

Jesus and Demons (Part 1)

The Messianic Contradiction

Introduction

The Text

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³² Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

³⁴ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ³⁶ And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:26–39)

A Storm in the Soul

- A. We carry on now with Luke as he provides us with yet another incident displaying Jesus' redemptive power and authority over all things. Immediately following Jesus' stilling of a storm at sea, He and His disciples set sail for what is Gentile territory, east of Galilee—"the country of the Gerasenes" (v. 26).
 1. And it's here that Jesus will now still a storm that's raging, not outside of a man, but within him—not a storm at sea, but a storm in the soul: "When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons" (v. 27a).
- B. And there is, perhaps, no more tragic a figure presented to us in all the gospels than the languishing shell of a man we meet here in this narrative.
 1. So much of his story we don't know. How did he get this way? How long has this been going on? Did he have a family? A wife? Or perhaps even children?

- a. Amongst many uncertainties, there is one thing we know for sure: demons have reduced his life to ruins.

The Messianic Contradiction

- A. We're going to take three weeks on this text, so if I leave some things out this morning, know that we'll be coming back around later.
 - 1. The title of this first message is: Jesus and Demons—The Messianic Contradiction. What Satan and demons are attempting to do, Jesus, the Messiah, has come to contradict.
 - a. I think we read this text just a few weeks ago: “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8b)—what I’m calling the “Messianic Contradiction”.
- B. Now, let me just say, I don't think I've known anyone who has been inhabited by a demon like this man here—where a demon has come inside and taken over the command center of a person's life.
 - 1. Certainly, though, we must admit that we all to varying degrees have been influenced, and are being influenced even now, by the demonic. We might not be possessed, but certainly we are influenced.
 - a. And this text, while an extreme case, helps us to identify what Satan and demons are up to, and how Jesus has come to destroy it.
- C. So we're going to look at two things this morning: (1) The Demonic Influence; and (2) The Messianic Contradiction.

(1) The Demonic Influence

Four Layers

- A. When we look closely at what these demons are doing to this man, various layers of their influence can be observed. I'll give you four, and they'll build off of one another.

(1) Pollution

- A. Here is where we note that the man himself was made unclean by the presence of what Luke describes as an “unclean spirit” (v. 29) within him.
 - 1. We recall that the ceremonial law in Israel dealing with cleanness and uncleanness really served symbolically for the spiritual conditions of either holiness or sinfulness, innocence or guilt.
 - a. Hence, the demonic aims to pollute, to corrupt, to lead you and I away from God into sin.

i. That's why Satan is called a "tempter" (Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5).

B. And I wonder how demons are influencing you these days towards pollution? "Did God really say?" Coming in from the TV, or your coworkers, or the other moms at the gym you go to. "Yeah, I know God said that, but this is where the party's at."

1. And this is just where demonic influence begins. It gets far worse from here.

(2) Exposure

A. Next we see that the demonic goal is not just Pollution but Exposure, not just guilt but shame.

B. We see that here with this demonized man. For we read that: "For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house (v. 27). So not only is he unclean. He is naked, uncovered, unprotected, exposed, shamed.

1. Satan aims to tempt you into guilt so He can expose it to your shame. The devil quickly goes from enticing you to accusing you, from whispering softly to you to screaming at you.

a. He plays both sides of the field you realize. He's a subtle snake and a devouring lion. He's a tempter and an accuser. He lures you to bite and then shames you for doing so.

C. I wonder where the Accuser has been after you lately? Anyone dealing with condemnation? If you are, you can know for sure: demons are close at hand.

(3) Isolation

A. So Pollution, Exposure, but we're still not done. In your guilt and your shame, you will want nothing else but to get away—Isolation.

B. We see that here with this man: "He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert [wilderness, uninhabited regions]" (v. 29b).

1. He couldn't be kept in the company of people no matter how hard they tried. "Get me to the desert, where I can be alone!"

C. That's the trajectory that the devil wants you on—take the fruit, exposed in naked shame, running and hiding . . . alone.

