

# EVEN THE DEMONS

JAMES 2:19

## Week of January 2 – Are Demons Real? Jesus and Demons in the Gospel<sup>1</sup>

### Overview:

I know what some of you are thinking...**Why are we doing a sermon series about demons?**

We live in a profoundly spiritual world that undergirds all that we do, feel, and act. While invisible, this world is more real than we know. But into this spiritual darkness, Jesus' light has crashed in to replace lies with truth and destruction with power. Jesus also gives believers that same authority over darkness. **"Even the Demons"** believe this and shudder, knowing they are already defeated!

This six-week series will examine topics including demons in the Gospels; differences between the "world," the "flesh," and the "Devil;" the need for spiritual transformation to overcome deception; how we can gear up for spiritual battle; and finally, prayers that make the enemy quake. We hope you will engage each week and recognize that ultimately, **Jesus has all power and authority over demons and empowers believers with that same authority to bring God's kingdom here on earth.**

### Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Have each person consider what it means for Jesus' kingdom to come on earth.

### DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are all for Jesus.* We know God best through Jesus, our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. Jesus has power and authority over all things.
- *We are empowered by the Holy Spirit.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

### Conversation Starters:

- What is the most "unbelievable" story you ever heard? What caused you to finally believe it was true?

### Read and Reflect: Inductive Bible Study Discussion

#### **This week's text is Mark 5:1-20**

*Mark's gospel is fast paced and descriptive, focusing on the many miracles of Jesus more than on his teachings or parables. When you read it, you can imagine a documentary of action stories, written to help people who knew nothing about the faith (probably Romans) understand who Jesus was and why he should be believed and trusted. Specifically, Mark shapes his gospel narrative to show Jesus as a person of power who will come up against opposition. Note the question set-up in 4:41: **Who is this?** Mark will answer that question throughout his gospel.*

**Background** – Assign someone to read each of the following brief texts as a lead-in to today's story. In each text, what do you notice about Jesus? What do you learn about the kingdom of God?

- Mark 1:7-8
- Mark 1:10-13
- Mark 1:14-15
- Mark 1:21-22, 27
- Mark 1:32-34, 39
- Mark 2:16-17
- Mark 3:10-12
- Mark 3:22-26
- Mark 4:39-41

<sup>1</sup> This week's lesson was written by Dawn Gentry with some notes from Mark Ashton and Karl Pagenkemper.

If you want to view a video depiction of today's story, this one is based directly on the text in Mark 5:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSkSbiW7u04>

### Read Mark 5:1-13 – The event itself

- Who is present? Where had they just come from?
- What words or phrases do you notice?
- Do you notice any repeated words or themes in the story?
- What do you notice about Jesus' interaction with the demoniac?
- What would you have wondered about Jesus if you had witnessed this event? What questions might you have asked him?

### Read Mark 5:14-20 – The people's reactions to the event

- Who are the characters in this part of the story?
- What are some of their reactions? Why do you think this is so?
- What words or phrases do you notice?
- Tell about a time you have been amazed by Jesus (vs 20).

### Summarize and Respond

- What can I learn about God's character from this text? About Jesus' power and authority?
- How would the original audience have heard or understood this story in Mark's gospel?
- What are some connections between this passage and those before and after?

*Note: there is intentionality behind this story's placement following the "calming of the sea." Many commentators note that the "sea" is associated with waters of chaos (see also the story of Creation) which is related to the corruption and demonic in the world. In Jewish tradition, the one who ruled the winds and sea was God himself (Ps 107, Jon 1:15).<sup>2</sup> God controls both the natural world and the spiritual world.*

- How does this story give us a clearer picture of the kingdom of God?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Allow time for silent reflection on the following questions:
  - Do I believe that Jesus is who he says he is? Do I trust that he has all power and authority?
    - Why does this matter to me in my daily walk?
  - Do I pray for God's kingdom to come "on earth as it is in heaven"?
    - If so, how is that kingdom power manifest in my life today?
- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.

### To Learn More:

- **Plan to attend the Soul Care conference with Rob Reimer, Feb 3-5.** For more information, go to <https://cccomaha.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/947190>
- Another video version, this one from The Chosen series: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am8EO4zZ39I&t=3s>
- *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*, Kenneth Bailey (2009)
- *Miracles Today: The Supernatural Work of God in the Modern World*, Craig S. Keener (2021)
- "Eschatological Elements in Jesus' Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac: An Exegesis of Mk. 5:1-20," N. Joseph Torchia, [http://gospelstudies.org.uk/biblicalstudies/pdf/irish-biblical-studies/23-1\\_002.pdf](http://gospelstudies.org.uk/biblicalstudies/pdf/irish-biblical-studies/23-1_002.pdf)

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<sup>2</sup> Craig Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary (New Testament)*, IVP, 2014, 139.