

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 13, Jesus Over the Supernatural

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Passage: Mark 5:1-20

Big idea: Mark 5:1-20 shows us Jesus' Divine Authority over the chaos of hell.



Have you ever been reading through the Bible and gotten stuck in a passage? Where you just aren't sure what you are reading? Unsure why a story or section would be included?

I think that many of us, myself included, ask those questions each time we engage the bible.

So, what I want to do, is to go through this passage of Mark and show you how you can go about studying the Bible for yourself - sometimes we just need a reminder, or a little bit of a boost in the right direction with some new tools.

As we read through the gospel of Mark, there are several things to point out. These are prompted by Mark the author in an attempt to draw your attention to the main theme of Mark's gospel, as well as the sub-themes that act as support.

The main theme of the gospel of Mark is the Kingdom of God.

Mark 1.1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

The sub-themes that support the Kingdom of God are:

1. Jesus is God, based on what He does (i.e. Miracles, signs, wonders)
2. The Son of Man motif
3. The Messianic secret (Jesus quiet nature about who He is)
4. Jesus' universal & exclusive call of discipleship
5. The teachings of Jesus

So, with those themes in our minds, lets get into the passage, and the Bid Idea for Mark 5.1-20.

BIG IDEA
Mark 5:1-20 shows us
Jesus' Divine Authority
over the chaos of hell.



¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis[b] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Mark 5.1-20

In last week’s passage, Pastor Kevin took us through Jesus calming the storm in the boat. In this passage we saw Jesus having authority over creation just by his very word. The sea was a metaphor of chaos for the Jewish people, as the sea can shift and change abruptly. Jesus having control over the sea, of course astounds the disciples in the boat who feared for their lives, but they now also are afraid by the knowledge that creation obeys Jesus.

So, this sets helps our understanding of the context of Mark 5.1-20. Understanding the context is very important and is where we should begin when studying scripture.

Question #1: What is the Context?

Are there any repeated phrases, or words that stick out to you?

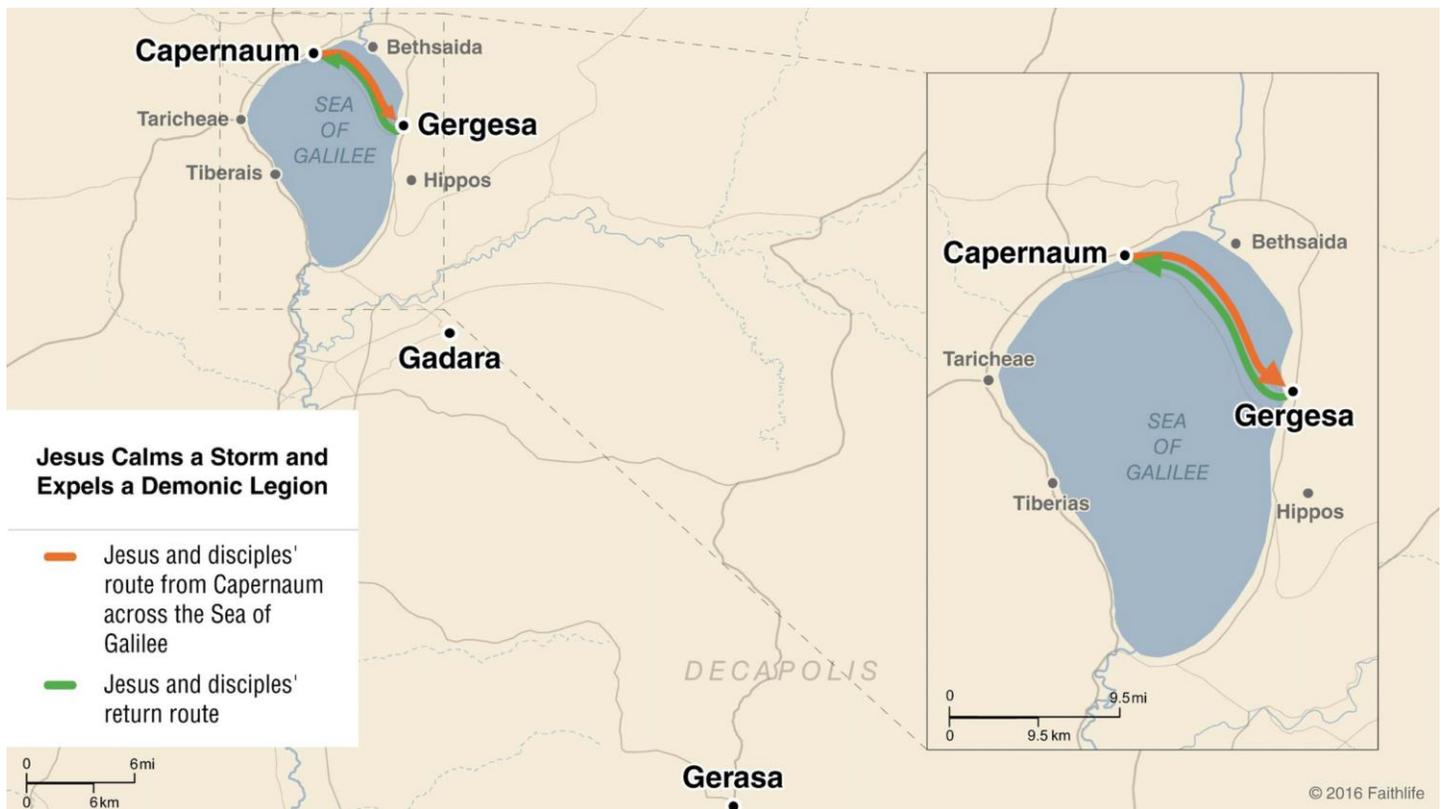
Are there any locations mentioned in the passage?