1. Does anyone feel like they are too dirty to be here? Does anyone feel so ashamed, so condemned they just want to run away? "I don't even want to see another Christian. I don't want to say the prayers, sing the songs, shake the hands. I don't belong here."

a. It occurred to me that sometimes I'm preaching to people listening in via the mp3 we post later online. To you I would ask: Did you not gather with the saints this

morning because you feel too ashamed of what you were out doing last night or last week?

- i. I beg you, don't play into the devil's hand. He divides to conquer. He isolates to kill.

(4) Death

- A. And that really takes us to the fourth and final layer in all of this. The demons will not be satisfied until you are dead.
- B. This brother is not living in a house, he spends a lot of time alone in the desert, but we're told even more: he's living "among the tombs" (v. 27b).
 1. You know demons are having their way with you when dead people start to feel like good company. I feel at home among the dead.
 - a. The kids in their classes last week talked about Cain and Abel. So we talked about it around my dinner table this week. That's where sin goes! With one brother standing over the dead body of the other. Pollution, Exposure, Isolation, and Death.
- C. The demons tell Jesus that their name is "Legion" (v. 30). A legion was the largest military unit in the Roman army, consisting of nearly 6,000 soldiers.
 1. So this name here implies at least two things: (1) There's a lot of them dwelling in this poor man; and (2) They are militant. They are like soldiers, violent in their aim to destroy souls.
 - a. That's why Mark, in his account of this story, provides us with this devastating detail: "Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones" (Mark 5:5).
 - i. What should be painful starts to feel pleasurable. What is so obviously wrong starts to feel right. Things are turning upside down. A life is coming apart at the seams. The image of God is being ravaged beyond recognition. The human becomes akin with the demon.
- D. And this really gets at the underlying goal in all of this for Satan and his demons. More than they hate you, they hate God. And, therefore, since you are made in God's image—like little mirrors reflecting His majesty, they will not rest until they've shattered that mirror into a thousand pieces. "I don't want see God anywhere!"
 1. This is one of the reasons I don't think Hell is a place where God is absent. That would be the Devil's heaven, don't you see?! O God is there, but in holy indignation, unrelenting judgment, in a fury of fire (cf. Rev 14:10).
- E. Have you ever thought of taking your life? "The guilt, the shame, the loneliness, the pain of this place. Just get it over with already."

A Suicide Hotline?

A. So now, having looked at these four layers, I wonder If you can identify demonic influence in your own life. What do you do? Where's the suicide hotline for this? Who can help us?

1. This is where we find the strength to take one more breath, and we keep reading . . .

(2) The Messianic Contradiction

A. No person, no chain, no shackle could hold against the rage of these demons. But then Jesus, the "Son of the Most High God" (v. 28) appears, and these spiritual terrorists are reduced to mere beggars. They just fall down at His feet.

1. And now watch as Jesus contradicts everything that they were after in this man's life! And He does this sort of thing for us as well.

(1) Contradicting Pollution: Jesus Washes

A. He commands "the unclean spirit to come out of the man" (v. 29).

1. He comes to an unclean man, with an unclean spirit, who lives among unclean tombs (Num 19:11), surrounded by people with an unclean occupation (herding pigs), in the midst of an unclean Gentile region. And He washes the man clean, in an instant!

B. Jesus is not deterred by your pollution. Your pollution is the reason He draws near. To clean. To wash.

(2) Contradicting Exposure: Jesus Covers

A. We read in vv. 34-35 that: "³⁴When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone . . . clothed . . ."

1. It's a picture, I think, of the way Jesus covers our shame. As God covered the naked shame of Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, so Jesus comes, not to expose us, but to cover us.

(3) Contradicting Isolation: Jesus Welcomes

A. This "man from whom the demons had gone" is not only now clean and clothed . . . he is "sitting at the feet of Jesus" (v. 35). He's been restored to God.

1. When the demons had him, he was screaming at the feet of Jesus, now he's sitting, listening, enjoying the welcoming fellowship of His Savior.

- B. And, even more than this, in [v. 39](#) there's this wonderful little detail. Jesus tells this brother to do what? ["Return to your home . . ."](#) This man is no longer isolated from God and he is no longer isolated from humanity.
 1. Imagine the joy when he knocks on the door of his own home, and as it opens he hears for this first time in far too long, a little voice: "Daddy!"
- C. This is what Jesus does. This is what the church is. We are a reconciled community. We've been reconciled to God and one another. No longer do we stand over our dead brother's body. We stand together and worship! We've been welcomed into the family of God.

