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## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: Luke 8:26-39*

**Bible Reading:** Luke 8:26-39 CSB 26 Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus got out on land, a demonpossessed man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!” 29 For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places. 30 “What is your name?” Jesus asked him. “Legion,” he said, because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. 32 A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and Jesus gave them permission. 33 The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. 34 When the men who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the town and in the countryside. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36 Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered. 37 Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked Jesus to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. So, getting into the boat, he returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had departed begged Jesus earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said, 39 “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:26-39 CSB)

**SUMMARY:** Jesus’ encounter with the Gerasene demoniac —“Legion”— is Scripture’s most vivid account of demonic possession and deliverance. For centuries, believers accepted it as fact, but the rise of modern science led many in the West to dismiss such miracles as superstition or

misdiagnosed mental illness. Yet Scripture affirms a spiritual dimension of human life beyond empirical explanation. As secular thought grew medical and skeptical, many in the global South found their lived experiences aligning with the biblical worldview. This story reveals both the dehumanizing power of evil and the liberating authority of Christ. When the demons entered a herd of pigs that plunged into the lake, the witnesses saw undeniable evidence of the supernatural—yet they responded with fear rather than faith. This dramatic deliverance stands as a powerful testimony to Jesus' supreme authority over the darkest spiritual forces. Today, Jesus' power still brings freedom where fear and bondage once ruled.

**I. Preliminaries**

**A. Role of Demons (evil spirits) in Luke's Gospel**

• Demons, “evil spirits have substantial roles in many levels of Luke...Luke...highlights the presence & influence of evil spirits...They appear more frequently in Luke...than...the other Gospels.” – Chakrita Saulina • “Essential...[to] the concept of being [demon-]possessed are that the demon has arrived from the outside, is alien to the person's constitution, and causes harm to the person.” –Linda Joelsson • “Demon possession can be defined as ‘a culturally shared belief in the potential for a maleficent spiritual being [demon] to disrupt, often in a way observable to others, the well-being of an unwilling host’.” — Eric Sorensen

**B. Demons' Activities**

• “The main activity of demons in the NT ministry of Jesus is not to tempt to sin but to cause disability, disease & insanity...they are clearly associated with the activity of the Devil.” [GJ. Riley, DDD, pp. 237-8] • “The nature & function of demons in the NT era [is] to defile and bring to evil their human subjects & hosts, in both physical & spiritual ways. Demons sought to indwell humans & were able to do so in large numbers: the Gerasene demoniac was indwelt; he said by ‘Legion, for we are many’ (Mk. 5:9). Mary Magdelene was said to have been healed of seven demons (Lk. 8:2...) ...The main effect of demons on the host...was to cause physical & mental suffering, and anti-social behavior: the violent Gerasene demoniac lives in tombs & deserted places, is... continually crying out & gashing himself with stones...” [GJ. Riley, Dictionary of Deities & Demons, p. 239]

**• Major Cases of Demon (unclean spirit) Possession in Luke's Gospel**

Bible reference	Description of symptoms	Common modern interpretive lens
<p><b>Luke 4:31–37</b> (Capernaum synagogue)</p>	<p>A man in the synagogue is “possessed by a demon” (unclean spirit). He cries out loudly in Jesus’ presence, calling out Jesus’ identity. When the spirit is cast out, it convulses him violently and then leaves.</p>	<p>Often read as a clear case of direct demonic oppression, where the spirit opposes Jesus’ teaching and is publicly rebuked and expelled. Many take it as a straightforward example of spiritual warfare, not reducible to mental illness.</p>
<p><b>Luke 4:40–41</b> (Evening healing at Capernaum)</p>	<p>Many are brought to Jesus with various illnesses and some “demon-possessed,” tormented by demons. The demons repeatedly cry out, recognizing Jesus as “the Son of</p>	<p>Frequently interpreted as a mixed group: some may have what is now called mental or neurological disorders; others are under spiritual oppression. Many see this as showing Jesus</p>

Bible reference	Description of symptoms	Common modern interpretive lens
	God” or “the Holy One of God,” then depart.	addresses both physical/psychological suffering and spiritual evil together.
<p><b>Luke 8:26–39</b> (Gerasene demoniac)</p>	<p>“Legion” has many demons, lives among tombs, doesn’t wear clothes, can’t be restrained by chains, is driven into desolate places, and exhibits extreme, violent behavior. After Jesus casts out the demons, he is restored to his right mind, clothed, and sits calmly at Jesus’ feet.</p>	<p>The most debated case. Some see it as severe psychiatric illness (e.g., psychosis or dissociative disorder); others see literal demonic possession. Many modern approaches hold both possibilities open: biological/psychological vulnerability plus demon/unclean spirit possession. (Some interpret it symbolically, e.g., as a critique of Roman oppression.)</p>
<p><b>Luke 9:37–43a</b> (Boy with an unclean spirit)</p>	<p>A father’s only son is seized by a spirit causing him to cry out, fall into convulsions, foam at the mouth, and be “mauled” by the spirit. The condition is recurrent and severe, leaving him exhausted and dependent on his father.</p>	<p>Often read as resembling epilepsy or a seizure disorder, yet Luke explicitly attributes it to an unclean spirit. Many suggest medical and spiritual explanations are not mutually exclusive: a neurological condition may also be a channel of demonic oppression.</p>

**C. Position of the Gerasene Demoniac Episode**

• Jesus’ ‘Sermon on the Plain’...is followed by a series of remarkable stories of Jesus’ power over creation...he stills a violent storm by merely rebuking the wind & waves (8:22-25); he heals 3 seemingly unhealable people: a man possessed by a legion of demons (8:26-39), a hemorrhaging woman (8:42-48) & raises Jairus’ daughter.” [CR. Campbell, JT. Pennington, Reading the NT as Christian Scripture, p] • “Usually, this story is taught as an example of Jesus’ power. He had just calmed a storm to display his power over nature; now he calms a demoniac to demonstrate his power over [the supernatural].” –David C. Cramer • “The healing of the Gerasene demoniac occupies a crucial role... Its placement immediately after Jesus’ calming of the storm (Lk. 8:22-25) underscores His power—not only over natural phenomena, but over the destructive forces of evil as well.” [N. Joseph Torchia, “Eschatological Elements in...Gerasene Demoniac,” IBS (2001) p. 5] • “This...[case] demonstrate[s] Jesus’...power over the forces of evil...to heal even the most extreme cases & restore them to wholeness. In conjunction with the preceding & following, it also establishes his authority... This [episode] is one of a series of Jesus’ confrontations with forces...considered uncontrollable. It follows the calming of the storm...& precedes the raising...of [Jairus’] daughter.” [Brian P. Roden, Luke 8:26-39, pp. 1, 3] > Jesus Crosses the Sea to encounter the Gerasene Demoniac, ‘Legion’ • “Jesus’ contest [is] with the demonic wind & waves as he crosses over into hostile territory...The objective of Jesus’ campaign is revealed...next...When Jesus & his disciples disembark...in the ‘country of the Gerasenes,’ they encounter...a man possessed by a Roman legion of unclean spirits living in a graveyard by a herd of swine [pigs].” [Nathanael Vette, “Son of Man & the Sea: ...in Mark’s Sea Voyages,” JSNT, V. 47(4) (2025) pp. 583-4]

**D. Summary of this Case**

• “Jesus is confronted by a man possessed of a ‘legion’ of demons...The possessed man was not ordinary in any way. He lives among the tombs (Mk 5:2–3), perhaps suggesting a necropolis [elaborate cemetery]. No one had been able to bind him. Nothing could restrain this man, for he wrenched apart chains & broke the fetters (5:3 4). ...The wretched man howls day & night & bruises himself with stones (Mk 5:5). His self-designation as ‘Legion, for we are many’ (Mk. 5:9) would bring to mind the Roman legions... The casting of this legion of demons into a nearby herd of swine (5:11–12) may well have [recalled the Roman] Legion X Fretensis...in Israel throughout the first & 2nd centuries, whose mascot was the [wild pig’s] head. The drowning in the Sea of Galilee [echoes] the final fate of evil spirits, who will be cast into the abyss... From a Jewish perspective, the demonized man was an example of wretchedness & uncleanness that could not be surpassed. Yet, after his encounter with Jesus, this man sits before Jesus (perhaps as a [disciple]?), clothed, & in his right mind (5:15). Indeed, so restored is this man that he begs to accompany Jesus & take part in his ministry (5:18–20). This man, in effect, becomes Jesus’ first apostle to the Gentiles: “...he went away & began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; & all people marveled” (Mk. 5:20).” [Craig A. Evans, “Jesus and the Spirits,” OCMS (16 Dec. 2009) pp. 5-6]

### **E. A Genuine Christian Cannot be Demon-Possessed**

• “‘Is it possible for God and evil to coexist?’ To put the question another way, ‘Can the Holy Spirit & a demon simultaneously inhabit a Christian?’...[NO! Paul says] “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20). Paul [says] the [Christian’s] body is the Spirit’s temple...it is the ‘place’ of the Spirit’s dwelling in the individual believer... The Holy Spirit not only resides in the spirit of the Christian, but also in that same Christian’s body... A human is not composed of various independent parts, which can be inhabited separately by the Holy Spirit & demons, but [he/she] is a unified & fully integrated whole [indwelt by the Holy Spirit].” [Steven S. Carter, “Demon Possession & the Christian,” Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies, 3/1 (2000) pp. 25-26, 31]

• “Demonic possession [implies]...demons having direct & complete control over an individual’s personality & behaviour. There is no biblical basis for a Christian to become demon-possessed...‘Scripture says plainly that the entrance of God’s salvation into a believer’s life will prevent that kind of satanic control [i.e., demon possession]’ (McKinley). Believers are under new management, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, & indwelt by the Person of the Holy Spirit & ‘Demons don’t have the ability to evict the Holy Spirit of God’...” [Godfrey Harold, E. Nel, “Investigation ...on Demonic Oppression or Demonic Possession,” Pharos J. of Theology, V. 103 #2 (2022) pp. ] • “The [Christian] believer belongs to the kingdom of God, [&] thus is not owned by Satan. Further, there is no biblical data to indicate that the believer can be demon possessed.” [Roger K. Bufford, Counseling & the Demonic (1988) p. 103]

### **F. Demon-Oppression vs. Demon-Possession**

• “Some biblical scholars...distinguish between demonic possession & demonic oppression... ‘Oppression usually denotes influence from outside the person, (as opposed to) ‘demon possession’ which...is typically more severe ...because the [unclean] spirit is dwelling within the person who is ‘possessed.’...proponents of the oppression/possession distinction focus their attention on the question, ‘Where is the [unclean] spirit?’ ...[While] there is no biblical basis for a Christian to become demon possessed. However, there’s no denying that Christians can be sorely vexed [oppressed] by demonic activity...Thus, oppression...[is] external demonic influence as opposed to demon possession which is far more internal in nature... Distinguishing between the two requires discernment.” [Godfrey Harold, Eugenio Nel, Op. cit., pp.]

