

Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. Mark Chapter Five

INTRO:

NOTE OSB 5:1-20 (See Map 6)

READ 5:1-20

OBS: Jesus enters the region of the Gadarenes (or Gerasenes). Gadara & Gerasa were both cities of the Decapolis (5:20) which was a confederation of ten cities in NT Palestine (ICSB). These were located mostly on the eastside of the Sea of Galilee about a mile or so to the south (ICSB 5:1). -Gerasa exists today as the town Kersa in modern day Turkey. This was a predominantly Gentile area. Perhaps our Lord went there to get some rest from the demands of His ministry in Israel. However as soon as He disembarks his boat, "immediately" there meets Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

[ICSB: The direction this story takes might be an indicator of God's intention to now include the Gentiles in His covenant of salvation.] In other words, after repeated rejections by His people, Jesus goes to the Gentiles.

In fact in the story of the demoniac, the demoniac himself, might even represent the Gentiles.

What about the demoniac?

Apparently this man was well known for his extreme misery and his demonically supernatural strength. What does St. Mark tell us about the demoniac's strength (v. 3-4)? He had made a dwelling for himself, in the mountains and the tombs (v. 5). There, far from any love or hope, he remained in this hellish prison, in misery day and night (p. 74-75). St. Matthew's account of this story mentions

two demon possessed men (8:28) so perhaps there was a second one with him.

OBS: It is interesting St. Mark states the demon's response before what actually comes first, Christ's words "Come out of the man unclean spirit." Apparently this is from St. Mark's enthusiasm for showing how helpless the demon was before Christ's power that he states the response first.

OBS: When it states in v. 6 that the demoniac worshipped Christ this can be understood that he bowed down before Him probably in desperate wordless supplication.

The Greek word used is: προσκυνέω *proskynéō*, *pros-koo-neh'-o*. According to Strong's Concordance, it means:

- I. to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence.
- II. Among the Orientals, esp. the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence;
- III. in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication;
 - A. It is used for homage shown to men and beings of superior rank;
 - i. to the Jewish high priests; ii. to God; iii. to Christ; iv. to heavenly beings; v. to demons;

Here it is clear they recognize Christ's Divinity because they directly refer to Him as the "Son of the Most High God."

OBS: The spirits within him recognize Jesus as their final Judge of the Last Day, and fear that the final torture of Gehenna is at hand. So the spirit (v. 7) desperately invokes the name of God, in a vain attempt to ward off Jesus' power.

OBS: Why does Jesus ask the demon his name? The Lord is exercising His authority over the spirit demanding, "What is your name?" b/c knowledge of one's name gave authority over the one named.

Notice the reply (v. 9) is "my name is Legion for we are many." A Roman legion consisted of six thousand armed soldiers. This points to the fact that a tremendous invasion had taken place in this man and in the Gentiles in general. St. Bede (along with other Church Fathers & writers) sees the demoniac as allegorically representing the Gentiles. Once they lived separated from God amid the tombs of dead works, haunted by demons and continuously inflicting harm on themselves. But through Christ they are at last cleansed and freed from Satan's domination.

Ultimately, this story shows the intensity of the spiritual combat between Jesus and the forces of evil (p. 75).

OBS: (v. 10) Due to their fear of being cast out into the abyss of final judgment, the demons request something else. What is it? To be allowed to enter into the great herd of pigs feeding on the hillside.

OBS: Perhaps if Jesus had forced them out of the man against their will, they would have inflicted much harm on the man (as happens later Mk 9:26) when the man was nearly died as a result. So Jesus allows the multitude of demons to enter into the pigs. But the pigs react unexpectedly and stampede in panic down the slope into the sea (all two thousand of them are drown).

OSB: MT 8:28-34 (pg. 1282)

OSB: LK 8:33 (commenting on v. 13)

OBS: Those tending the herds probably witnessed their vast herd go down the steep bank and then floating there dead in the lake... along with the famous demoniac sitting calmly by the Lord. So what is their reaction? A. They told all about this incredible act of power and the resulting carnage. (v. 14)

OBS: When the crowds come out they observe the demoniac clothed and in his sound-mind, what is their initial reaction (v. 15)? Then after they are told the full story what is their reaction (v. 17)?

Whether they understand Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God or not, they do understand that He has great power and fear Him -thus they ask Him to go away from their area.

Notice that Jesus willingly complies b/c He does not force His will, power or love on anyone.

Then what is the demoniac's reaction to his miraculous healing (v. 18)? A. He wants to be with Jesus. Anyone who has been helped by Jesus wants to be with Him more (e.g., this is why we are here).

What does Jesus instruct him to do? Note that Jesus instructs him to tell of the things the Lord had done for him (v. 19) but what does he report (v. 20)? So by this St. Mark means for us to understand how Jesus exercises the power and authority of God on earth. Jesus is God's true and Divine Messiah.

READ MK 5:21-43

Now Jesus returns from the region of the Gadarenes to the western side of the lake (probably near Capernaum), where He is mobbed again by a great crowd.

