

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Jesus' Power Over Supernatural

Text: Matthew 8:28-34

Sermon Aim, Proposition: To show the power of Jesus over the supernatural, and to prove who Jesus is.

Introduction: I want to **unpack a biblical view of what the Bible has to say about demon possession**. Most of us have a “Hollywood” view about demons. Let’s look at some Scripture, Matthew 4:24 **“and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and severe pain, demon-possessed, people with epilepsy, and people who were paralyzed; and He healed them.”** Matthew 8:16 **“Now when evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.”** Matthew 9:32 **“As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.”** Matthew 12:22 **“Then a demon-possessed man *who was* blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.”** Clearly, we have a **literal truth** that a **man** can be **possessed**, and **influenced** by **demons**, which promote evil, wickedness and satan derived behavior.

Jesus has power over the supernatural. And this is the main point behind this text is to prove this is who Jesus is, the Son of God. 1 John 3:8 proves this doctrine, **“the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”**

POINT 1 - THE ACTIVITY OF DEMONS

The reality of their work is evident in Matthew 17:15-16, **“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶ I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.”** Here is a man **falling into the fire and water. Odd behavior. Appearance of losing control.** He is being **influenced** or **controlled**.

The Jews were involved in “exorcisms.” They had “formulas” and “rituals” they went through in order to “exercise” these demons. This is the kind of “Hollywood” style renditions you see. They did it with fear, apprehension and failure, **cf. Acts 19:11-15.**

What does it mean to be “demon-possessed”? The Greek term for the word is one word and it means “under control.” I suppose there are a lot of different forms we may notice. Some talk about “oppression” for which I am not sure, there’s no definitive answer. But the Bible never talks about these, but only “possession.” So let’s look at that. You can be tempted by Satan, he can “whisper” in your ear, and try to **lead you astray from God’s truth.** “So, demons can attack the **physical**; they can attack the **spiritual**; they can attack the **mental**. Because the Bible tells us that doctrines of demons are sent out; **perversions of the truth to distract a way into idolatry and error.**”¹ What we do know, is

¹ Jesus' Power Over The Supernatural; John MacArthur; <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2261/jesus-power-over-the-supernatural>

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demon-possession is some sort of control of the person to do illicit, evil and wicked things. It most definitely affects one's behavior.

POINT 2 - THE MEN AT THE TOMBS

Let's get a vivid description of the possessed men. In Mark 5, Luke 8 we see the same story, told with more detail. He was living among the tombs. For most of us graveyards kinda give us the chills. But this is where he lived. In vs. 3-4 no one was able to bind him, not even in chains, so there was some extreme strength. Let's see his state of mind, vs. 5 most translations point out "constantly" or "always" night and day, screaming and cutting himself. This is the destructive power of demons. I've seen some accounts of this activity in my lifetime, miserable, evil, wicked, vile people often powered by illicit drugs and activity. I believe these demons possess people who participate in the pornography, child trafficking industry.

Here is how Luke describes the man living in the tombs, "and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs" (Luke 8:27). This vivid description of nakedness describes one out of control, no sense of modesty and wild maniacs. When people say that being naked is natural and belong to the sunshine club, the Bible only speaks of those without clothes as lunatics.

POINT 3 - THE RESPONSE OF THE DEMONS

Mark 5:6 says they "bowed down before Him" but Matthew doesn't, Luke says they "fell down" and in Luke they gave their name as "legion." They all account for the question of tormenting them before the time. It seems the demons knew their eschatology. James 2:19 "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (NKJV).

Some scholars say the question was peppered with "hate and fear", knowing they are doomed. They know their future, and it's one of judgment. Jude 6 "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day." Revelation 20:10 tells of this future judgement too, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." It seems the demons knew their theology better than most people. Today, people don't believe in judgment.

They know their eternal doom, they say, with a resentful manner, He is here too soon. They despise Jesus, they loathe Him, but they bow down. And so will every single person, "so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). Luke describes another scene of miracles and demon possessed people being freed, "Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God!'

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But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ” (Luke 4:41).

POINT 4 - THE REQUEST OF THE DEMONS

They wanted to go into the swine. Why? I don't really have an answer for that. Maybe they need to be in something. They didn't want to go to the abyss? I really don't know. All I know is what the Bible says, and that's the request here. Mark 5:13 says there were about 2,000 pigs. So there must have been a lot of demons.

The demons obeyed because they were commanded to “go” by Jesus. A simple word. A simple speaking and they must obey. They had no choice. God said, and it is done. The entire herd ran down the steep bank and were drowned.

POINT 5 - THE RESPONSE OF THE CROWD

Again, we come to the point of large crowds. **Not everyone will believe**. Many will **refuse**. So the question I have, at this point, is why did the “whole” city (vs. 34) come to meet Him and ask Him to leave? Some say the pigs were their income, and they would rather live with the demoniacs, as long as they had their pigs. Let's not forget the overall lesson of the text, Jesus has power over the supernatural. He is God!

Why pigs you ask? When Jesus said “Go” they went, no resistance. **If they were to go into another person, you have the same problem again**. But these pigs went right down the steep slope and committed suicide. John MacArthur says “I believe that He wanted a living proof that those demons came out of those men. And He sent them into those animals, that those animals might put on a demonstration that nobody would ever forget.”² But why pigs? In vs. 26 Jesus proved His power over nature, and now His power over everything, Psalms 50:10 “**For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.**”

The herdsman fled and went into town. Fact, the pigs weren't the issue, the man who cast out the demons was. The stampede proved the demoniacs had been freed from the man, but also exposes the real value of the people in the vicinity, “**They prefer pigs to power, swine to the Savior.**”³ In fact, many today are in the same place. They simply don't want God to be the influence, they prefer thier sin and lifestyle. I think John 3:19 affirms this today as well, “**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**”

² Jesus' Power Over The Supernatural; John MacArthur; <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2261/jesus-power-over-the-supernatural>

³ Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament; <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+8%3A28-35&version=NASB1995>

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POINT 6 - THE FREED MAN

The story ends with the grace of God in deliverance. The crowd of the city may not have wanted Jesus there, but God left a lone missionary in their presence, cf. Mark 5:18-20. The newly freed man wanted to go with Jesus. But Jesus said “go and tell what God had done.” God always leaves a remnant. They couldn’t deny what miracle had occurred.

His testimony of deliverance is this man who was once possessed, wild and a lunatic is not sitting, clothed and in his right mind (vs. 15). We don’t know anymore about the story. How effective his mission was. If a church was started. Doesn’t matter. Some of you were controlled by wickedness, it showed on your face, your actions. But now, you are free. Set free by the power of God. Set free from darkness. Set free from the dominion of demons. You are in your right mind, telling the story of Jesus.