sin, "we are all like an unclean thing" (Isaiah 64:6). Believers are not called to uncleanness but to live in holiness (I Thessalonians 4:7). We are not to yield our members to uncleanness but to righteousness and holiness (Romans 6:19).

The teaching about uncleanness springs from the concept of God's holiness (Leviticus 11:44-45). It is a miracle in itself that freedom from uncleanness and guilt is possible through God's grace. Holiness within, purity of heart, is possible through the exercise of faith in Christ's redemptive work and obedience to His truth.

2. What role does God's Word play in this exorcism? Matthew 8:32; Mark 5:8, 13.

**Comment:** There is great power in the Word of God (Proverbs 30:5). It can transform a person dramatically (Luke 4:4), working mightily in those who have faith in Christ (I Thessalonians 2:13). No one could have as big a problem as these men possessed by a legion of demons. Nevertheless, it took only a few words from Jesus to deliver them. In Luke 4:35-36 is another example of Jesus using the power of God's Word to exorcise demons:

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

The world tried many ways to restrain and control the two demon-possessed men in Gadara, but the only effective solution was God's power through Christ. Man's idea was to start on the outside with chains and other bonds, but Jesus began on the inside with the Word of God, which is not chained (II Timothy 2:9). Using their various "programs" to deal with evil, people only treat the symptoms. The best they can do is whitewash the outside. Christ corrects the problem at the source. So Christ is the solution, the remedy for the sin. He cleans out the inside, which is the best way to correct the problem on the outside.

When we study and accept the Word of God, we draw closer to the One who can give us access to the knowledge and power to conquer our spiritual enemy. Hebrews 4:12-13 reads:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

The day of accountability is coming—at Christ's return with power and authority—when all people, as well as Satan and all his demons, will be forced to submit to the Word of God (Revelation 19:11-16).

We will continue to analyze this healing miracle in Part Three.