One of the synagogue-rulers named Jairus comes to Jesus. Synagogue-rulers were lay officials of the local synagogue. He would share this role with others in taking care of the building and

ensuring the services went well. He would be a man of some importance and wealth. Q. What is the condition of his daughter (see v. 23) A. She is at the point of death. So he is very desperate about his daughter. Jesus immediately goes with him (v. 24) but He is still being thronged by the crowds.

OBS: Then, in the middle of this story, someone almost as desperate as Jairus also approaches Jesus, the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years (v. 24). Her condition was not only one of physical sickness, but also (perhaps more importantly) one of social and spiritual isolation. She could not attend synagogue nor worship God in the Temple and the pious would avoid her touch. She could not enter a crowd without spreading her contagion.

OBS: But in her desperation she decides to enter the crowd without telling anyone and comes to Jesus secretly. She thought she could touch Jesus' garment perhaps without His knowing and so be spared of any rebuke for breaking the Law. Even in the book of Acts there are examples of this (19:12) happening.

So what happens to her (v. 29)? A. She is aware that she receives immediate healing. Perhaps she planned to slip away after this. But the Son of God is not unaware of the healing. The Greek word used in is that He was "epiginosko" (or "really-knowing") that power had gone forth from Him. So He stops and asks what (v. 30)?

Meanwhile what do you think Jairus is thinking? A. His daughter is dying and every second is precious! Perhaps he is exercising his faith in his patience in waiting on the Lord to act?

What is the woman's reaction to Jesus' question (v. 33)? A. She finally (v. 33) comes forward, probably with a pounding heart and tells Him the whole truth. But instead of finding the expected

rebuke she finds God's mercy. What does Jesus say to her (v. 34)? Jesus shows the woman that He does not fear contagion because His power is stronger than sickness and death itself!

Meanwhile the delay which brings salvation to the woman brings disaster to for the father of the dying girl. Confirming his worst fears, while Jesus is still speaking, messengers come with the dreaded message (v. 35) "your daughter has died" and they add "why trouble the Teacher any further?" There was nothing left, they thought, but to return to the house of death and bury the young girl. As the ruler of the synagogue was probably breaking down in sorrow, what does Jesus tell him (v. 36)?

When Jesus arrived at the house, He probably observed the custom of the day which was, even for a poor man, to provide two flute-players and one professional mourner to wail for the death of such a loved one. Being Jairus was a synagogue-ruler he probably had many more professional mourners there (as alluded to in v. 38), those who wept and wailed loudly, were likely these professional mourners.

What does the Lord say to them about their mourning (v. 39)?

ICSB 5:39 -not dead but sleeping: [The Scriptures and Christian Tradition] often speaks of "sleep" as an euphemism for biological death (Mt 27:52; Jn 11:11; 1 Cor 15:6). Why? A. For the same reason Jesus uses it in this story: to emphasize that the girl's condition is only temporary and reversible.

What is their response (v. 40)?

So Jesus put these out doubters before performing His miracle (b/c He didn't come here to impress them). He allows only the child's father and mother and His own inner circle to accompany Him (the father and mother b/c this is their child and the apostles to be witnesses of His work).

Jesus's words, which St. Mark translates "little girl I say to you arise," are also given in their original Aramaic which Jesus spoke. This was probably told to St. Mark by St. Peter. This phrase, "Talitha cumi," (ICBS) is one of several Aramaic expressions preserved in Mark (7:11, 34; 14:36, 15:22, 34).

St. Mark regularly translates these for his immediate audience and readers in Rome. St. Peter as an eyewitness probably had these words of the Lord etched in his heart and mind as he related them to his "son" Mark. With these two common and simple words (Talitha cumi) Christ commands death to depart from the girl as one who has the very authority of God.

The girl arises full of life and even hunger! The parents are in a great "ecstasy of amazement" as the Greek (v. 42) can be translated. Jesus knowing that news of this would make it even more difficult for Him to enter other cities commands that no one should know of it (v. 45) and humorously adds "something should be given her to eat." Perhaps the first words of the little girl were, "I'm hungry."

These two miracles again show Christ's authority. The Lord demonstrates His power over (1) sickness and even (2) death! What do both of these stories have in common? A. Both stories involve the number 12 (the age of the girl and the amount of years the woman suffered the hemorrhage). Both show the divine response to those who come to Him with faith.

OSB NOTE 5:21-34 See notes at Mt 9:18-26 (Pg. 1284)

OSB NOTE 5:25-29

CONCLUSION: All of these miracles (stilling the storm, casting out the Legion, healing the sick woman, and raising the dead child) reveal the Lord's authority as the divine Son of God. They form a backdrop for the story coming next, that of His rejection at

Nazareth which prefigures the final rejection by all Israel at the Cross.

Both of these (last two) miracles also have in common people desperate for the healing which only Jesus can give. But they had to come to Him, desperate and in faith, in order for His power to change their lives. The same goes for us. We need to be desperate for God and come to Him with all our being, crying out for Him. We have to beware that we don't become too proud to be desperate for God's power in our life thinking we can do it and are self-sufficient on our own.

Christ is Ascended!

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"With God all things are possible... We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us... Woe to us if we do not preach the Gospel!"