### **II. Attitudes Towards Demons**

➤ “There are two equal & opposite errors...about [demons]. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is...an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They [the demons]...are equally pleased

by both errors..." – CS. Lewis A. The West's Scientific Naturalistic Worldview Denies the Supernatural

- "It is impossible to use electric light & the wireless & to avail ourselves of modern medical & surgical discoveries, & at the same time to believe in the NT world of demons & spirits." –Rudolf Bultmann, "NT & Mythology" (1953)
- Response: "Neither modern science nor R. Bultmann has actually disproven the ideas of possession & exorcism." –CS Lewis B. Science: World is a 'Closed System' of Natural Causes & Effects
- "After the Enlightenment, the success of science's naturalistic methodology led to the widespread view...that the world was a 'closed system' of natural causes & effects...Within this naturalistic worldview, Satan & the Powers, and any other...spiritagent [demon] can only be understood as...relics of our pre-scientific past." [Gregory A. Boyd, "Personified Evil...", in M. Grebe (ed.) T&T Clark Handbook of Suffering & the Problem of Evil, p. ]
- "Many Western scholars...dismiss...all talk of spirit-agents and all reports about people encountering these agents as... 'primitive' ...This cavalier dismissal... presupposes the modern western...understanding of reality is superior to all ancient, non-European...ways of looking at the world...['Ethnocentric']" [GA. Boyd, Op. cit., p. ]
- Response: "John Pilch suggests that 90% of the world today accepts both 'ordinary reality and non-ordinary reality,' the latter including God and spirits." [John J. Pilch, Visions & Healing in the Acts..., p. 17]
- "The 'closed continuum' of cause and effect is a modernist myth...God, who is always present & active within the world, sometimes shockingly, may well have been...active on this occasion [the incarnation miracle] (NT. Wright). For Wright the assumption of a creator God who is involved in His creation makes the reality of miracles [e.g.,] the virgin birth, possible." [S. Alkie, Miracles Revisited, p. 331] C. Critiques of the Western 'Scientific' Approach to Spirit-Possession & Exorcism
- Critics "point to three fatal 'mechanisms of reduction'...in Western science...[1.] our subjectivity (egocentrism), [2.] our enlightened rationality...& [3.] our alleged cultural superiority (ethnocentrism)... All 3 mechanisms...cast their shadow on Jesus research...especially...spirit possession and exorcism... [There's] a common tendency among [scholars] to psychologize, to rationalize...& to pathologize...[demon-] possession...in the NT...[They] employ current psychological

**C. Critiques of the Western 'Scientific' Approach to Spirit-Possession & Exorcism** ➤ Critics "point to three fatal 'mechanisms of reduction'...in Western science...[1.] our subjectivity (egocentrism), [2.] our enlightened rationality...& [3.] our alleged cultural superiority (ethnocentrism)... All 3 mechanisms...cast their shadow on Jesus research...especially...spirit possession and exorcism... [There's] a common tendency among [scholars] to psychologize, to rationalize...& to pathologize...[demon-] possession...in the NT...[They] employ current psychological theories... Thus, NT reports are still considered as cases of hysteria, mania, or epilepsy...which ultimately makes possession irrelevant." [Christian Strecker, "Jesus & the Demoniacs," in BJ. Malina (ed.) Social Setting of Jesus & the Gospels, p. 119]

#### **D. Science & Medicine assert their Sovereignty over Illness, Health, & Healing**

objective phenomena [and] places the primary emphasis on biomedical symptoms and pathogens [germs, viruses]." [Chakrita M. Saulina, pp. 75-76] ➤ In today's Western World, "therapy & healing in modern societies are located in the fields of medicine...There's ...a general consensus on scientific and medical interpretative sovereignty over illness and health and the corresponding healing processes." [Nicole M. Bauer, "The Devil & the Doctor: (De)Medicalization of Exorcism in the Roman Catholic Church," Religions, V. 13, #87 (2022) p. 4]

#### **E. Is the West's Psychiatric Paradigm guilty of Medico-centrism?**

- “There’s a long tradition in Western medicine of categorising demon or spirit possession [among] ‘dissociative syndromes described in [the psychiatrists]’... Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) [specifically as a] ‘Dissociative Identity Disorder’ (DID)...[Yet,] the perspective...which assumes... psychiatric conditions apply universal[ly] has over and over been singled out [for its] medico-centricism... [So,] it does not make sense to take the DSM category as yardstick to...analyse spirit and demon possession...in most other cultural settings, including in NT texts.” [Peter F. Craffert, “What does it mean to be possessed by a spirit or demon?” HTS, Vol. 71(1) (2015) pp. 4-5]
- Note: “Medico-centricism:” an approach prioritizing the biomedical model...over the patient’s lived experience, personal preferences, and holistic needs. It treats the doctor’s perspective as the only objective reality. ➤ “‘Medico-centrism,’ the view that only current western views of sickness & healing are authentic & that disputes the many claims to cures outside western views.” –Craig Keener, “Scripture & Context,” *Asbury Journal*, V 70/1, p. 39] F. Post-Modern Worldviews ➤ “In western culture, as enlightenment-modernity is replaced by the current late-modern milieu, there’s a greater openness to spiritual ideas such as angels & demons than in the [recent] past. No longer will the mention of the devil, angels or demons bring the social conversation to a halt...” [Alistair J. Cuthbert, *Participating in Divine Conflict*, University of St Andrews, Scotland (2023) p. 2]

### G. Exorcism’s Growing Popularity in the Catholic Church

- Nicole Bauer sounds the alarm at the rising popularity of exorcism in the Catholic Church: “Demonic possession is, [modern exorcists] claim, a separate phenomenon to mental illness, & the exorcist steps in where the psychiatrist cannot help. This argument helps to establish...exorcism not only as equal to the world of medicine, but even as superior, as an exorcist provides a service when modern medicine fails.” [NM. Bauer, Op. cit., p. 10]

### H. Exorcism/Deliverance Neglected by large segments of Western Christianity

- “Exorcism does not appear on the radar of many forms of Western Christianity. Typical believers... will not... hear it spoken of in sermons ...It seems that the devil & his demonic hordes have been largely ‘cast out’ of many Western Christian worldviews—exorcised through...deliberate amnesia’.” [RA. Parry, “Exorcism,” WK. Kay (ed.) *Exorcism & Deliverance*, p. ]

## III. Jesus’ Demon-Exorcisms discounted as Mental Disorders

### A. “Demon-possession” is dismissed as “merely mental illness”

- ❖ “What many...attributed to demonic forces...[is] widely understood as mental illness...Many... assume... spiritual healing [belongs to] the ‘primitive’ past, when people didn’t...understand...mental illness.” –Hillary Raining
- ❖ “Some modern scholars have identified all the [diseases] afflicting biblical demoniacs as illnesses and concluded that the historical Jesus was essentially a healer [& not a genuine exorcist].” –Brian Levack
- ❖ “The exorcism of the Gerasene demon should be translated as Jesus delivering a man of some psychiatric disorder rather than exorcising him from a demon...Demons & spirits [are] ...outdated means of stating that people suffered from various illnesses...” –Hans Van Eyghen
- ❖ “The description of the “demon-possessed” man in Luke 8 is...[a] very accurate, description of an individual suffering from acute & serious mental illness.” –Ragy R. Girgis
- ❖ “In the psychiatric literature...there’s...a pervasive, largely unquestioned, assumption that what we call mental illness today was understood as demon possession in history...The possibility of ‘true’ possession... [i.e.,] real demonic entities at work, is excluded by definition from the medical & scientific frame of reference.” –Christopher CH. Cook

### B. The Biblical View allows for Spiritual Causation – “Man is also spirit...” – James Dunn,

### Graham Twelftree

- ❖ “Jesus saw his exorcisms not...as cures of...merely physical ailment[s] or mental illness[es], but...wresting individuals...from ...Satan... Jesus...claimed...[to be] tackling the malady...at its spiritual root.” –James Dunn, Graham Twelftree
- ❖ When “we recognize that man is also spirit as well as body and mind, it [is]...obvious that physical or mental illness can have spiritual causes. The label ‘demon-possession’ ...[takes] account of the evil active in the spiritual dimension...of many particular ailments.” –James Dunn, Graham Twelftree
- ❖ “It is...foolish to treat a spiritually-rooted [disease] merely as a physical or mental illness” James Dunn, Graham Twelftree C. Distinctives of Demon Possession? Invasion from outside of an ‘alien being’ –Demon/evil spirit
- ❖ “Demonic attribution posits the invasive ontological existence of another being [demon] while strategies devised to deal with mental disorders... focus on issues within the individual him- or herself.” –Loren Stuckenbruck
- ❖ “Essential...[to] the concept of being [demon-]possessed are that the demon has [1.] arrived from the outside, [2.] is alien to the person’s constitution, and [3.] causes harm to the person.” –Linda Joelsson
- ❖ [1.] exogenous (not endogenous) [2.] foreign (not natural, innate) [3.] malevolent (not benevolent, helpful)

**IV. The Majority World’s View of Spirit/Demon Possession** > “Anthropologists have documented [spirit/demon] possession claims...in a strong majority of the world’s cultures studied. Their wide occurrence...warns against assuming that they are generated solely from a particular cultural framework (e.g., early Judaism...).” [Craig S. Keener, Op. cit., p. 217]

> “Studies overwhelmingly confirm the existence of experiences indigenously interpreted as spirit [or ‘demon’] possession by a vast range of cultures around the world...even though a majority of Western scholars...demur from [disagree with] the indigenous interpretation.” [Craig S. Keener, “Crooked Spirits...,” Journal of Mind & Behavior, Vol. 39, #4 (2018) p. 346]

