

Our Lord's Power Over Nature and Satan

Luke 8:22-39

*Luke 8:22-26: Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. **23** But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. **24** And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. **25** But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" **26** Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.*

Background Notes

The Sea of Galilee is about eight miles across. The Lord and His disciples were sailing from the western side of the Sea of Galilee to the land of the Gadarenes, on the eastern or southeastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Some translations and the parallel account in Matthew's Gospel say "the land of the Gadarenes," but don't let that be confusing. Both the Gerasenes and the Gadarenes lived in this area.

A fierce gale - a violent windstorm - came down on the lake. This can happen quite suddenly on the Sea of Galilee. A big wind can sweep down from the surrounding hills and churn up the water in no time. These strong winds are fueled by the great differences in temperature in close proximity: cool temperatures over the water of the Mediterranean Sea, and hot temperatures over the land masses.

Notice that this was not a storm with rain, thunder and lightning, as some of paintings of this event depict. This was a windstorm that caused huge waves to toss the boat and fill the boat with water. The disciples feared they were in danger of drowning.

By the way, this was not the same storm event when the Lord came to them, walking on the water, and invited Peter to walk on the water. That storm came later in our Lord's ministry, immediately after the feeding of the five thousand.

Doctrinal Points

1. All storms are under the sovereign control of God.

When the Lord calmed this storm, the disciples *“were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!” (v25).* The simple answer to their question was: Jesus is the God of the universe! **Jesus is God.**

As God, Jesus Christ created all things (Colossians 1:16). As God, He has sovereign control over all things. Ephesians 1:11 says that God *“works all things after the counsel of His will.”* Colossians 1:17 says, *“in Him [Christ] all things hold together.”* Does that include winds and weather patterns, hurricanes and tornados - and all storms? Yes! Obviously yes! All storms are under the sovereign control of God.

But storms can do damage, just as the other “Ds” can do damage. Disease, Death, Demons and Disasters all cause damage. All of these “Ds” are the result of sin coming into the perfect universe that God created. But God is not the author of sin, and is therefore He is not the cause of the damage that results from sin. The really good news is that God controls everything, including the damaging effects of sin. In fact, He can use all the bad fallout from sin for His own good purposes. As Romans 8:28 says, He can work ***all things*** together for our good.

Think of the giant step in Theology 101 that the disciples took during this storm. Even if this storm on the Sea of Galilee was an evil attempt on the part of Satan to do away with Christ, it was under the overall sovereign control of God. When the Lord said, *“Let us cross over to the other side of the lake”*- no storm could stop them! What a lesson for us. There is no storm in this life that can thwart God’s good purposes for your life.

Notice how both the full humanity and the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ are seen in this miracle. He fell asleep - He was fully human. He calmed the storm - He was fully God. All storms are under the sovereign control of God.

2. All spirits are under the sovereign control of God.

Verses 26-36: Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, 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 it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. 30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. 32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. 33 Then the demons

went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

34 *When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35* *Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36* *They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.*

Demons are evil spirits, part of the evil angelic ranks. Demons were not created evil, but they became evil when they joined Satan in his rebellion against God. In Matthew 12 Satan is described as the prince, or ruler, of demons. In Matthew 25:41 the Lord said that hell was prepared for Satan and his angels. Ultimately all evil spirits will be consigned to hell. Right now, however, until the final judgment, most demons and Satan have a certain measure of freedom - but they are **always** under the sovereign control of God.

Notice that the demons recognized the Lord's control over them: *"And the demons begged Him that He would not condemn them to go out into the abyss"(v31).* And notice how they could only enter the pigs when the Lord gave them permission: *"So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them" (v32).*

"Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned." It is possible that the Lord allowed the demons to enter the pigs and cause them to drown, because the pig farmers may have been Jewish people, and raising pigs was contrary to Jewish Law. Remember, under the Law, swine were unclean for Jewish people.

In any case, the Lord was more concerned about the welfare of one demon-possessed man than the welfare of an entire herd of pigs. This is a great lesson for us. The Lord considered the value of humans - even a deranged, disturbed human - to be much greater than animals. The name *Legion* indicates that a great number of demons possessed this one man, because a Roman legion consisted of several thousand fighting men. The multitude of demons caused the man's bizarre behavior.

When the Lord cast out the demons, there was a great change in this man's behavior. Before, he was unable to even ask for help because he was so deranged and possessed, but in His sovereign grace the Lord came to him, where he was, and healed him! After he was healed, the man sat quietly at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind! What a beautiful picture of God's sovereign grace and our salvation! And what a blessing to know that all evil spirits are under the sovereign control of God.

Practical Application

Your personal testimony is needed where God is not wanted.

Verses 37-39: Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. 38 Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

The people could not deny the evidence. The demon-possessed man, who had been running around naked, living among the tombs, and who could not even be restrained with chains for his own protection, was now completely well - and completely changed! Wouldn't you think that the people who lived in that area would have been thankful? Wouldn't you think they would want the Lord to stay? No. They asked Him to leave. "...the whole multitude of the surrounding region... asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned."

Does this sound familiar? Our society cannot deny that the gospel of Jesus Christ has changed the lives of law-breakers, drug addicts, and prisoners - and yet God is systematically asked to leave the classroom, leave the campus, leave the courthouse, and even leave the country. As Christians, what should we do?

We should maintain our personal testimony - right where we are. That's what the Lord asked the man to do, once he was healed. Remember, the "powers-that-be" cannot stop the good effects of **your personal testimony**. The Ten Commandments and nativity scenes may be banned from public places, but your changed life and your loving words will be effective. "Tell what great things the Lord has done for you."

This man's personal testimony was definitely effective, because when the Lord later returned to the Decapolis area, he was more readily received by the people. Your testimony is needed where God is not wanted.