

Mark 5

God has power over demons, death and extreme health issues.

This first account is clearly is located outside of the main Hebrew community. Gadara was a city in what is today, modern Jordan. Gadara was once the capital of Peraea. Perea was a Greek Empire territorial province name. The name Peraea was so named because it was *on the opposite side* of Judea (*other side* of Sea of Galilee). In other words, these areas were originally considered to be the hinterlands to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Gadara means at the *back and at the end*.

Gadara was one of the 10 Decapolis cities.

The Decapolis was a group of ten Hellenistic–Roman cities on the eastern frontier of the Roman province of Syria and the southern Levant, largely east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. They were culturally Hellenistic/Roman centers in a region otherwise dominated by Semitic (Jewish, Aramaean, Nabatean) populations. Commonly listed Decapolis cities:

- Damascus (sometimes included)
- Philadelphia (modern Amman)
- Raphana (location uncertain; eastern Transjordan)
- Scythopolis (Beit She'an) — the only one west of the Jordan
- Hippos (Sussita)
- Gadara (Umm Qais)
- Dion (location uncertain; possibly Tell al-Ash'ari)
- Pella (Tabaqat Fahl)
- Gerasa (Jerash)
- Canatha / Kanatha (Qanawat) or sometimes Abila (Irbid) in variant lists

Notes:

- Lists vary in ancient sources; some include Damascus and exclude others. Scythopolis (Beit She'an) is the only Decapolis city located in what would later be Roman Judaea/Palestine west of the Jordan — most Decapolis cities lay in Transjordan.
- The Decapolis was not a formal political federation but a loose cultural/urban network of Hellenistic poleis under Roman rule.
- Archaeological remains (theaters, colonnaded streets, temples) show strong Greco-Roman urbanism in these cities.

Gadara was at the time of this story a city of Greek, and later Roman influence. It was like *a little bit of Rome away from Rome*. It was like a Gentile world bordering Israel. It was prosperous and it had a lot of Gentile culture. A well-to-do Gentile would be more at home in a Decapolis city than in Judea. That is significant in that

it would not be known for having any synagogues or Jewish faith. It was apart from Israel's godly influences. It stands to reason that a demon possessed man would be found there. Demon possession is rare in a Christian society. The godless and hedonistic societies is where you normally find demon possession, such as sub-Saharan animistic cultures.

Jesus purposefully went to the Gentile zone near, but outside of Israel to a Decapolis city for good reasons. Clearly this man needed the help that nobody could provide. Jesus demonstrated that he had authority over demons. The scriptures do not explicitly say so, but it seems like the demon possessed man ran out in a confrontational way to Jesus. Immediately, this otherwise unstoppable man was begging for mercy. Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of Israel, but he had the most success among Gentiles. News from this location would spread across the Roman world.

Read Mark 5:1-20: Christianity is a life culture amidst various death cultures. Islam is an obvious death culture. God is the author of life and health. We need to communicate healthy notions. God's people should not litter their bodies with skull tattoos of death symbols.

The Devil comes to kill, steal and destroy. His demons are adept at bringing depression, frustration, and hatred. It is consistent that a man ruled by demons would live in a graveyard. He probably wants to be away from people...and they probably want to be away from him.

The demon-possessed man is living in the most prosperous and modern city in the area and he is miserable. We normally associate squalor with such things. It makes no difference if you are down and out or up and out...if you are outside of God's presence. This man is out of control. As you study counterculture and anarchist cultures with no regard to the common good, you find illogical and reactionary personalities.

He has super-human strength. They say that people on PCP can have superhuman strength at times.

Hysterical strength is a display of extreme [physical strength](#) by humans, beyond what is believed to be within their capacity, usually occurring when people are in—or perceive themselves, or others, to be in—[life-or-death situations](#).^{[1][2]} It was also reported to be present

during situations of [altered states of consciousness](#), such as [trance](#) and alleged [possession](#). Its description is mostly based on [anecdotal evidence](#).

The name refers to [hysteria](#), a [nosological](#) category that included bouts of [superhuman strength](#) as one of the possible symptoms, but in [Europe](#), this had also been an attribution in previous cases of alleged [demonic possession](#).^{[3][4][5]} [Charcot](#) imputed to the phase of hysterical attacks called *clownism* the presence of strength and agility not consistent with the age and sex of the person, which before in the Catholic ritual of [exorcism](#) was attributed to demonic force. Thus, the cause of the phenomenon began at that time to be addressed by the investigation of [insanity](#).^[5] During that period in the 19th century, the term *hysterical strength* could also be found in the intersection of such fields, scientific and religious, for instance mentioned by the [Society for Psychical Research](#) regarding a statement given by a physician.^[6]

It was also described in reports of trance or possession in several other cultures, as for example in the [New Testament](#) ([Mark 5:4](#)) or in [shamanic](#) practices.^{[7][8]}

Unexpected strength is claimed to occur during the now widely rejected [pseudoscientific](#) condition of [excited delirium](#).^{[9][10]}

It is interesting that Satanic temptations sell the idea of pleasure or pride, but they deliver misery and loss. This crazed man wanted nothing to do with people. He is tethered to the most unclean place. Kids who think that they will have a more exciting life by skipping school and doing drugs often end up living in cardboard boxes on the streets. It is also a good fit to see hogs raised here. They were considered an unclean animal to the Jews.

Demons are invisible; but they desire recognition. Indwelling in a person give the demons an image, a voice and an identity among men. The demons in this man were part of a group called *Legion*. Demons and angels exist in rank and levels of authority, just like the military. Jesus obliged them by sending the demons into the swine, once they left the man. Then God just directed them to run off of the cliff over the sea to their death.

Having 2,000 hogs was an exceptionally large herd for that time. Additionally, pork is not kosher, so they were not destined for Jewish consumption. They could have been likely contract grown for the Roman army provisions. That was a provision and logistics location.

Yes. Salted pork (or salted/ cured pork products) was commonly included in Roman military rations alongside items like hardtack (buccellatum), grain (wheat or barley), olive oil, wine, cheese, and sometimes salted or dried fish. Salted pork preserved well for marching campaigns and garrison supplies, making it practical for soldiers.

It is interesting that the people were freaked out when they saw the demon possessed guys in his right mind. Instead of thanking Jesus they became extremely uncomfortable, while others just marveled. It would be like Jesus closing down a shipping terminal. It would seem out of place, and create a lot of anxiety.

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)

Crisis Opportunities

Read Mark 5:21-43: The religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus. God uses extreme health issues to open people (closed hearts) to the idea of asking for God's help. This leader of the synagogue begs Jesus to heal his nearly dead daughter. He was desperately trying to hold onto his most prized thing any way he could. By the time Jesus got there she was dead. The mourners were thinking that Jesus was making a mockery of trying to suggest anything about this girl's corpse. "Hey show's over!" The people were awe-struck to see her get up. Their mind was blown.

A woman who could not stop bleeding purposefully touched Jesus on the chance that it would heal her. She had gone to every doctor she could and spent all her money. She was desperate financially and medically. God healed her.