> “E. Bourguignon...observed that spirit-possession beliefs are geographically & culturally pervasive...Sampling 488 societies, she found spirit-possession beliefs in 74% of them (i.e., 360 societies), with particularly high [%] in the Pacific [islands] (88%) & 77% around the Mediterranean.” [Erika Bourguignon, “Spirit Possession Belief & Social Structure,” A. Bharati (ed.) Realm of the Extra-Human, pp. 19-21] > “Recent [US] surveys...lend support to the generality of such [spirit-possession] beliefs, with nearly 7 in 10 Americans (68%) believing that angels & demons are active in the world (Pew Research Center, 2008) & an additional 19.5% endorsing the ‘probable’ existence of demons (Levin, 2016; Stark, 2007).” [CEM. Lloyd, “...Externality, Oppression, & Agency...Demonic in Mental Illness,” Pastoral Psychology (2023) V. 72, p. 502] > “The sometimes-violent [depiction] of spirit possession in early Christian narratives have parallels in some other cultures. Spirit possession is associated with extraordinary strength in Mk. 5:4 [demoniac ‘Legion’], where no one was able to bind the possessed man, & only Jesus could deliver him...Cross-cultural parallels suggest... that Mark need not have simply invented this...In a variety of diverse cultures...spirit possession sometimes yields apparently superhuman strength that makes restraint difficult or impossible.” [Craig S. Keener, Op. cit. p. 231] > A modern “description of spirit possession in many African societies would hardly surprise readers of Mark’s Gospel: he notes that spirit-possession drives the person to live in the forest, to jump into fire, or to use sharp objects to hurt himself. Similarly, in Mark a person controlled by spirits might dwell outside society (Mk. 5:3), jump into fire (Mk. 9:22), or use sharp objects on his body (Mk. 5:5).” [Craig S. Keener, Op. cit. p. 233]

> “In view of the wide range of phenomena attested [in today’s societies], some features of early Christian accounts that have appeared suspect to modern western interpreters [now] appear plausible as genuine descriptions of possession behavior. These include the self-destructive behavior

of possessed persons in Mk. 5:5 [Gerasene demoniac] & 9:22, the violent behavior of the possessed person in Acts 19:16, & the mantic behavior of the enslaved woman in Acts 16:16-17...Nothing in the early Christian descriptions requires us to assume that they could not depend on genuine eyewitness material." [Craig S. Keener, Op. cit. p. 235]

➤ "NT accounts that some scholars consider overly-dramatized, such as the self-destructive behavior of possessed persons in Mark 5:5 [the demoniac, 'Legion'] ...have clear analogues in modern accounts..." [Craig S. Keener, "Spirit Possession as a Cross-cultural Experience," Bulletin for Biblical Research, V. 20.2 (2010) p. 216] ➤ In "Growing Evidence for Demonic Possession," Stafford Betty asks psychiatrists [to] "question their materialist assumption that mental illness is strictly a matter of an aberrant brain, carefully examine the literature on possession, & [seek] to determine why exorcists & deliverance ministers often succeed where psychiatry fails." [Stafford Betty, "Growing Evidence for Demonic Possession," in J. of Religion & Health, V. 44, #1 (2005) p. 13] ➤ "Studies reveal 'an altered neurophysiology' during...[spirit-]possession states. While some anthropologists note that [these] studies cannot resolve whether supernatural factors might supplement natural ones, it is clear that neurophysiological changes, including hyperarousal, do occur [during spirit-possession]." [Keener, Op. cit., p. ]

**V. The Demoniac, 'Legion,' his Location & Condition** • "The Gerasene demoniac represents the extreme end of the spectrum of demon possession in the Synoptic[s]." [Graham H. Twelftree, Jesus the Exorcist, p. 82] • "The healing of the Gerasene Demoniac is arguably the most dramatic exorcism in Luke's Gospel" –CM. Saulina • It's "the longest, most detailed &...complex of the exorcism accounts in the Synoptic Gospels." –Teresa Calpino • "The most significant of the demonic [episodes] in the Gospels is...the Gerasene demoniac." –Archie Wright

• "This is the most disconcerting & scandalizing of all miracle stories" –Rene Latourelle • "The most spectacular encounter between Jesus & demons is...the Gerasene demoniac...Details of how severely possessed [he] was ...[show] how impossible his healing...by normal means." –Frank W. Hughes A. The Location – Demon Encounter in a Gentile Area • "Geographically, this encounter between Jesus & the man having many demons takes place on the eastern shore of the Sea of Tiberius, "opposite Galilee" (Luke 8:26). If Galilee was viewed by the religious elite as "less pure" due to a significant number of Gentiles living in some of its cities & its distance from the religious power center of Jerusalem, then the eastern shore of the lake & beyond (known as 'the Decapolis') were even more unclean due to Gentile predominance. Even though some Jews may have lived in this area, the presence of a large herd of swine [pigs] in the vicinity (...Mark 5 puts the number around 2,000) makes it clear this is Gentile territory... This is Jesus's first & only journey into predominantly Gentile territory in [Luke's] Gospel." [Brian P. Roden, "Exegesis of Luke 8:26-39," (Dec. 2016) p. 2] B. Don't Blame the Victims of Demon-possession! • "We are told nothing of how this man arrived at this condition." –Archie Wright • The NT does not "explore reasons for [demon-]possession, or blame the demonized person for...causing or encouraging the presence of the demon; ...the demonized are... passive victims. They play no part in the exorcism; Jesus required them to do nothing to effect the cure." [Keith Warrington, Miracles in the Gospels, p. 15] • A related incident: Jesus' "disciples asked 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 3 Jesus answered, "It's not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." (John 9:23) "The NT makes clear...suffering isn't always a direct result of a person's sin." ESV C. Symptoms of Demon Possession • The Gerasene demoniac "was under the complete dominion of Satan[']s agents (demons)], both in body & soul... His mental faculties were under the direction of a 'legion' of... demons...(& his bodily strength was only employed for his own injury & shame.'" (Ryle). Jesus' encounter with this man (...Mk. 5:1-20) illuminates several signs of demon possession which are very helpful...to discern whether such possession is at play...: ➤ Demon/s indwell the possessed [person] (Mk 5:2a). ➤ The possessed are often drawn to isolated dark places (Mk 5:2b-3). ➤ The possessed

can have supernatural strength (Mk 5:3-4). > The possessed experience great torment (Mk 5:5a) > The possessed experience strong desires to self-harm (Mk 5:5b). > Demons speak through those they possess (Mk 5:7-12). > The possessed are often out of their right minds (Mk 5:15). [Godfrey Harold, Eugenio Nel, Op. cit., pp. ] D. The Demonic, 'Legion's Condition 0. Unclothed: "For a long time he had worn no clothes" "He was scarcely even human" —Joel Green 1. Unclean: "Jesus meets a man with an unclean spirit living among unclean tombs surrounded by people employed in unclean occupations [pigs], all in unclean Gentile territory." [James R. Edwards, Mark, p. 155] > Unclean: "Descriptions of uncleanness dominate...The man is possessed by an ['unclean spirit' (8:29)] & lives among the tombs [(8:27)] ...His contact with the dead makes him unclean according to Scripture (Num. 5:2 [etc.]), so ...he is not only a Gentile, & therefore 'unclean,' but he is nearly 'radioactive' in his uncleanness." [TG. Gombis, Mark, p. 169] 2. Unhoused: "did not stay in a house, but in the tombs" 3. "Unhinged" —Not in his "right mind" (8:35) "madness...in connection with demon possession" —AR. Solevåg 4. Unrestrained: "no one could bind him...not even with a chain...His hands & feet had often been bound with chains & shackles, but he tore the chains apart & broke the shackles. No one could subdue him" (Mk. 5:3-4) 5. Demon-possessed: "a demon-possessed man," Called "'Legion,' because many demons had entered him." ❖ The [Gk.] word *daimonivzomai* is used 13 times in the NT, occurring only in the gospels...It is significant that it is used a total of 6 times in reference to the Gadarene demoniac. This man was totally controlled by the demons inside of him...This is a [clear] case of typical demon possession. This man was clearly under demonic control & the demons possessing him seem to have determined his every action... Demons...seek to destroy & distort the divine image within mankind." [Steven S. Carter, Op. cit., pp. 22-23] 6. Voice co-opted by demons: "he cried out...in a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me..." (Lk. 8:28) "...we are many" (Mk. 5:9); "It's clear... the spirit has the ability to control the man's speech" —Archie Wright 7. Seizures: "Many times it had seized him..." 8. Superhuman strength: "bound by chains & shackles, [but,] he would snap the restraints" • "The unique characteristic of possession in this account is the man's superhuman strength. Luke's perspective on the man's extreme possession is clear. The legion of demons caused his social isolation, convulsive fits, madness, & extreme strength. Upon exorcism, the man is relieved from these ailments." [Joy L. Vaughan, *Spirit Possession in Luke-Acts...*, Asbury Theological Seminary, KY, US (2020) p. 151] 9. Violent: "extremely violent, so...no one was able to pass by that way" (Mt. 8:28) made the road impassable.