What Style of Writing is this Passage (genre)?

This narrative is from the early part of Jesus’ earthly ministry. He has already done miracles, already dispelled an unclean spirit, and recently healed physically.

Mark 5.1, “¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.”

The region where Jesus is during this passage is in the Middle East, the region of the Gerasenes.



Jesus has now come from Capernaum across the sea of Galilee, into this eastern region, also known as the Decapolis. It was a largely Gentile region where several Roman legions and garrisons would have been placed.

Mark 5.2-3, “When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.”

The tombs on the outside of the city were a pretty sad place. For the Jews, the issue of ritual uncleanness was very important, and being near tombs and unclean spirits was a big deal.

Tombs were where the dead were buried, but also where those who were deranged or deformed were sent to live. Away, or on the outskirts of society.

Mark 5.4-5, “For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.”

We see that directly after Jesus gets out of the boat, the demon possessed man comes toward him and falls at his feet.

Then we are given a description of this demon possessed man’s behaviour. The language used to describe the lack of ability to subdue him is quite graphic. The word used is *damazo*, which translates to taming a wild animal. The wild animals in this geographic location are lions, wolves, and bears. These animals would kill people.

The chains and shackles could not contain him, and due to the demonic invasion, this man was constantly cutting himself with stones. A lot of demonic worship involves blood, as a show of the sacrifice of life to the devil. So, there is a possibility that this is why the man was cutting himself. Or, that the demon just wanted to physically torment this man with as much psychological, emotional, and societal torment as possible.

From what we understand about the devil and the demonic officers of hell, Satan was a murderer from the beginning. His whole purpose is to destroy the image and kingdom of God in the world and because the devil has no way to deface God and his power and glory, the next best thing to is try and destroy those who are made in His image and likeness.

As we continue to read and study this passage, we must remember this important truth: The Bible cannot mean to us what it did not mean to them.

This then leads us to the next question we should ask:

Question #2:

Who is the original audience? What does it mean to them?

Who is speaking?

Who are they speaking to?

What key themes from the whole of the book are present?

Mark was writing down the eyewitness accounts of Peter, an apostle of Jesus, and writing to Roman Christians as a way for them to hear and preach the gospel, and to encourage them that Jesus is God.

Mark 5.6-7, “When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won’t torture me!’”

The demons see Jesus and fall down but try to undermine Jesus by rightly naming him publicly. This is an attempt to get authority over Him, but they also are afraid of Jesus and His authority.

This demon is forced to bow in worship and in submission, in realizing that he is lower than Jesus. The word that is used here reveals that the evil spirit forced the man to fall on his knees. It is the Greek word *proskyneō*, where we get the word prostrate, but it is the idea of a dog coming and licking his master’s hand.

The enemy will kneel. He knows his place before Christ, he knows that they will bow because they are subject to his authority and kingdom rule.

The demon then tries to fling this back at Jesus by again using his name, trying to get the advantage by announcing Jesus’ true identity, in a hope to have Jesus submit to him.

Mark 5.8-9, “For Jesus had said to him, ‘Come out of this man, you evil spirit!’ Then Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘My name is Legion,’ he replied, ‘for we are many.’”

Jesus then commands the evil spirits to come out of the man.

