

Jesus Sends Demons into Pigs

This dramatic account of Jesus casting out demons into a herd of pigs appears in:

-  **Matthew 8:28–34**
-  **Mark 5:1–20**
-  **Luke 8:26–39**



GOSPEL COMPARISON CHART

Detail	 Matthew 8:28–34	 Mark 5:1–20	 Luke 8:26–39
Region	Gadarenes	Gerasenes	Gerasenes
Number of men	Two	One	One
Man's condition	Violent, demon-possessed, fierce	Possessed, lived among tombs, unrestrainable	Possessed, naked, lived among tombs
Demons speak?	Yes	Yes ("Legion")	Yes ("Legion")
Pigs involved	Yes, whole herd rushes into sea	2,000 pigs	Many pigs
Demons request to enter pigs?	Implied	Explicit	Explicit
Townspeople's reaction	Plead with Jesus to leave	Afraid, beg Him to leave	Afraid, beg Him to leave
Healed man's desire	Not mentioned	Wants to follow Jesus	Wants to follow Jesus
Jesus' instruction	Not mentioned	"Go tell" in Decapolis	"Return home and declare"



GEOGRAPHY: GADARENES or GERASENES?

- **Region:** The eastern side of the Sea of Galilee in the **Decapolis**, a Gentile-dominated area.
- **Gadara** and **Gerasa** were both cities in that region. Gadara is closer to the lake and may have been the regional capital.
- The “**steep bank**” into the sea is a real feature found near the lake’s eastern shore.



NARRATIVE DETAILS



THE DEMON-POSSESSED MAN (MEN)

- **Matthew:** Two men, possibly because Matthew likes to emphasize the legal validity of testimony (Deut. 19:15 – “by the mouth of two or three witnesses...”).
- **Mark & Luke:** Focus on **one** man—likely the more prominent or vocal of the two.
- Descriptions include:
 - **Lived among tombs** (unclean place – Numbers 19:11)
 - **Unrestrainable**, breaking chains (Mark)
 - **Naked** (Luke), **self-harming with stones** (Mark)
 - Roaming the mountains and tombs crying out day and night (Mark)

This highlights the **dehumanizing** and **isolating** power of demonic influence.

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💬 DIALOGUE WITH JESUS

“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28)

- Acknowledgement of Jesus' divine identity. Demons have **correct theology** but are in rebellion.
- They **beg not to be tormented before the appointed time** (Matt), referring to the eschatological judgment (cf. Rev. 20:10).



GREEK TERMS

- “**Legion**” (λεγιῶν, *legiōn*): A Roman legion was 4,000–6,000 soldiers, implying many demons.
- “**Demons**” (δαιμόνια, *daimonia*): Supernatural beings opposed to God, distinct from Satan but under his authority.
- “**Begged**” (παρακαλέω): Used repeatedly — the demons beg Jesus, the people beg Him to leave, the healed man begs to follow. This creates an intentional pattern of desperation.



THE PIGS

- **Unclean animals** (Leviticus 11:7) — their presence underscores that this is Gentile territory.
- Around **2,000 pigs** rush into the sea and drown (Mark). The scale is dramatic and meant to provoke awe and fear.
- The pigs may represent the **host bodies** demons seek (cf. Matt 12:43–45).
- Raises the theological question: Why did Jesus allow the demons to go into the pigs?
 - Possible answers:
 - To demonstrate the **destructive nature of demons**
 - To **reveal the spiritual battle** in a tangible way
 - To force the locals to choose between **economic interest** vs. spiritual renewal



REACTIONS

THE MAN

- Once healed, he is **sitting, clothed, and in his right mind** (Mark/Luke) — a stark contrast to earlier chaos.
- He begs to follow Jesus — the **first Gentile missionary** in the Gospels!
- Jesus **commissions him** to go share his story in the Decapolis (Mark 5:20).



THE TOWNSPEOPLE

- **Fearful**, not celebratory.
- **Beg Jesus to leave** — perhaps out of terror or economic loss.
This exposes a theme: some would rather keep their way of life than face the holy disruption Jesus brings.

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THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theme	Explanation
Spiritual Authority	Jesus commands even a legion of demons with a word.
Restoration	The man goes from possessed to proclaiming — a total reversal.
Missionary Commission	Jesus sends a Gentile man as the first sent witness to non-Jews.
Power over Chaos	The tombs, the sea, and the pigs reflect chaos, but Jesus reigns over all of it.
Divine Identity	The demons recognize Him as “Son of the Most High God.”
Fear vs. Faith	The people’s fear drives Jesus away, the healed man’s faith sends him out.

MESSIANIC AND GENTILE IMPLICATIONS

- **Hints of Isaiah 65:1–4:** God found by those who didn’t seek Him; people sitting among tombs, eating pig’s flesh.
- Jesus fulfills the role of **light to the Gentiles** (Isaiah 9:1–2; 42:6).
- The man becomes a **forerunner to the Gentile mission** seen later in Acts.