10. Self-harm: "Night & day...he would cry out & cut himself with stones" (Mk. 5:5) 'cut himself.' The goal of demons is to destroy the person created in the image of God. The man's demonization is evident in his social isolation, superhuman strength, & self-destructive tendencies." [ESV] > Supernatural Knowledge & Super-human Strength ❖ "The man meets Jesus 'as he stepped out on land'— before anyone can identify him & spread word of his arrival— indicates that the demoniac has obtained his knowledge of Jesus' identity through the super-natural beings that control him. If demoniacs, when encountering Jesus, 'immediately and truly recognized him as the Messiah, apart from anything which they had heard regarding him, it seems psychologically impossible to hold that they were simply insane.' This fact, combined with the superhuman strength...points to...a genuine case of demonic dominion over a human being, rather than a psychosis or imagined condition." [Brian P. Roden, Op. cit., p. 4] > Dehumanized, Self-destructive: "Night & day...he would cry out & cut himself with stones" (Mark 5:5) • "Most people would agree that the possessed man seems to lose almost all traces of his humanity due to the demons' possession: living among the tombs & wearing no clothes (8:27)." [CM. Saulina, Op cit., p. 94] • "This is a human being out of control, exponentially unclean, & enslaved to chaotic forces that are slowly forcing him to destroy himself. He is a walking exhibition of chaos itself, of creation disordered by impurity, death, and the demonic... His 'howling night & day' (Mk. 5:5) reveals him to be a microcosm of the 'whole creation...groaning for redemption' (Rom. 8:22)." [Andy Johnson, *Holiness & the Missio Dei*, p. 117] > Exceptional Case – with 'a Major Mental Disorder' • "Gospel accounts...generally describe people with physical medical conditions..."

rather than...a mental illness. The notable exception...the Gerasene demoniac, [is] suffering from a major mental disorder.” –Christopher CH. Cook E. Jesus' Power-Encounter with Demons (Lk. 8:28-33) > This episode “depicts an intense power struggle between Jesus & a horde of demons.” — Christina Abraham 1. Jesus goes on the Offensive • “When the Holy One of God arrives, [Jesus] goes on the offensive...by the Holy Spirit, making him the vehicle of God's reign, Jesus goes into battle to reclaim this helpless human for God's lordship...In this battle...Jesus brings the...presence of God to bear on the man's situation by liberating him from his living death in... polluted surroundings & restoring him to shalom [wholeness]” [Andy Johnson, Op. cit., pp. 116-8] • “In the Galilean ministry [evil spirits]...frequently appear, Luke highlights Jesus' authority & superiority over them as depicted by his exorcisms & healings...In Jesus' exorcism...the demoniacs immediately respond when they encounter Jesus (4:34; 8:28...), & the response frequently contains the emotive aspect of the demon's cry denoting their fear. The demons have more words to say than Jesus, portraying a defense mechanism [on their part—They're on the defensive!] ...[Yet,] in the Galilean ministry, Luke portrays demons as powerful spirits...that cause many human maladies [diseases].” [Chakrita Saulina, Op. cit., pp. 192-4] 2. The Demoniac's Defensive Response to Jesus > “When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torment me!” 29 For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.” (Lk. 8:28-29) a. “He cried out...in a loud voice” (8:28) “cried out” Gk. *chradozo* which “suggests a sense of anxiety or alarm on the part of the demons at the approach of Jesus...The demons view Jesus as a threat to their wellbeing &...‘cry out’ in distress at the sight of him.” [Michael J. Morris, *Warding Off Evil*, p. 192] b. “He...fell down before” Jesus {cf. “At the name of Jesus every knee will bow...” (Phil. 2:10)} • “When he saw Jesus, he...fell down before him” “The demon-possessed man... fell on his knees before Jesus. The Greek verb...is often used to indicate a posture of worship.” [Timothy Gombis, Op. cit., p. 170] • “While the proskynesis [‘falling down before him’] by the...demoniac...is certainly not equivalent to the positive deference motivated by true faith in Jesus...Mark stresses...that the demons know who Jesus is [which] suggests the proskynesis this figure extends to Jesus correspondingly reflects the right response to...Jesus and is therefore ...to be understood positively.” [Ray M. Lozano, *Proskynesis of Jesus*, p. 38] c. “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Lk. 8:28) • “What do you have to do...” meaning “Why are you bothering us?” (Twelftree) “This phrase is probably...a defense mechanism to keep Jesus at bay [away].” (Morris) • “The demons invoke Jesus' identity in the form of a title...[with] the name of Jesus [&] his nature... [It's their] attempt to dictate or influence the actions of Jesus... the defense mechanism of the demons...The demons invert anti-demon language to repel Jesus...The address by the demons to Jesus...functions as a means of defense against the approaching exorcist [Jesus].” [Michael J. Morris, Op. cit., p. 193, 196] • Who Jesus was “must have been known to supernatural powers [demons] all along. Hence the demons must have recognized him for what he was. They recognized their Master, who was to put an end to their rule.” –LH. Silberman

3. Jesus is in Gentile Territory – “Most High God” • Until this point “Jesus had limited his ministry to a Jewish audience [/territory]...This would not be unexpected as Israel's Messiah. His entrance into the country of the Gerasenes –Gentile territory [Lk. 8:26] –...indicated a departure from that pattern... When the Legion asks ‘what have you to do with me?’ [8:28] the question echoes [Lk. 4:34] where Jesus cast out unclean spirits in the Jewish region of Galilee. But there is a subtle difference: > “What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? ...” (Lk. 4:34) > “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Lk. 8:28) [M. Heiser, *Demons*, p. iii] F. Demons Identify Jesus as the “Son of the Most High God” (Lk. 8:28) • “Satan & demons are the first characters to recognize Jesus' identity (as the Holy One of God, the Son of God, [etc.]), while many human characters...especially the religious leaders, fail to recognize who Jesus is... The demons' knowledge of Jesus' authoritative status [is manifest] several times in Jesus' exorcisms (4:34, 41,

8:28). They are fully aware of Jesus' superiority & his ability to expel & destroy them. The evil spirits' recognition of Jesus's identity...informs readers of who Jesus truly is." [Chakrita M. Saulina, Op. cit., p. 192] • "How Jesus is addressed contains an important theological point. The title: 'Son of the Most High God' is significant for OT cosmic geography. Recall that in Dt. 32:8-9 the 'Most High' had disinherited the nations ...assigning them to the...supernatural 'sons of God,' and then created Israel as His own inheritance... Those 'sons of God' rebelled and became corrupt (Ps. 84:1-4 ["God stands in the divine assembly; he pronounces judgment among the gods' 84:1] throwing God's order into chaos (Ps. 82:1-5) ...The exorcism of Legion is...about theological messaging. Legion recognizes that Jesus is the rightful Lord of the country of the Gerasenes –old 'Bashan' [assigned to Israel's 12 tribes] now under Gentile occupation...The fact that Jesus ventured into an area under Gentile governance in his day let everyone know that He was not merely the Messiah for Yahweh's portion. He was the Lord of Gentile lands as well." [Michael S. Heiser, Demons, p. iii] • Here "the legion of demons identifies Jesus as the Jesus, Son of the "Most High God" –a designation for God that indicates God's kingship over all the nations in addition to Israel (Dt. 32:8; Dan. 4:17). It is used in biblical contexts in which Gentiles recognize the ultimate authority of Israel's God (Gen. 14:18-20; Num. 24:16; Is. 14:14; Dan. 3:26). It also appears ...[in] Psalms where other spiritual entities regarded a 'gods' are in view... As [the 'Most High God'] Israel's God is the one true creator God, who stands apart from & over all gods of the nations & all other spiritual entities. He is uniquely the king & sovereign Lord over all. Jesus is the bearer of this very same authority...Because this episode takes place in Gentile territory, Jesus is called 'Son of the Most High God,' rather than 'Son of God'." [Timothy G. Gombis, Mark, pp. 168, 170] • In "Israel's biblical worldview, the God of Israel was the uniquely sovereign God who had no competitor & who alone was the Creator of all things. His 'Divine Council' reported to Him and was filled with 'gods' ...appointed to rule the nations on His behalf. These figures [–'gods'–] rebelled & were leading the nations astray into idolatry. Psalm 82 depicts the Most High God calling these gods to account and declaring their eventual judgment. This 'legion' of demons recognizes Jesus' true identity [as 'Son of the Most High God']." [Timothy G. Gombis, Op, cit. p. 170] G. Progression in the demons' confessions about Jesus • There's a progression in "the demoniacs' confession [Lk. 8:28] that Jesus is 'the Son of the Most High God.'... [Earlier Luke] says that the demons know Jesus as 'the Holy One of God.' [Luke 4:34]. Next in the general summary [Luke] tells readers that ['demons came out of many] & cry out, saying, 'You are the Son of God!" [Lk. 4:41]. Finally, at climax, these evil, supernatural beings witness through the demoniac that Jesus is 'the Son of the Most High God' [Lk. 8:28] ...The question ['Who is this?'] concludes the previous episode [Sea Crossing: Lk. 8:22-25], then this text provides a more explicit answer about who Jesus is: ['Son of the Most High God' (Luke 8:28)]." [Joseph K. Liem, "Healing of the Demoniac of Gerasenes," Trinity Theological College Singapore (2013) p. 26] H. Jesus asks "What's your name?" "My name is Legion, for we are many." (Mk. 5:9) > "What's your name?" Jesus asked... 'Legion,' he said, because many demons had entered him." (Lk. 8:30) > Jesus asked him, "What's your name?" He said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." (Mk. 5:9) > The same voice which said 'my name' [singular] says immediately 'we are': it has become a collective voice. > "The man possessed by demons is stripped of his individual identity, becoming a medium for a collective ("We are many"). The voice that speaks from him is not his own, but that of the "Legion," [alluding to] the Roman military occupation...an oppressive force...When Jesus asks, "What is your name?", the demons reply 'Legion,' a "response in which the 'I' is replaced by a 'we'". The demoniac speaks with a plural voice, indicating a fragmentation of the self and the takeover of his vocal apparatus by a multitude [of demons.]" [Jean Starobinski "Struggle with Legion: Literary Analysis Mk. 5:1-20," New Literary History, V. 4 #2 (1973) p. ] > "The name Legion means 'thousands,' a word taken from a Latin term for a large group of soldiers. [It] not only suggests a multiple possession, but also adds a military feel to the account. This is a true battle." [NET] • Contemporary evidence suggests "The revelation of the name Legion does not provide Jesus leverage over the demons but instead provides information about the possessing spirits...Likely, the name Legion is meant to illuminate the

