

Episode #736 Matthew 8 Part 4-The Demons and the Swine

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. When the Lord was ready to depart to the other side of the sea, a scribe came and wanted to be His disciple, but in the end it seems he did not want to pay the price. Another disciple of His came to Him, apparently wanting to back off on being a disciple. As they crossed the sea a great earthquake arose, but the Lord calmed the sea with a word. Today, He faces two demon-possessed men on the other side of the sea.

III. Two Demon-Possessed Men. Matthew 8:28-34.

- A. Verse 28. Two possessed men, Greek “demonized,” as in 4:24. Fierce is Greek *chalepos*, only twice in the New Testament, the other in II Timothy 3:1, “perilous” times will come.
- B. Verse 29. They want nothing to do with Him. They call Him “Son of God.” Interesting this is the third time He has been called this, the first two being by Satan in His temptation. They knew before men did! But we worship Him as Son of God, like the disciples did the fourth time it is used (Matthew 14:33). They knew there was a right time for this, and it had not come. They did not want to be “tormented.”
 1. The Greek word is *basanizo*, has to do with a touchstone by which things were tried: to thoroughly and revealingly test. Over time, as the Romans degenerated, they tested prisoners by torture, but that is not what these mean. They knew the time would come for them to be tried and judged, but the time was not yet.
 2. We had this word earlier in the chapter, for the paralyzed servant. In Matthew 14:24, the ship was not tormented by the waves, but severely tested. Mark 6:48, their skill as boatmen was severely tested by rowing. II Peter 2:8, Lot severely tested his righteous soul by the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites.
 3. The noun *basanos* in three occurrences could mean torments. We do not deny the later meaning, but it does not erase the earlier meaning of a thorough test.
- C. Verse 30. Swine = *choiros*, sounding rather like oinking.
- D. Verse 31. They “begged” is *parakaleo*, begged for this favor. Clearly, going into a “herd” indicates there were more than two demons present.
- E. Verse 32. The Lord tells them to go out. They ran off “the” precipice, well-known in that location. Literally they “died,” not the usual word for “perished.” Keep in mind that swine were unclean, and the keeping of swine in Israel was illegal.
- F. Verse 33. “Kept” is “fed,” same word as “feeding” in verse 30. These were probably hired and now reported to the owners.
- G. Verse 34. The Lord is rejected.
 1. The keeping of the swine seems to have been a community activity. The salvation of the possessed men does not concern them so much as losing this profitable economic activity.
 2. Begged = *parakaleo*, the same word for what the demons did. Interesting; they were allied with Satan in disobeying God’s Word. The centurion did the same in verse 5; but quite a contrast to these last two supplicants!

3. One wonders how many more possessed and sick might have been healed, or how many sinful saved, if they had asked the Lord to stay rather than go?

V. Conclusion: The Lord faced two demonized men, and showed His authority over them. They did not want to be tormented, but this may refer to being thoroughly tested and judged before the time. They asked the favor to be let go into a herd of illegal swine feeding nearby, and the Lord did not forbid them. After the swine killed themselves, the people of the community were upset, not wanting to lose this important, though illicit, part of their economy. Do we ever let economic concerns become of more importance to us than the favor of God? Do we miss the good things He offers because we are too concerned with money gotten through vice? Let us never allow money to come between us and the good gifts of God!