

## The Demoniacs

It is especially difficult to tell my story, partly because of the painful memories but even more so because of the inevitable questions of, “Why?” If I had been healed of a crippled hand or leprosy, it would have been easier, because those are things you are either born with or contract by contagion. But despite the shame and remorse I feel in the recollection, I cannot help telling, because of the wonderful liberation, completely undeserved and unexpected, and even more because it is a message of hope to many.

I have been told that in your day demons are not recognized by many people. In my day they were known but underestimated. They gain authority over those who submit to them. Why would someone do that, you ask? For the benefits, of course. You see, I came from a very religious family. My parents regularly gave sacrifices at the pagan temple to ensure the success of their business. The results they got seemed trivial and unreliable to me. So I made a diligent study of more powerful practices, namely the religions of the ancient Canaanites. What was the source of real power? Ritual sex and human sacrifice. I’d rather not go into the details but leave it at that.

My associate and I found that we could control other people and certain events and outcomes, at no cost to ourselves – so we thought. We did not see the bondage as it tightened around us until, like the coils of a giant serpent, the evil spirits had trapped us with no escape. What did we do at that point? The conflict between what was left of my own will and the power of the unclean beings controlling me led me to separate from society and harm myself out of remorse and a desire to die.

When Jesus suddenly appeared, the demons knew Him instantly and called out, pleading that He not torture them. I had never perceived them to be afraid of anything before and sensed that something big was about to happen. They bargained with Him for permission to enter a herd of pigs. I later learned that He allowed this to reveal the hearts of my neighbors. The pigs apparently got the death wish that I had felt and stampeded into the lake and died.

Suddenly I was free, by the grace of God and the power of Jesus. He began to teach me and the lights came on in my head, I repented of my many sins and He forgave me. I learned things that had been hidden from me. There were many “Aha!” moments. I wanted to stay with Him and learn more forever. But He asked me to go and tell my story. And I found out quick enough why it was so crucial that I do so. I also realized that although I had made a complete mess of my life and the lives of many others, He had a job for me, for which I was uniquely suited – this was REAL power, the power to speak truth in love and bring others to the source of life and meaning.

If a person in your community, seemingly hopeless and dangerous, were suddenly transformed into a rational, gentle, caring human being, would you not be glad? Why not at least for the sake of community safety if not the well-being of that individual? What was their reaction? The economy! The loss of the pigs was the only thing they cared about! And perhaps, looking a little further down the road, there would be concern on the part of buyers of pork that meat offered to idols might be toxic!

I learned that the God Who made heaven and earth, Who chose the descendants of Abraham to produce a Savior, intended the salvation He would bring for all people. Do you obey Him, loving Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength? If not, you are obeying the enemy, who is the deceiver and the accuser, and so doing you are allowing his servants authority in your life. Once trapped, there is nothing that can liberate you but the power of God Himself. Call out to Him, He will answer.

Discussion Questions [http://www.rossolson.org/drama/other\\_bible/demoniac\\_discussion.pdf](http://www.rossolson.org/drama/other_bible/demoniac_discussion.pdf)

Based on Matthew 8:28 – 9:1, Mark 5:1 – 20, Luke 8:26 – 39, and

“Satan and Demons: A Biblical Perspective” [http://www.rossolson.org/new\\_age/satan.pdf](http://www.rossolson.org/new_age/satan.pdf)