severity of the man's condition & builds upon the plight of the demoniac described in Mk. 5:3–5. The extreme nature of this man's case is [due to the fact] that we are dealing with an instance of multiple possession." [Michael Williams, "Not Your Average Exorcist," Lexington Theol. Quart., Ch. 5, p. 16] The Demons' Negotiation with Jesus "29 ...Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man...31 They begged him not to banish them to the abyss. 32 A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and Jesus gave them permission. 33 The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned." (Lk. 8:29-22 CSB) A. The Demons begged not to be banished to the Abyss (Lk. 8:31) • "Luke says that the demons begged Jesus not to order them into the 'abyss' (Lk. 8:31) ...Luke brings a whole new dimension to Mark's story..." [Graham H. Twelftree, Jesus the Miracle-Worker, p. 156] • "In Hebrew cosmology, the abyss the demons feared was a 'watery deep' below the earth, connected to the seas. In trying to escape punishment in the abyss by requesting to enter the swine, the unclean spirits have obtained only a momentary reprieve. Their presence inside the pigs causes a stampede into the sea (8:33), providing visible confirmation that the evil spirits have left the man." [Brian P. Roden, Op. cit., p. 5] • "An allusion to the [Book of the Watchers] is found in Luke's...Gerasene demoniac [episode]. In Lk. 8:31...the evil spirits plea[d] not to be sent into the abyss, an allusion to...Jubilees 10. There we are told that 90% of the spirits of the giants have been bound up in the abyss (Tartarus) until the day of judgment. The spirit obviously is aware that at some point in time (Matt. 8:29) it too would be sent there for judgment." [Archie Wright, "Demonology of 1 Enoch & the NT Gospels," in LT. Stuckenbruck (ed.) Enoch & the Synoptic Gospels, p. 243] B. What's the Abyss? (Gk.: abyssos) • "The term Abyss occurs 9 times in 5 different passages in the NT. In Luke 8:31 it is the place to which demons do not wish to be sent. In Rom. 10:7 it is translated "the deep" and is the opposite of heaven, the one being above the earth and the other below. In Rev. 9:1-2 the "shaft [or well or pit] of the Abyss" is opened. In Rev. 11:7 there is a "beast that comes up from the Abyss." And finally in Rev. 20:1-3 Satan is chained and thrown into the Abyss for 1,000 years, the shaft being locked and sealed over him. This is the NT data that we have to work with. • The Greek translation of the OT uses "Abyss" to translate "the deep" (Gen 1:2; Ps. 42:7; 107:26) and "the depths of the earth" (Ps. 71:20). In the first group of passages it refers to the deep seas or primeval deep from which solid ground is separated and which in some Hebrew cosmologies lie under the earth. In the 2nd passage (Ps. 71:20) it refers to the place of the dead. These probably give us the background of Rom. 10:7 (either the place of the dead into which no living person can go or the deep as opposed to the heights of heaven), but they do not help us with Revelation. • In the intertestamental [Jewish] literature we discover what a first-century Jew like the author of Revelation thought of when he wrote "the Abyss." In 1 Enoch 10:4 a rebellious angel is bound & cast into darkness in a hole. This hole [abyss] seems to be distinguished from the final place of judgment, a place of fire mentioned in 1 Enoch 18:11 & 21:7, although this is also a pit. Likewise in Jubilees 5:6-11 the fallen angels are bound in a pit. With this background we can now understand John's image [in Revelation]. • The Abyss is apparently the prison of demons & fallen angelic beings (some Jews believed demons were fallen angels, while others distinguished them as being their offspring). This explains the fear of the demons in Luke 8:31. They wanted to remain free, not be placed in prison. Jesus apparently allows them freedom because the time of judgment has not yet arrived. Likewise, it explains why Satan is imprisoned in the Abyss, for it is the standard place to imprison such beings.' ["Abyss," www.ivpress.com] • "If ['Abyss' (abyssos) is] ...interpreted purely in the light of OT usage... the Abyss is not a place name ...but simply [describes] large bodies of water...A study of...early Jewish writings... however, reveals ...it to be closely associated with punishment, especially of fallen heavenly beings & eventually became a place name ['the Abyss'] ...NT references are closer to nonscriptural [intertestamental Jewish] usage, [which NT] commentators recognize." [Kim Papaioannou, Geography of Hell, p. xxiii] • In the intertestamental book of Enoch the Abyss is a place of "temporal punishment till the Day of Judgment. This use of an Abyss to describe the temporary abode of fallen angels is paralleled in Jubilees 10:7 where the evil angels are also cast 'into an Abyss

till the Day of Judgment'." [Kim Papaioannou, Op. cit., p. 142] C. Why Did the Demons Beg to Go into the Pigs? (Lk. 8:32b) "Why the demons begged to be allowed to enter the swine [pigs] is unclear from the account. 1. Perhaps they didn't want to leave the area where they had been successful in doing their mischief among the people. 2. Perhaps, they were drawn to the unclean animals because of their own filthiness. 3. The demons may have made this strange request because it was their last chance to avoid confinement in the Abyss, the place of confinement to which evil spirits are doomed (Rev. 9:1-6).

Whatever their reasoning, it is clear from the account that demons had little power of their own and were unable to do anything without Jesus' permission. As Christians, we can take comfort in the knowledge that the forces of the enemy of our souls are under the complete control of God and can only act in ways He allows." [GotQuestions] D. Demons exorcised into a Herd of Pigs (Swine) (Lk. 8:32-33) • "The demons came out of the man & entered the pigs [which] rushed...into the lake & drowned." (Lk. 8:33 CSB) • "Unclean spirits came out & entered the pigs [which] rushed down...into the sea & drowned..." (Mk. 5:13 CSB) • "When they had come out, they entered the pigs...[which] rushed...into the sea & perished..." (Mt. 8:32 CSB) • In traditional Judaism [e.g. Josephus] demons "could be exorcised by providing a substitute host body, usually an animal...That a demon needed a host is an idea found also in the NT: demons cast out of the Gerasene demoniac ask to enter a herd of swine lest, apparently, they be left homeless (Mk. 5:12; Mt. 12:43-45)." [G.J. Riley, "Demon," in K. van der Toom (ed.) Dictionary of Deities & Demons in the Bible [DDD], p. 237] E. Why did Jesus allow the Demons to Enter the Pigs? • Many ask "why Jesus gave them permission, since the animals were destroyed. However, this is another example of a miracle that is a visual lesson. The demons are destructive: They were destroying the man. They destroyed the pigs. They destroy whatever they touch. The point was to take demonic influence seriously, as well as Jesus' power over it as a picture of the larger battle for human souls. There would be no doubt how the man's transformation had taken place." [NET Note on Mark 5:13] VII. The Demoniac Restored, Saved, Transformed, & Commissioned A. Jesus' Exorcism restores the man's lost humanity • The "people...came to Jesus & found the man [Gk. anthropos] the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus's feet, dressed & in his right mind..." (Lk. 8:35 CSB) • "In Lk. 8:33 there's... 'apo tou anthroponou' [out 'of the man' (Anthropos)] ...Only Luke specifies that the demons came 'out of the man'... [The phrase] has an important role for the whole narrative... From the beginning... [Luke] painted a rather gruesome picture of [the demoniac... conveying] more an idea of an animal than that of a man. ... [Jesus' exorcism aims to] restore the man to his lost humanity... Having portrayed the man in such 'bestly' colors, Luke makes it a point...to underline that the demons came out of the man [anthropos (human being)] to present the humanity of the healed demoniac...In the same way, as the restoration of the human condition stripped of the power of the demon...[is implied by the noun] anthropos in Lk. 8:35... Luke continues to call the demoniac anthropos... to underline the man's restored humanity." [Piotr Blajer, "Usage of ANER & ANTHROPOS...(Lk. 8:26-39)," *Collectanea Theologica*, V. 92, #2 (2022) p. 53-6] • Luke's "triple repetition of the noun Anthropos (Lk. 8:29, 33, 35) should... be considered the center of the narrative...intended to...direct attention to the extraordinary result of the encounter between Jesus & the demoniac... 'They came to Jesus & discovered the man [anthropos]' (8:35 lit.) ... The encounter with Jesus & the exorcism restored the oncedemonized man to his human condition." [Piotr Blajer, Op. cit., p. 60] • "Jesus uses his power not as a demonstration, but for restoration—restoring the man to dignity ('clothed', Lk. 8:35), sanity ('in his right mind') & community ('to your own people' Lk. 8:39). Yet the response is fear; the people are not prepared to accept Jesus' reordering of their world." —Ian Paul B. The Man is Delivered, Saved, Transformed, Restored to Community, Commissioned • "The eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered." (Lk. 8:36 CSB) "He is now saved" — Piotr Blajer • "Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man..." (Mk. 5:16 CSB) 1. • Luke "uses one of

his favorite words [Gk.] sozo...What happened to the man was not accidental but an intended action. The...passive voice indicates that God is the hidden actor... God saved the man who was [previously] possessed by the demons...because of God's intervention he is now saved." [Piotr Blajer, "Usage of ANER & ANTHROPOS ...(Lk. 8:26-39)," *Collectanea Theologica*, V. 92, #2 (2022) p. 57] • The demoniac's salvation is confirmed by: the drowning of the pigs; his sitting at the feet of Jesus instead of being among the tombs, bound with chains and shackles (8:27, 29); his being clothed rather than naked (8:27); and his being in his right mind (cf. Mk. 5:15). afraid. The drowning of so many pigs also verifies that a large number of demons were in the man. [ESV] 2. "Not only healed but received salvation" –Graham Twelftree • Reporting "the result of Jesus' miracle Luke adds that the man was 'healed' (Gk. sozein 'to save' or 'to heal'; Lk. 8:36 ['how the demon-possessed man was delivered' (8:36 CSB)] In using Gk. sozein ['to save'] ...Luke conveys...that the man was not only healed but received salvation by being freed [delivered] from the demoniac [legion of demons]." [Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle-Worker*, p. 156] 3. "Shows Jesus'...ability to transform people" — Darrell Bock • "The miracle...shows... Jesus' authority over evil & his ability to transform people...Jesus can erase the effects of evil in a person." [Darrell Bock, *Luke*, p. 157]

