

A Study of the Book of Matthew: Chapter 8 v. 28-33

- **Short Review - In the preceding text (v. 22-27) we saw that Christ is the Lord of nature.**
 - He can command the winds and waves, the very laws of the physical world.
 - Christ is Lord of nature.
 - Christ speaks to nature as a subordinate.
 - Today we see that Christ is Lord of that which is *above* nature—he is Lord of the *supernatural*.
 - **Colossians 1:16**

- **“When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.” (v. 28)**
 - This begins the final miracle in chapter 8. This will demonstrate His power over the spirit world.
 - Look at the parallel in Mark 5.
 - Mark, in his gospel, gives us more information about the violence, not being able to be bound, and so on.
 - The implication is they are so powerful because of the possession - they had great strength.
 - **Mark 5:3-4**
 - Mark and Luke also describe some of his mental derangement.
 - **Mark 5:5**
 - **Luke 8:27**
 - These men are totally controlled by demons.
 - It seems that the idea was that anyone who tried to pass were attacked by these possessed men.
 - And here comes Jesus.

- **“And suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’” (v. 29)**
 - Jesus doesn’t answer either question
 - Both are important.
 - **“What do we have to do with You, Son of God?”**
 - They recognized the One true God and that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - They have nothing to do with Jesus.
 - They are totally of the demonic realm, not of the heavenly realm.
 - They are opposed to all that Jesus is trying to accomplish.

- This is the rule of God contrasted with the rule of Satan - a major conflict taking place between the forces of the evil and the forces of good.
- In **Luke 17:21** Jesus says, **“The kingdom of God is in your midst”** - certainly Jesus’ coming with all power and authority.
- Jesus’ power is greater than that of Satan.
- If we submit to Jesus, as **James** says in **4:7**, Satan will flee from us.
- **“Have you come here to torment us before the time?”**
 - What time?
 - And how did they know He was going to torment them?
 - By recognizing Jesus, they knew His authority, and that He is the one they will have to answer to in judgment.
 - The demons know they are going to have to suffer for they are hopelessly corrupt.
 - These demons know there is an appointed time that they are going to have to suffer.
 - **Luke 8:31** tells us specifically that they were afraid that Jesus was going to cast them into the abyss.
- Interesting fact: Mark and Luke indicate that one of the men even fell down before Jesus
 - **Luke 8:28**
 - **Mark 5:6**
 - Even evil spirits have no choice but to fall down and obey Jesus - **Philippians 2:10-11**
- **“Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.” (v. 30)**
 - Jesus is not in the land of Palestine, but on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in the land of the Gadarenes.
 - Probably not a Jewish community
- **“So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.” (v. 31)**
 - A demon did not want to be without a habitation, and these particular ones would rather be in pigs’ bodies than in no bodies at all.
 - They knew Jesus was about to cast them out; that is why He came - to demonstrate His power over evil and the powers of darkness. (**Mt 12: 43** - **“seeking rest”** is to find other bodies to inhabit).
- **“And He said to them, ‘Go.’ So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*.” (v. 32-33)**
 - Jesus granted their request to go into the swine.
 - The swine went berserk, rushed down an embankment, and into the water.

- There seems to have been an ancient belief that the only way a demon could be destroyed was through drowning.
 - What seems to add some credence to this is in **Mark 5:13** and **Luke 8:33**, all of which emphasize that they were drowned in the sea or perished in the waters.
 - **Luke 8:33** - **“Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.”**
 - **Matthew 12:43** - **“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.”**
 - Can we make something from this information?
 - What we do know is that Jesus demonstrated a power to rule, and the power to destroy.
 - Is it possible the reason Jesus allowed the demons to enter into the swine was so He could clearly demonstrate His power to destroy them?
 - Whatever, Jesus is responsible because He knew what was going to happen, He allowed it.
 - Jesus is the Lord of creation and, because of that, He can use it as He so chooses.
- **“And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.” (v. 34)**
 - Why did they respond as they did?
 - Maybe they were afraid of His power.
 - Maybe they were afraid of more loss of property - someone just lost a herd of pigs!
 - Whether they wanted Him to leave for materialistic reasons, or because of His power, they should have been asking questions about this Man.
 - When the people saw Jesus, there was something that made them afraid.
 - Mark writes 17 verses on this event, whereas Matthew writes only 6 verses. Mark tells us, **“Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.” (5:15).**
 - The people feared Jesus’ power, **“And they began to entreat Him to depart from their region” (5:17).**