

"Who Makes Demons Shudder"

Matthew 8:28-34

Overview



There is a fascination in our culture with spiritual things. Ghosts, spirits, the after-life, angels and demons, and much more can regularly be found on TV, and in movies, literature and social media.

The theology of these secular spiritual explorations is suspect to say the least. Often these subjects are treated in a light-hearted way (which can lead to tragic results when such an attitude is adopted in the presence of the real thing).

Thankfully Scripture is a faithful witness to the truth of the supernatural. It shows Jesus demonstrating not only the right attitude towards the spiritual world but also the truth of His superiority over these unseen realities.

Getting Started

Darkness (and Light)...



1. Do you like to watch TV shows or movies that are scary? How high is your tolerance for things that are suspenseful or fear-provoking?
 2. Is there an aspect of God's power or character that you find frightening? If so, what is that aspect and why does it make you uncomfortable?
 3. Have you ever encountered a supernatural being (an angel or a demon)? Share your experience.
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The Text



²⁸ When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

³⁰ Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹ The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

³² He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. ³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴ Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Matthew 8:28-34 (NIV)

The Video (optional) “Who Makes Demons Shudder” – Matthew 8:28-34 – by Kyle Corbin, Oct. 17/21 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca).



NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. Where has Jesus just been (vs. 23-27)? In this passage, Jesus arrives at the “other side” of what (vs. 28)? Who greets Him on that side? How would you describe their greeting?
2. What do the two demons ask Jesus (vs. 29)? What is the “appointed time” which they mention? How do they address Jesus (and what does that say about their understanding of who He is)?
3. What request do the demons have of Jesus (vs. 30-31)? Why do you suppose they make this request (possible clues may be in Matt. 12:43-45 and Luke 8:31)?
4. How does Jesus respond to their request (vs. 32)? What is the result of His response? What do these verses show us about Jesus’ authority over the spiritual world?
5. How do the herdsman (who were tending the pigs) react (vs. 33)? Do you imagine their reaction is one of fear, one of awe and amazement, or something else?
6. What is the response of the townspeople to the news of what has happened (vs. 34)? Jesus has just removed an evil presence from the midst of the population but the largely non-Jewish townspeople ask Him to leave. Why do you suppose they would do that?

Applying



1. What do we learn from this passage about the dangers of allowing demonic or Satanic influences in our lives? Consider the impact these beings had on the two men Jesus meets (vs. 28 and also Mark 5:3-5, 9; Luke 8:27,29).
2. Where do we see the influence of Satan in our own culture today? What might be some of the less obvious ways Satan is working (i.e. other than outright possession of people)? Do people even believe in the existence of demons today? Do you (see Eph. 6:10-12)?
3. The demons seem to be concerned that Jesus is about to “torture” them (vs. 29)? Is Jesus a torturer? How do you understand this comment from the demons?
4. Jesus’ actions result in the destruction of the herd of pigs. Why do you imagine the pigs rush to be drowned (vs. 32)? Is this something the demons initiate or is there another cause? What, if anything, does this suggest about the impact of the demonic?
5. Do you think people are more afraid of the demonic or more afraid of Jesus today? Defend your answer.
6. How does this account demonstrate what Jesus values? What is His approach to material things and how should that affect the way we live?
7. Jesus seemed to have an expectation that His followers would perform exorcisms (see Matthew 10:1, Acts 19:12-16). Do you believe this is something you should be able and ready to do? If so, how will you prepare for it?
8. Jesus continues to demonstrate His great power in this account. Reflect on how the lives of the demon-possessed men must have changed because of Jesus’ work on their behalf (check also Mark 5:15, 18-20; Luke 8:35). What spiritual challenge(s) do you need Jesus’ help with today? How will you bear witness to Jesus’ power at work in your life (Mark 5:18-20)?

Memory Verse(s)



¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ “*Who Makes Demons Shudder*” – *Matthew 8:28-34* – by Kyle Corbin, Oct. 17/21 (sermon, view at www.immanuelonline.ca). Pastor Kyle helps us grapple with the reality of the demonic in our world.
- ❖ “*The Bondage Breaker*” - by Neil T. Anderson (Harvest House Publishers, 2000). This book reveals the whys and hows of spiritual warfare and points readers to the truth that can break the power of sin.
- ❖ “*Jesus’ Power Over the Supernatural*” – by John MacArthur (article at www.gty.org, Nov. 16, 1980). MacArthur reviews the possession by demons, the power of Christ and the perspective of the people.