• "Jesus' exorcisms [were] ...transformative ...'the identity of possessed persons was constituted anew, their...positions in the social arena revised' (C. Strecker, *Op. cit.*, p. 125) ...A new identity was forged through the public performance of exorcism..." [Amanda Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist*, pp. 117-8] • "Luke includes many unusual elements in the Gerasene demoniac's story...[e.g.] ... details of the condition of the demoniac before and after Jesus expels the demon...These details underline the transformation of the demoniac, i.e., his condition before & after the exorcism, including the man's response to Jesus in faith after being saved from his horrible condition." [Chakrita M. Saulina, *Op. cit.*, p. 94] • "Luke is...presenting a series of miracles that reveal the extent of Jesus' authority...The miracle...shows... Jesus' authority over evil & his ability to transform people...Jesus can erase the effects of evil in a person." [Darrell Bock, *Luke*, pp. 154, 157] 4. Re-integrated to his community — Christopher Cook • In "the story of the Gerasene demoniac...[he] is alienated from his community by his mental disorder at the beginning of the story, & reintegrated at the end... & the Gerasene man has a new vocation; he has good news to share of a new awareness of himself, and his community, & Jesus." [Christopher CH. Cook, *Op. cit.*, p. 1121] 5. Commissioned: 'Go...& tell all that God has done for you.' (Lk. 8:39) • Jesus "sent him away & said, 39 'Go back to your home, & tell all that God has done for you.' ...Off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:38-39) • "After his encounter with Jesus, this man sits before Jesus (perhaps as a [disciple]?), clothed, & in his right mind (5:15). Indeed, so restored is this man that he begs to accompany Jesus & take part in his ministry (5:18–20). This man, in effect, becomes Jesus' first apostle to the Gentiles: '...he went away & began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; & all people marveled' (Mk. 5:20)." [Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Spirits," *OCMS* (16 Dec. 2009) pp. 5-6] C. The Towns folk's Reaction –They ask Jesus to leave (Lk. 8:37) 1. "They were more interested in economic gain than...the demoniac[s], & their own salvation." — J. Wolmarans • "The owners of the pigs...were the people who asked Jesus to leave their territory. They were more interested in economic gain than in the social reintegration of the demoniac into their society & in his, & their own, salvation." [JLP. Wolmarans, "Who Asked Jesus to Leave...?" *NEOTESTAMENTICA*, V. 28(1) (1994) p. 91] 2. They fear that Jesus might...further disrupt their local economy" –David C. Cramer o Town's folk "are willing to sacrifice one man ['Legion'] for the good of the town. Jesus, instead, sacrifices the economy of the town for the sake of this one man. When the townspeople arrive and see the man dressed and in his right mind, they respond not by rejoicing that their fellow townsman has been cured but by asking Jesus to leave them "because they were overcome with fear" (Luke 8:35b) ...They fear that Jesus might somehow further disrupt their local economy. They fear that all this 'Jubilee stuff' might be bad for business." [David C. Cramer, "Gerasene Demoniac:

Biblical Horror Story or Jubilee Proclamation?" Vision (2019) p. ] 3. They "do not to accept Jesus' programme in their lives" — Joseph Liem • Luke completes the story concerning the townspeople before completing the story of the demoniac. for they were seized with great fear. While fearful reverence & awe are appropriate in the presence of Jesus, the fear of these townspeople is negative & seems to be a wrongful, superstitious fear of Jesus' mysterious power, & perhaps a fear of further loss of their property, for their fear does not draw them to Jesus. [ESV] • "Why did the townspeople pleaded with Jesus to leave from their region? [Lk. 8:37] Their motive perhaps not only because they were afraid of the power which Jesus had demonstrated, but were also concerned from an economic motive. It is a lot cheaper to maintain one demoniac person by putting him on the tombs & to buy chains, rather than suffer from a loss of 2,000 valuable pigs. So, although this people believe in Jesus' power, they choose not to accept Jesus' programme in their lives." [Joseph K. Liem, "Healing of the Demoniac of Gerasenes," Trinity Theological College Singapore (2013) p. 22] VIII. Gerasene Demoniac: Demon Possession or Merely Mentally Ill? A. Mental Disorders & Demonic Possession – Similar Symptoms • Similar "symptoms of mental disorders and those of demonic influence... suggest...the two are difficult to distinguish, [yet] they remain distinct. Specifically, mental disorders are primarily psychological, while demon possession is primarily a spiritual phenomenon. This suggests that the natures of the two conditions, & perhaps the treatments...are significantly different...Mental disorders are conceptually distinct from demon possession ...the two conditions involve problems at different levels." [Rodger K. Bufford, "Demonic Influence & Mental Disorders" (1989). Graduate School of Clinical Psychology, George Fox University, Paper 57 (1989) pp. 37, 40] B. 'Gerasene Demoniac' had signs of Mental Illness (only?) • All the [diseases] biblical demoniacs suffered could be described as neurological or physiological disorders, & only the Gerasene demoniac...reported to have cried [out] during his possession & recovered his 'right mind' after Christ exorcized him, displayed some of the signs of mental illness. No wonder that some modern scholars have identified all the [diseases] afflicting biblical demoniacs as illnesses & concluded that the historical Jesus was essentially a healer." [Brian Levack, Devil

• "Nearly all of the deliverance narratives in the Gospels center on physical afflictions, not mental illnesses. Jesus casts unclean spirits out of people...experiencing deafness, muteness, & epileptic seizures. Only once does [Jesus] perform an exorcism on a person...exhibiting symptoms of a mental disorder—the Gerasene demoniac...It's the only story where Jesus heals someone who may have been living with a mental illness." [Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Session 2: Mental Illnesses (The Sanctuary Course)] • "The Gerasene demoniac is clearly suffering from insanity or mental illness of some sort." [Jesmond Micallef, Efficacy of the Exorcistic Prayers, p. 58] • "Mark 5 clearly indicates that the Gerasene demoniac was suffering from mental affliction – "The man who had been demon-possessed...sitting there, clothed & in his right mind" (Mk. 5:15) ...Several passages indicate the presence of insanity among those...demonized." [Archie T. Wright, "Demons in the NT," in BR. Grafius (ed.) Oxford Handbook of Biblical Monsters, pp. 311-2] C. He was Not Merely Mentally Ill, but also Demon-Possessed • "The NT demonstrates a belief in evil spirits & their ability to enter or afflict a human. Demonic possession... seems to result in another ego from the demonized person; such [as when] you observe the spirit doing the talking [Jesus asked "What's your name?" ...he said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." (Mk. 5:9)] ... [So,] many cases of possession can be attributed to pathological conditions of the mind –hysteria & epilepsy. [But,] it is apparent...that the authors of these [NT] texts had a strong belief in the ability of an evil spirit to take possession of the body & the mind ...[NT authors also] understood that they had been granted the authority & power to bring relief to an individual... under the influence of such a spirit." [Archie T. Wright, Op. cit., p. 316] D. Skeptics Deny the 'Gerasene Demoniac' was Demon-Possessed ❖ "Demoniac possession is a social construct...Modern scholars have identified all the [diseases] afflicting biblical demoniacs as illnesses & concluded that the historical Jesus was essentially a healer." –Brian Levack ❖ "The exorcism of the

Gerasene demon should be translated as Jesus delivering a man of some psychiatric disorder rather than exorcising him from a demon... Demons & spirits [are] ...outdated means of stating that people suffered from various illnesses..." –Hans Van Eyghen ❖ "The description of the [quote] "demon-possessed" man in Luke 8 is...[a] very accurate, description of an individual suffering from acute & serious mental illness." –Ragy R. Girgis ❖ "There is no precedent in the Bible for demon possession except as a way for people...to describe behavior for which they had no explanation." [Ragy R. Girgis, *On Satan, Demons & Psychiatry*, p. ] > Skeptics contradict Jesus' self-description • Jesus: "Go & tell that fox [Herod], '...I cast out demons & perform cures today & tomorrow..." (Lk. 13:32) • "Jesus saw his exorcisms not...as cures of...merely physical ailment[s] or mental illness[es], but...as wresting individuals...from...Satan...Jesus...claimed...[to be] tackling the malady...at its spiritual root & source." [JDG. Dunn, GH. Twelftree, "Demon Possession & Exorcism in the NT," *Churchman* (1980) p. 219] • Rebuttal: "When a psychiatrist examines the Gospel record there are...limited possibilities for interpreting the physical healings as...righting...hysterical disorders, but in most cases this is unlikely or impossible. The exorcism passages are more amenable to re-interpretation in psychiatric terms, but there are still difficulties. These passages make the most sense when...read as literal descriptions of exorcisms" [David Instone-Brewer, *Op. cit.*, p ] E. Pitfalls of Retrospective Diagnosis: It is 'High Risk' • "Attempts to diagnose mental illness among saints &...spiritual exemplars [& NT cases] are fraught [high risk]." –H. Haruta 1. Lack of Data: The first obvious challenge with retrospective diagnosis is lack of data. It is questionable how much we can know about the mental health of individuals who lived centuries before our own. [Today,] an official diagnosis of mental illness can only be offered by a licensed professional after a personal evaluation of a patient, & even... [then], misdiagnosis is common. Even the most air-tight historical record cannot replace the insights of a face-to-face interview. If it is possible for professionals to miss or misinterpret the symptoms of mental illness that are under one's nose, this [should] caution those practicing without a license with fragmentary historical evidence [e.g. the NT cases]. 2. Applying Modern Diagnosis to the Past: Then, there's...anachronism. Retrospective diagnoses typically rely on criteria found in the [Psychologists'] Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM], which has existed in different editions for less than 75 years. When these contemporary labels of mental illness are applied to historical figures, it is often without regard for the complex cultural, social, and religious conditions in which those individuals lived [Different eras, different cultures]. 3. DSM: the "Psychiatrists' Bible" has Changed: It may be tempting to view the diagnostic criteria as definitive & historically stable. Indeed, the DSM is often referred to as the [so-called'] "bible" of psychiatry...indicating the text's authority within the field. Yet for those with even cursory knowledge of biblical studies, this comparison is doubly apt, reflecting the DSM's complex & contested nature. Diagnostic criteria have changed substantially since the 1950s & have often been the source of controversy." [Halley Haruta, "Diagnosing Saints," University of Chicago Divinity School, April 24, 2024 pp.]

