

The Demon-possessed Man (Mark 5:1-20 NLT)

So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. With a shriek, he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!”

For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.”

Then Jesus demanded, “What is your name?”

And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.”

Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.

There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. “Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.”

So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns^[c] of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.