By Jesus questioning the name 'Legions' he puts the demons under His authority. He then exercises His authority by telling the evil spirits to leave the man.

A legion was a large Roman military grouping which numbered around 5,500 soldiers. While we cannot know if the legion of demons was exactly that number, we are to be shocked at the number in this text, and to see that this man was bound, humanly speaking, by insurmountable odds.

Question #3: What does this passage say about God/Christ/Theology?

Where Does God/Jesus do something significant?

What Does God/Jesus Do?

Mark 5:10-12, "And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.'"

Again, we see one of those repeated words, **begged**. The word in Greek is *parekalei*, which is to strongly plead with earnest.

The demon does not want to be displaced, and does not want to be sent away from the region. Surprisingly, Jesus grants this request and sends him into nearby pigs.

Mark 5:13, "He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned."

Why were the demons concerned about being cast into the pigs as opposed to be cast out?

The implication that I see here is that Jesus has the authority to end them from existence, but he doesn't torment them. For reasons I cannot explain, Jesus gives them permission.

Notice the implications of their request and their destination.

The unclean spirits are sent into unclean animals, and the multiple (possible thousands) of spirits, are driven into pigs of multiples.

Question #4: **What does this passage say about humanity?**

What is the Human Condition Shown?

What is the Response of Humanity?

Mark 5.14-15, “Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.”

The response of the people here is fear, they are petrified really, wondering how this possessed man - who they would have known, and been afraid of, this man who was hopeless, beyond human, an outsider and outcast - how could he possibly be made right?

Mark 5.16-17, “Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.”

Because they couldn't explain what they had seen their fear gets in the way, they beg Jesus to leave. Their issue in Mark's gospel is not about the cost of the loss of pigs, their issue is with how Jesus dealt with the improbable, and to them, the impossible. They fear what they cannot explain, and so, they ask Jesus to leave.

Question #5: **How do we apply this passage to our lives?**

What situations does this passage speak to in life?

What Truths should we trust about God from these verses?

Mark 5.18, “As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.”

As Jesus was getting back in the boat, the man who was possessed wanted to join.

Jesus did not let him.

Inside this encounter we have read three requests - all three involve begging Jesus.

1. The demons begging Jesus to send them into pigs
2. Those who tended the pigs, begging Jesus to leave
3. The previously demon possessed man, now healed, begging to follow Jesus

The man begs for a good thing, to go with Jesus, but Jesus denies him for greater Kingdom impact.

Before we assume any salvation implications wrongly into this text, let’s continue.

Mark .19-20, “Jesus did not let him, but said, ‘Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”

Jesus’ response is interesting, He tells the man:
go back to where you were ostracized from
go back to your family
go back to your people

Jesus commissions the man to preach the gospel and be a Kingdom witness.

So, the man did, and his family and his people were amazed.

We have seen that Jesus has the authority over the chaos of hell, and have walked through some questions, but I want to make sure that you have the answers and are able to use this process for your own future Bible study.

You can see the Questions and Answers below:

Question #1: What is the Context?

Are there any repeated phrases, or words that stick out to you?

- bound, chains, begged

Are there any locations mentioned in the passage?

- Garasenes, Decapolis, Tombs

What Style of Writing is this passage?

- this Passage is historical Narrative
events that took place to describe the ministry of Jesus.

Question #2:

Who is the original audience? What does it mean to them?

Who is Speaking?

- Jesus to the legion, the legion to Jesus, the crowds & the healed man

What Key Themes from the whole of the Book are present?

- Jesus isn't like any other man - he could free what couldn't be bound
- Messianic Secret
- Kingdom of God

Question #3:

What does this passage say about God/Christ/Theology?

Where Does God/Jesus do something significant?

- Jesus shows authority over the Demons.
- Jesus commands the demons.
- Jesus heals the possessed man.

What does Jesus do?

- Jesus goes out of his way into a Gentile region seemingly only to help this man.

Question #4:

What does this passage say about humanity?

What is the Human Condition Shown?

- Fear at what they cannot explain
- Fear at what this man can do
- Quick to Dismiss Jesus because of their fear,

What is the Response of Humanity?

- begged Jesus to leave

Question #5: How do we apply this passage to our lives?

What Situations does this passage speak to in life?

What Truths should we Trust about God from these Verses?

- Jesus is Sovereign over the chaos of creation and the chaos of hell
- Jesus Has authority over the demonic
- Jesus has the ability to heal and liberate captives

I encourage you download the document with these questions [HERE](#) to use as a reference as you study and engage with the Bible.