IX. Distinguishing Demon-Possession from Mental Illness • "Is mental illness demon possession?" The contrast and distinction between the two is shown in light of [1.] demonic reaction of Jesus, [2.] the separate personality, [3.] rational nature & object-relatedness of demons, & [4.] the difference in cure." [Millard J. Sall, "Demon Possession or Psychopathology? Clinical Differentiation," *J of Psychology & Theology*, V. 4, #4 p.] A. Supernatural Insight into Jesus' true identity • "The only symptoms attributed to demons in the gospels which cannot be regarded as psychiatric or medical symptoms is the insight that many of the demonized have into Jesus' true identity. The man in the synagogue shouted out that Jesus was the Holy One of God (Mk.1.24 // Lk.4.34). The [Gerasene demoniac] called him 'Son of the Most High God' (Mk. 5.7 // Mt. 8.29 // Lk. 8.28). Many other demonized people are also recorded as shouting that he was the Son of God & had to be silenced (Mk. 1.34; 3.11; Lk. 4.41). This insight into Jesus' character cannot be explained in psychiatric terms, though...it could certainly be explained in literary terms, as [the author's] device for introducing the

secret of Jesus' real identity. It was generally recognised that a demon would have such insight... It would therefore be expected that a demonized person would speak the truth about Jesus." [David Instone-Brewer, "Jesus & the Psychiatrists," A. Lane (ed.) *Unseen World* (1996) pp. ] • Those who "understand...demon possession as a manifestation of mental illness...cannot explain the NT record of demonpossessed persons having a supernatural knowledge of the identity of Jesus Christ (e.g., Mk 1:21–28), displaying superhuman strength (e.g., Mk 5:1–20, Acts 19:13–16), & having the ability to tell the future (e.g., Acts 16:16–19)." [Paul Politi, *Demon Possession & Exorcism in the NT*, Regent University (2011) p. 5] B. Other Distinctions between Demon-Possession and Mental Disorders • "Warren cites...guidelines on differentiating these different afflictions. Here are a few of them: > The demon-possessed react negatively to the name of Jesus Christ, while those with psychological problems usually respond positively. > Demon-possessed people can perform supernatural acts which the mentally ill cannot. > Demons speak logically while individuals with psychological problems often do not. > The possessed often have a history of occult activities such as participating in seances or Satan worship, while the purely mentally ill do not. > Demon-possessed individuals do not respond to therapy while the mentally ill often do." [Godfrey Harold, Eugenio Nel, Op. cit., pp. ] C. The Demons & their Host: Multiple Personalities • Jesus asked him, "What's your name?" He said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." (Mk. 5:9) • The same voice which said 'my name' [singular] says immediately 'we are': it has become a collective voice. • Morna "Hooker astutely observes, Mark's apparent difficulty with grammar in this verse "reflects not only the difficulty of speaking consistently of one man with many demons, but the divided condition of the man himself." [Morna D. Hooker, *Mark*, p. 143] • "An example...that exhibits multiple personality traits [is] the demoniac in the Gerasenes...His personality was being eclipsed by something else...a 'nest of demons'...who spoke with one voice as 'Legion'... The demonic personality spoke with one voice representing many demons...This was not the real person speaking at this time." [Phillip S. Morris, *Multiple Personality Disorder, Psychological or Demonic?* pp. 70-73] D. Supernatural Knowledge of Future Events • In Matthew's version of the same event Jesus "is addressed as the Son of God & [the demoniac] cried "Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Mt. 8:29). The demons are here portrayed as having knowledge of a future judgment that ordinary humans would not normally have had, consequently reinforcing the claim that such extraordinary...beings [demons (unclean spirits)] exist." [Phillip H. Wiebe, *God & Other Spirits*, p. 31] • "As intelligent spirit beings...demons do have some knowledge of future events, & they use their supernatural knowledge to give credibility to superstitions like astrology" [S Nusantara, *Supernatural Principalities & Powers*, p.] > A Demon-Possessed slave-girl Predicts the Future (Acts 16:16) • In Philippi Paul & Co. met "a slave-girl...[with] a spirit by which she predicted the future. She made a large profit for her owners by fortune-telling" (Acts 16:16). Hans "Conzelmann argues that... this story...of possession by an evil spirit, [with] similarities...[to] the gospels...Acts 16:16 notes that her work [involved] the telling of fortunes or predicting the future...[It] was 'the technical term for ecstatic prophecy'." [Christy Cobb, *Slave-Girls Speaking Truth*, Drew Univ., pp. 256-7, 262-3] E. External Demon Possession vs. Internal Mental Illness • In a sample of evangelical Christians "demonic involvement...was often positioned as [originating] external to the individual rather than as...internal [to the] person. This...contrast[s] with medical or psychological notions of mental illness...as related to internal features of the person... Accounts...portrayed demonic involvement as external [in origin]." [CEM. Lloyd, "...Externality, Oppression, and Agency ...the Demonic in Mental Illness Among Evangelical Christians," *Pastoral Psychology* (2023) V. 72, pp. 516-7]

❖ "Demonic attribution posits the invasive ontological existence of another being [demon] while strategies devised to deal with mental disorders... focus on issues within the individual him- or herself." [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Human Being & Demonic Invasion," CCH. Cook (ed.) *Spirituality*,

Theology, & Mental Health, p. 96] • “Demonic possession involves entry into the human body... Almost all the texts portray exorcism as a disembodiment of spirits: they are ‘cast out’ of the victims they have possessed. The image of exit from within is reinforced by the notion of evil spirits either ‘entering’ or ‘departing’ from them.” [LT. Stuckenbruck, Op. cit., p. 107] X. Why the 2,000 Pigs? • Luke doesn’t regard them as incidental ‘collateral damage;’ they are an integral part of his account. A. The Fate of the Pigs • “So the demons came out of the man & went into the pigs, & the herd of pigs rushed down the steep slope into the lake & [were] drowned [passive].” (Luke 8:33 NET) • “One of the most notable features of this story is the transfer of unclean spirits into pigs.” [Robert Willis, Liberation & Integration, Assemblies of God Theolog. Seminary, (2025) p. 49] • “Jesus could have deliberately chosen to send the demons into the pigs to demonstrate to the audience proof of the man’s exorcism.” (I. Howard Marshall, Luke, pp. 335–36) • “The transfer of the demons into the swine [pigs]...is one of the largest challenges for Western interpreters to understand this story as historically plausible.” [Joy L. Vaughan, Spirit Possession in Luke-Acts & Modern Eyewitnesses, Asbury Theological Seminary, KY, US (2020) p. 146] • Luke 8:33 is “a verse that has baffled interpreters: ‘And the unclean spirits came out & entered the swine, & the herd, numbering about 2,000, stampeded down the steep bank into the sea & were drowned in the sea’ (Mk. 5:13 [Lk. 8:33]). The unforgettable image of 2,000 pigs rushing to their deaths in the sea led to the once popular belief that pigs cannot swim. The opposite is in fact true. The ancient praised pigs’ ability to swim...We’ve already been told that the ‘wind & the sea obey [Jesus]’ (Mk 4:41). The implication here is that when the pigs are ‘drowned’ (ἐπνίγοντο) [Lk. 8:33], the verb is passive & not middle – the pigs do not drown themselves, but are drowned by the sea which obeys Jesus. This would have been the natural reading for Mark’s Jewish readers, who would have heard in it echoes of the greatest battle in Israel’s history, when Pharaoh’s army was drowned by the sea at YHWH’s command...It is the Jewish Messiah who rules the waves. The sea does Jesus’ bidding when it drowns the demonic pigs. And with this, Jesus’ conquest of the land is complete, having driven the unclean legion of spirits & unclean herd of animals from the country.” [Nathanael Vette, “Son of Man & the Sea: ...in Mark’s Sea Voyages,” JSNT, Vol. 47(4) (2025) pp. 585-7] • “Jesus sends the legion of spirits from the Gerasene demoniac into a herd of swine [pigs]. Even though the swine are drowned in the lake, the spirits likely moved on to another location seeking another body to possess...[like the] drowning...of the physical giant [the Nephilim] offspring of the Book of the Watchers, but their spirits survived to become the evil spirits [demons] that roamed the realm of humanity.” [Archie T. Wright, “Demons in the NT,” in BR. Grafius (ed.) Oxford Handbook of Biblical Monsters, p. 309] B. 2,000 Pigs Undermine the “Demon Possession” equals “Mental Illness” Assertion 1. It’s All Psychological — “enhancing the experience”? • “The experiences of watching the healing of the [quote] “demon-possessed” man via the transfer of the illness to the pigs, [etc.] ...were all enhanced by the specific details & process of each miracle. Therefore, how this miracle occurred [with the stampede of 2,000 pigs?] would be consistent with... this person experiencing mental illness [alone], or that he was demon possessed.” [Ragy R. Girgis, On Satan, Demons, & Psychiatry, pp. 53] • Response: If the miracle merely cured the man’s mental illness, ‘transfer’ to pigs is an unnecessary ‘enhancement,’ sacrificing 2,000 pigs & counter-productively scared the local inhabitants. If it was a genuine exorcism, a ‘legion’ of demons was cast out of the man & (in reality) entered into the pigs (an alternate host, perhaps modelled on ‘scapegoat’). ➤ “What psychological explanation...can account for the ‘suicide’ of a herd of pigs?” – WK. Kay, R. Parry In “the case of the Gerasene...demoniac...what psychological explanation of [demon] possession can account for the ‘suicide’ of a herd of pigs at the very moment that Jesus exorcised the man from a legion of demons?” [William K. Kay, Robin Parry, Exorcism & Deliverance, p. ] 2. What “metaphorical meaning”? • “Some modern...readers of the NT...like to think that Jesus healed by psychological means (faith healing) rather than literally exorcising demons, this interpretation is not supported by the text. For e.g., ...in Mt. 8:28-34) the demons cast out by Jesus entered a herd of pigs, who then cast themselves off a cliff & died. It’s hard to see how metaphorical demons could drive a herd of pigs to suicide; the reader is clearly meant to understand that the demons were objectively real & powerful.” [Timothy C. Thomason, “Possession, Exorcism, & Psycho-

therapy,” *Professional Issues in Counseling*, V. 8(2) (2008) p. 6] 3. “A mental...illness does not beg to be transported into a herd of [pigs]” — Michael S. Heiser • In “the episode with Legion, the cluster of demons possessing the man in the country of the Gerasenes (Lk. 8:26), simply cannot be considered a disease. A mental or physical illness does not beg to be transported into a herd of swine [pigs] nor

