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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1999

HIS MIRACLES - BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Study #1: Miracles and Signs for the Many

Reading: Mark 5: 1-21

Thanks bro. Greig!

Well, brethren and sisters and young people, I have one duty to perform before I commence with this study this morning, I echo bro. Richard's words that it is both a pleasure and a privilege to be here again at Silver Star, and my sister wife Margaret prevailed upon me to ensure that I extended to you all her love; she was unable to come with me on this occasion, but she wanted her love passed on to all of you here at Silver Star, and especially to those who are virtually a second family to us here in this area.

Well, b&s and young people, there are marvellous things before us this week. Beautiful things, majestic things, to use the words of the apostle Peter. And our minds will be taken into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; there's no doubt about that! it's already commenced with our study this morning, on the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now we come to look at His miracles, His signs and His wonders. And we're going to see that there's a purpose in all that He did, b&s, nothing was done without reason, nothing was done without some eternal aim, and those things were intended just as much for you and me, as they were for those who saw and experienced His marvellous works and words, and we're going to try and get behind, why the Lord gave, not only signs and wonders, but why, b&s, why He did it in the way He did; why He didn't do some of the things that we might have expected Him to do. We're going to try and go behind the reasons and the purpose for Christ's miracles.

But as you would be aware, the topic we're speaking to this week, has been taken from Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. It is there, b&s, that these words are spoken by the apostle Peter, 'Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you'. There are three words used there, three different terms for what we might generally call 'miracles'. There's that word 'miracles' that you can see behind me on the screen which occurs in the text of Acts 2:22, it's the word 'dunamis' (1411), 'dunamis has the idea of power, as we shall see in a moment. There is the word 'wonders', the Greek 'teras' (5059), and the word

'signs', a very significant term in the gospel of John, 'semeion' (4591), and here the apostle Peter, b&s, is demonstrating in very simple terms as to why the Lord Jesus Christ performed miracles. It was that He might be approved of God. And that word 'approved' in the Greek, as you can see, 'apodeiknumi' (584) means 'to show off or to exhibit'. There are only 4 occurrences of the word in the New Testament, one of them occurs in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 4, where the man of sin sits in the temple of God (as he calls it) 'showing himself' (that's the word!), 'showing himself that he is God'. Now that, of course, is the antithesis of what we see here. So, God was going to manifest, or to exhibit, His Son by signs; for what purpose would He do that?

Well, Christ's miracles primarily were to convince the Jews that the leader that their leaders despised as 'a Nazarean' (do you see how that's said there in Acts 2:22), 'Jesus of Nazareth'; (I wonder why Peter would select that title? He could have said, 'Jesus the Son of God' or 'the Son of the living God', he doesn't, he says, 'Jesus of Nazareth' because that was the very terminology that the leaders of the Jews used to convince their people that this was not the Son of God. This is Jesus of Nazareth, we know His father and His mother, we know that He's a carpenter, how can He come down here and claim to be the Son of God?) and, when they saw His miracles and signs and wonders, God was exhibiting that here was indeed, His own Son, the Son of God indeed. So there, very simply, is the primary reason for miracles.

But we make a mistake, b&s and young people, if we think that that is the most important reason for miracles. It wasn't! as we shall see in our studies. There was a much higher reason than that; and we're going to see also in our studies, that there is a much higher power, a much more forceful, a much more powerful influence, in the lives of people, than miracles; and, we shall explore that as well and see, especially when we come to look at the transfiguration, how that principle was forced upon the mind of the apostle Peter, and is the underlying basis of everything that he says in the epistles that he wrote. We're going to see that the 1st of Peter and the 2nd of Peter were based upon his experiences in the transfiguration, perhaps in many ways the greatest miracle that had occurred in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, except for His resurrection perhaps, although, of course, His transfiguration took Him beyond that. The greatest miracle which He did not perform, for Himself or by Himself. It was done for Him by His God, and we shall see the reasons for it, in due course, God willing.

But let's come back now, b&s, to the record of Mark, because as we go back to Mark, we're going to see that these three terms in the Greek that are used for miracles are expressed in a very peculiar way when we come especially to this section of Mark that we're going to focus on this morning. Our title is for this session, SIGNS AND WONDERS FOR THE MANY, and the reason for that is that in the gospel of Mark it is said in the 10th chapter that the Lord Jesus Christ came to give His life a ransom for the many. We want to try and explore what that phrase means and Mark helps us when we come to chapter 5. We're going to see, b&s, signs and wonders in this chapter; the three Greek words which we will be, of course, traversing in the course of our studies are, 'dunamis', 'teras' and 'semeion'. As I said, dunamis means 'power'. In the plural it

has the idea of mighty works, a manifestation of God's power; 38 times in the first 3 gospels, but not in John curiously. The Greek word teras means 'a wonder' and speaks of the effect produced on those who witnessed the mighty work. It is translated that way, 'wonder', and occurs in Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22 and John 4:48. And the term semeion, the basis, of course, of the 8 signs of John, speaks of the significance of the work wrought. That is, the reason for it, there was always an object or a design behind what the Lord did! and, we're going to see how true that is as we approach Mark chapter 5, this morning. 48 times that word 'semeion' occurs in the gospel accounts and as you would expect, 17 of those are in the gospel of John.