(4) Contradicting Death: Jesus Brings Back to Life

- A. And, finally, we find that this man is not only now clean, and clothed, and at Jesus' feet . . . he is ["in his right mind"](#) ([v. 35](#)).
 1. In the language of [v. 36](#), he ["had been healed \[sozo: 'saved'\]"](#)!!! The broken mirror is being put back together in Jesus.

Calvary's Hill

- A. And of course we know what Jesus will have to do to fully accomplish this for us don't we? To save my life from the demonic realm, He will let the demons rush Him, ravage Him . . . on the cross.
 1. He becomes the polluted one, the unclean thing, as He takes our sin on Himself.
 2. He is stripped naked, utterly exposed, and held up for all to mock and shame.
 3. He is isolated from every form of community—humanity against Him and even His own Father forsaking Him.
 4. And, of course, He would eventually be lowered into the ground . . . dead.
- B. [Heb 2:9](#) says that He ["taste\[d\] death"](#) for us. All so that in His resurrection, He might disarm the powers of darkness and lead us out into life!

The Prostitute and the Bride

- A. I've been going through the book of Revelation in my devotions, and I wanted to bring something out from this for you as we close.
- B. Throughout the book there are these intriguing contrasts drawn between the way God does things and the way Satan does things. As I was reading this past week, I came to [Rev 17, 18, 19](#) and another contrast came out.
 1. Where the devil has a beast on his team, God has a Lamb, Jesus. And both the beast and the Lamb have a people that follow them, described symbolically as their woman.
 - a. The Beast has a Prostitute. The Lamb has a Bride.

- C. And here's why I bring all this up. Listen to how Satan treats his own: "[T]he beast will hate the prostitute. [It] will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire" (Rev 17:16).
1. Satan doesn't love you. When you forsake God for the fleeting pleasures of sin, you become, not the devil's bride, but the devil's prostitute. It feels good for a moment, but when you wake up the next morning you feel used, exposed, alone, and left for dead.
- D. With the news of Hugh Hefner's passing, I couldn't help but think of him here as an example of this sort of thing. Jon Bloom of *Desiring God* writes: "Hugh Hefner, the founder of Playboy Enterprises and its chief ideological incarnation, died on Thursday at age 91 at the Playboy Mansion, immersed in the fantasy he created. He will be buried next to Marilyn Monroe, Playboy's inaugural centerfold. . . . Hefner and many others have become very rich by objectifying women and turning them into virtual prostitutes — mere bodily images to be used by millions of men who care nothing about them, who ravage them in their imaginations for selfish pleasure and then toss them in the trash. . . . It is tragically appropriate that Hugh Hefner will be buried next to Marilyn Monroe. Monroe was not merely the inaugural centerfold of Playboy Magazine; she became and remains the poster girl of 20th century American sexual objectification. Nearly sixty years after her suicidal death, she remains a sexual icon in most people's minds, not a broken soul who knew the despairing loneliness of being a sensual image desired by millions, yet a person truly loved by very few. Hefner encouraged millions and millions of men and women to view people in the very way that destroyed Marilyn Monroe."
1. This is where the demonic falls out. This is where following the devil goes. The promise of fame, luxury, affluence lures these women in, but then, somewhere along the way, it turns.
 - a. One of Hefner's many girlfriends put it this way: "Everyone thinks that the infamous metal gate (that surrounds the mansion) was meant to keep people out. But I grew to feel it was meant to lock me in." "I spent so much energy trying to get in, but now I find I can't get out. I'm not free. I'm a slave."
- E. Held up against the beast and his prostitute is the Lamb and His bride. Chs. 17 and 18 give way to ch. 19 and the wedding supper of the Lamb, where we read of voices crying out in joy: "⁶ Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" (vv. 6–8).
1. He stands in the gap for His bride, for us! He's not using us and tossing us aside like trash. He lets the demons trash Him, so that He can save us.
 - a. He washes us with the water of His word, clothes us in spotless splendor, invites us into deep and intimate communion, and gives us life forevermore.
 - i. This is the Messianic Contradiction. Hallelujah what a Savior!