can it jump from a human into the herd (Lk. 8:32-33). This infamous encounter along with others transcends the sorts of diseases & pathologies that are diagnosed & treated medically in today's world.” [Michael S. Heiser, *Demons*, p. iii] C. Why the Pigs? Proof that the ‘Demon Legion’ was Exorcised • “The swine function...as the proof of the departure of the evil spirits” — Chakrita Saulin • “Jesus could've deliberately chosen to send the demons into the pigs to demonstrate to the audience proof of the man's exorcism.” —I. Howard Marshall • “The function of the swine episode is to demonstrate exorcism...” —John F. Craghan • “Jesus exercises authority over the destructive forces of evil [i.e., demons], & he does so visibly by using the swine [pigs], so that expulsion is clear to all.” — Darrell Bock • “The pigs' death may have been necessary to communicate Christ's victory over the region's hostile spiritual inhabitants.” —Michael J. Gossett • The graphic depiction of the pigs' fate is “intended to indicate the ultimate success of Jesus' exorcistic technique by giving ‘physical’ evidence of the demons' exit from the demoniac's body. Campbell Bonner, for example, suggests that “this is the act of physical violence that bears witness to the reality of the expulsion’ (Campbell Bonner, “Technique of Exorcism,”).” [Travis W. Proctor, *Rulers of the Air*, Univ. of NC, Chapel Hill, (2017) p. 63] • “Jesus' ‘negotiation’ with the demons & the use of pigs in the exorcism process is unusual in Jesus' exorcism or healing practices. However, Jesus' decision to allow the demons to enter the pigs can be compared with the scapegoat traditions in Greek & Jewish society. The legion of demons that previously possessed the man come out & then possess the animals. The swine function as ‘the substitute’ for, as well as the proof of the departure of the evil spirits in the process: the rushing of the swine into the lake proves that the same destructive forces that had possessed the man have now taken over the animals. Consequently, Jesus' exorcism in the Gerasene land signifies not only a transfer of evil/impurity into an object but also its disposal in an uninhabitable realm.” [Chakrita M. Saulina, *Op cit.*, p. 95] D. The Timing of this Sequence of Events supports causation > “The significance...[is] rendering credible the theory of evil spirits.” — Phillip Wiebe • The three Gospel “accounts of this exorcism...tell the story so...relevant events follow a plausible sequence [that's] close together in time...[which] contribute strongly to the impression that the events are causally related. The demons...express ...their desire [to remain]...but when forced to leave they ask to enter the swine [pigs]...[When] Jesus give[s] permission... they leave the demoniac, & then the swine rush into the sea...giving the overwhelming impression [these events] are causally connected...In the case of the Gerasene demoniac, the exorcised spirits enter swine [pigs]...The significance of this kind of example [is] rendering credible the theory of evil spirits. We are fortunate that such an account from the life of Jesus was preserved. Most other exorcism cases in the NT could perhaps be explained as instances of ‘dissociative identity disorder’ [DID (previously called ‘multiple personality disorder’)], but this one cannot.” [Phillip H. Wiebe, *God & Other Spirits*, p. 32] > “The behavior of the pigs...an impressive basis for thinking...evil spirits might exist.” —P. Wiebe • “This incident introduces a test of the reality of demons...I suppose the behavior of animals [pigs] could be erratic & unpredictable on occasion, but the strange behavior of...2,000 [pigs] swine is remarkable...The behavior of the pigs... especially just after Jesus' command to the demons to leave the demoniac, provides an impressive basis for thinking that evil spirits might exist.” [Phillip H. Wiebe, *God & Other Spirits*, p. 32] E. Psychiatry Excludes, but Scripture includes, the Possibility of Spiritual Causation 1. “Possession...is excluded by definition” — Christopher Cook • “The possibility of ‘true’ possession...is excluded by definition from the medical and scientific frame of reference.” -Christopher CH. Cook • In psychiatry “the fundamental presumption is that...possession and related signs/symptoms...are either culturally-defined idioms of distress or else manifestations of psychiatric disorder. The possibility of ‘true’ possession, in the sense that there are ontologically real demonic entities at work, is excluded by

definition from the medical & scientific frame of reference.” [Christopher CH. Cook, Op. cit., p. 178] 2. “Physical or mental illness can have spiritual causes” –James Dunn, Graham Twelftree • “We should recognize that many [diseases] are rooted in man’s spiritual being. We recognize...that mental disorders can have physical symptoms—i.e., that many physical ailments are rooted in man’s mind. As soon...as we recognize that man is also spirit as well as body & mind, it [is] obvious that physical or mental illness can have spiritual causes. The label ‘demonpossession’ never was particularly specific ...& it needs to be given more scope to take fuller account of the evil active in the spiritual dimension, which is one aspect of all illness & the source of many particular ailments...[The] treatment of illness must take serious account of the different ...dimensions of illness [including the spiritual].” [James DG. Dunn, Graham H. Twelftree, Op. cit., p. 222-3] • “It is...foolish to treat a spiritually-rooted [disease] merely as a physical or mental illness...Christians can expect that ministry to a spiritually-rooted [disease] (...exorcism) will be effective on at least some occasions. Where...a condition is the

result of some particular bondage (that of Satan) then one...empowered by the Spirit of Christ should...minister deliverance, as Jesus did.” [James DG. Dunn, Graham Twelftree, Op. cit., p. 223] • “Jesus...cast out many demons... [Today] we understand much more about the mental...health... than...in ancient times. What many...attributed to demonic forces...[is] widely understood as mental illness. Thus, many [Christians]... assume... spiritual healing [belongs to] the ‘primitive’ past, when people didn’t...understand... mental illness.” [Hillary Raining, “Oppression & Possession,” Anglican Theological Review, V. 106, #4 (2024) p] XI. Is this Episode a Polemic Against the Roman Empire? • “Loren Stuckenbruck comments, many scholarly interpretations concerning Jesus’ exorcisms, including the anti-Roman metaphor, “lose some of their force to the extent that they make Jesus’ exorcisms illustrate something else than what they claim to be.” [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Myth of Rebellious Angels* (2014), pp. 165-7] • “The Gerasene Demoniac is often interpreted as a polemic against the Roman army. Two primary arguments... [1.] First, the demonic force is named ‘Legion’ ([Lk. 8:30]) Legio is [a]...Latinism...In other ancient texts, the word legio always refers to a Roman military unit. Legions were [present]...in Palestine after the Jewish [-Roman] War [~67-70 AD] [2.] 2nd, Mark uses images associated with the specific legion [stationed] in post-war Judea, legio X Fretensis [Roman Tenth Legion...]. This legion was active throughout Judea during the Jewish War & after the War [stationed] in Jerusalem [70-132 AD] ... The symbols of legio X Fretensis included a boar [wild pig], a ship, & the deity Neptune who was god of the sea...which Mark may[?!] evoke in... [this] story: Jesus sends Legion into pigs that drown in the Sea of Galilee...The transliteration of legio [‘Legion’ &]...the symbols confirm that matter beyond doubt for some interpreters ...[this episode’s] allusion to the army [is] a polemic against the Roman occupation of Palestine: ‘Legion’ is not only demonic, but also evokes the ritually unclean presence of pigs. This anti-occupation reading sometimes takes on an allegorical quality: Jesus’ exorcism of Legion manifests a desire to expel the occupying Roman legion from the territory; the demon & thus Rome are invasive forces whose removal returns the man to health.” [Christopher B. Zeichmann, *Roman Army & the NT*, pp. 50-52] Objections: [1.] “The complete absence of evidence for a legion [force]...near the city of Gerasa...The narrative context of Gerasa is...difficult to link with...the reference to Legion, since there were no legions...there before or during the time of Mark’s composition.” [Christopher B. Zeichmann, Op. cit., p. 52] [1’.] “The ancient evidence hardly supports the hypothesis that the Romans ‘occupied’ Gerasa (or...any other city of the E. Mediterranean). Both the technical limitations of ancient military deployments & the very Roman idea of an ‘inexpensive’ empire-building process render such a possibility highly unlikely. [Giovanni B. Bazzanna, *Having...Spirit of Christ*: p. 87] [2.] “There are... numerical discrepancies: the roughly 2,000 pigs have no obvious connection to military units in the region. Legions were nominally 6,000 soldiers, but functionally...closer to 5,400... [Perhaps we should] understand ‘Legion’ merely as a...reference to ‘many’ demons in the man[?].” [C. Zeichmann,

Op. cit., p. 52] [3.] “The anti-occupation reading ...has difficulty accounting for the Gerasene locals’ rejection of Jesus after the exorcism...[since] this would imply that Jesus’ [alleged] anti-Roman politics were an unwanted imposition[!]” .” [Christopher B. Zeichmann, Op. cit., p. 54] [4.] “The largely Gentile Decapolis’ ...relationship with Rome was far more positive than it was with Judaea ...[There was a] very friendly attitude toward Rome in the region [which included] Gerasa – a city known for its Roman affinities. [It] is thus difficult to reconcile [this] with...an anti-Roman reading.” [C. Zeichmann, p. 54] Another “problem in the current interpretation...[is] the exclusive treatment of [Jesus’] exorcism as allegic [allegorical] cover or... a kind of proxy for social marginalization or political oppression [as the (alleged) real message of the episode]...In these cases spirit possession is eventually treated as a mechanical ‘reaction’ to... marginalization or oppression.” [Giovanni B. Bazzanna, Op. cit., p. 87] “The problem...[with] anti-occupation... interpretations [is that] Jesus’ exorcism doubles as an exorcism of the Roman army & this connection between the military & the demonic is an essential (if not the essential) component of the story...[Yet there’s] no indication that the military was a topic of controversy in the [NT] episode...The exorcism is not about the [Roman] military....The interpretation proposed here...suggests that the passage compares the demons [possessing the man] to the Roman army [legion], not vice versa...Mark’s word legio [‘Legion’]... treats legions...as a type of power-byproxy...Ordinary people never encounter Satan –the ruler of demons –directly, but only his functionaries [i.e., the demons] ... Rather than a face-to-face encounter between God and Satan, Jesus engages Satan’s demonic subordinates taking the form of Legion.” [Christopher B. Zeichmann, Op. cit., pp. 55, 57] The Gerasene Exorcism viewed as a Parable “Garraway proposes to understand Mark 5 in close connection with Jesus’ teaching in parables in Mark 4...The episode of the Gerasene demoniac functions quite well as a narrative illustration of what Jesus taught in kingdom parables such as...the Sower (Mk. 4:1-8).” (Joshua Garraway [“Invasion of the Mustard Seed: A Reading of Mk. 5:1-10,” JSNT (2009)] [Giovanni B. Bazzanna, Op. cit., p. 99]