

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

5, As the Gospel source being uniquely (the) Son of God, Jesus Christ is LORD Over the Living and the Dead Even Between this World and the Other World, Part 5C

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Introduction: As Christian believers in this age of computer generated imagery by special effects wizards, we need to be guarded that we do not think of the supernatural revelations from the Bible as just another type of fantasy or science fiction. There is a necessary distinction between reading fiction from human imagination and the supernatural elements in Biblical stories. This necessary distinction is intensified through visual effects that are sensory-fooling and depicted as reality...

**I do not think it is being an alarmist to sound a warning concerning the trend in sensationalized technology that increasingly pushes the envelope, both experimentally and morally, between the natural world/creation and Artificial Intelligence in the sinful quest to create an alternative reality, like a postmodern Tower of Babel.*

Mark chapter 5 symbolizes and reveals Jesus' authority and power between the natural world and the supernatural world.

Chapter 5, As the Gospel source being uniquely (the) Son of God, Jesus Christ is LORD Over the Living and the Dead Even Between this World and the Other World.

vv.1-20, The Gadarene man possessed with a legion of demons—as Jesus passes over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, to the eastern shore, so He divinely transcends the natural world and the supernatural world with His presence and power over the living and the dead...

vv. 1-6, When Jesus arrives on the other side of the Sea of Galilee (in the natural world) the first thing He encounters is the evil presence of a legion of demons (from the supernatural world).

**This story magnifies and personalizes the meaning for all of those whom Jesus delivered from being demon-possessed and saved their souls as witness to the Gospel.*

The point that should not be missed is that Jesus' saving power reaches lost souls even from afar, even those considered beyond human reach, even between the natural world and the supernatural world ... Even the compulsory testimony of vile demons to Jesus' transcendent *godness* is separated and purified in the souls of those He rescues and saves so that Jesus supernaturally sees through and beyond this world and the other world...

How amazing, astounding, awesome that although divinely transcendent, Jesus permeates the worlds of His creation, natural and supernatural, human and supra-human.

vv. 7-13, Jesus' divinely transcendent power is indicated by His compelling subjugation from a distance of this man and the demons, while both the human and the demonic are tangled up in this man, Jesus is able and intent on saving the man and destroying the demons.

vv. 7-10, The text states that the man has fallen in worship at Jesus' feet (v. 6) and is loudly crying out, but it is with the demons' words of irrepressible witness to Jesus' divine identity (cf. 1:23-24, 34; 3:11-12) as they try to hide within the man [note the conflicted use between the 1st & 3rd person singular "I"/"he", e.g. v. 7 & v. 10a, compare 1st & 3rd person plural "we"/"them", e.g. v. 9 & v. 10b]:

- Jesus turns the table on the demons with commanding authority while separating their identity from the man himself...
- Jesus uses no formula for exorcism and does not gain power over demons by divining their secret name...
- The answer given of "**legion**" is further identified not as a secret name but a description, i.e. "**for we are many**", although technically a Roman military term for a unit of 6,000 soldiers, also used in common discourse for a large number demonstrated in the story by a herd of about 2,000 pigs [not a forced literalism so the interpretation must be that each pig hosted 3 demon, etc.]...
- Once again the Biblical text clearly separates the man from the demons so this is not a mistaken primitive superstition for a case of multiple personality disorder, etc.
- Also there is not a one-to-one correspondence of human to demon or demon to animal...
- There is much speculation about the morality of the destruction of the pigs, assumptions should not be made that the owners or herders/keepers were Jews in violation of O.T. laws, or that pigs are morally evil animals, or superstitions about demons using animals to harm humans [what happened to the demons after the pigs drowned?]...
- As the balance of the story shows, vv. 14-20, Jesus' delivering and saving this man body, soul, and spirit reveals His saving power transcending the natural world of creation including humans and animals as well as the supernatural world of spirit beings...

Often the Biblical stories of Jesus challenge us with more questions than we are given answers. In God's providence this is intended to grow our faith by trusting the Triune God about things seen and unseen in this natural world and in the supernatural world.

Whether it is the Devil (MK 1:12-13, et al.), one demon or a legion of demons, did you notice the power of the word of Jesus' command. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I Am [He].' And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, 'I Am [He],' they drew back and fell to the ground." (St. John 18:4-6).

Jesus Himself said to the sword welding Peter and the other Apostles, facing this same cohort of mercenaries led to Him by the cowardly betrayer, "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (St. Matthew 26:53).

How can Christian believers stay grounded in Biblical truth about the supernatural without on the one hand being shamed by rationalism and intellectualism's denials, and on the other hand caught up in the trends of human imagination and superstitions reimaged by technological sensationalism so easily morphing with ancient idolatries of false religions?