Now brother Richard, this morning, dealt with that day on which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke a series of parables. He dealt with the first, that of the sower; there were 7 parables spoken on that same day as recorded in Matthew chapter 13. It was a day, b&s, which had begun without breakfast. It was a day when the Lord Jesus Christ awoke from perhaps what was a broken sleep, because the house had been surrounded by a tumultuous crowd of people before the day had broken. There wasn't even time and there wasn't room for Him to eat His morning meal. That's the record of Mark chapter 3 and verse 20 You come back with me and have a look at it; you think about this: we come into these sessions with a full stomach; we shall go to lunch; we shall have our supper (to use your term); and, we'll still be eating when the final session is done. He began this day without eating. In verse 20 of Mark chapter 3 we read, 'That the multitude cometh together again and surrounded the house, so they could not so much as eat bread. And if that wasn't enough, b&s, His family came, and because of the tumult with its waves of fervour that was going out throughout all Galilee, His family came and accused Him of being out of His mind in verse 21. And then the unforgivable sin was committed! as the scribes came from Jerusalem and accused Him of working by the power of Beelzebub, the god of the Philistines, the lord of the dung heap. And then, when He was able to get into the ship, He spoke for the best part of that day to the people on the shore. And, I guess some of you can appreciate that teaching, although it may in some way appear to be a glamorous job, it is also sometimes an exhausting one; and, the record of Mark chapter 4 tells us in verse 35, that when this day had come to an end, and the sun began to wane in the sky, it says, 'And the same day, when the even was come, He said to them in an exhausted voice, 'let us pass over unto the other side'.

'And when they had sent away the multitude, (and that would have been no easy task, given the circumstances) the record says and look at the pregnancy of these words, (think about this, b&s, think about this, b&s, think about the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ bore the same nature as ourselves, had to deal with the same problems as ourselves, felt the same affliction as ourselves and yet gave Himself so unstintingly, that He was at the point of collapse), and the record says, 'they took Him even as He was'; and, here's a man who was about to collapse, He could hardly stand up on His feet, and they put Him in the ship and they launched forth to the other side, and He was fast asleep, so fast asleep that when a storm arose upon the lake, and beat into the ship, as the waves pounded the sides of that little boat and water poured over the side and the

disciples began to despair of life itself, Jesus was still fast asleep!

And he arose in verse 39, 'And rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still; and they were sore amazed'. And verse 41, having chastised them for their lack of faith, the record says, 'they feared exceedingly and said one to another', (you can just imagine the atmosphere on that boat, in the calm of that lake as it instantly ceased from the broiling brew of water and the howling winds that ripped into the sail and into the clothes of those on board), in that calm you can just imagine, the awe that had overcome the disciples when they said, 'What manner of man is this' (what have we come up against? We can ask the same question, can't we?), 'that even the wind and the sea obey Him?' The idea is drawn from Psalm 65; you come back and have a quick look. Psalm 65, one of my favourite psalms, b&s, 'Praise waiteth for Thee, O God in Zion:' (and so it does), 'and unto Thee shall the vow be performed. O Thou that hearest prayer (and He does) unto Thee shall all flesh come' (and they will, and that, b&s, is the theme of Mark chapter 5), 'unto Thee shall all flesh come'. And they will come because of the work of this One who struck awe into the hearts of His disciples when they saw the power at His fingertips and at the point of His words. And then the record says in verses 5 and 6 of Psalm 65, 'By terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation; Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth'. Look at those words! that embraces us, b&s; I'm not suggesting that Canada is the end of the earth, Australia's probably in that category, but it's all the ends of the earth who are involved here. This is not a psalm confined to Israel, this is a psalm that has broad application to our God in all the earth in which we are involved. Then it says at the end of verse 5, 'And of them which are afar off upon the sea: Which by His strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: (look at these words in verse 7, how applicable they are to the story of Mark 4 and 5) 'Which stilleth the noise of the sea, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people'.

And that's exactly what He did on the sea, and exactly what He did in the life of Legion, and in the life of the woman with an issue of blood, and in the life, the stormy life of Jairus and his wife and their daughter. That's what He does, b&s, in Mark chapter 5: He stills the noise of the seas, the storms of their life, and the tumult of the people. And verse 8 says, 'They also that dwell in the uttermost parts (that's us) are afraid at thy tokens: Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice'. And we shall rejoice, b&s, as we behold these wonderful things and we come to consider a simple fact, that if our Lord Jesus Christ can still the storm of Legion (and I'll show you what that means in a minute), if He can calm the storm of family life, in the family of Jairus, and in the life of a woman who was cast out because of her problem, in a hopeless position, if He can calm those sorts of storms, there's not one person here, or anywhere else in the brotherhood, that that can't be done for as well! Let none of us think, b&s, that we're some sort of unique person that God can't help in some way, and I know, I happen to know that there are many people in our brotherhood (because I deal with them every day, and because I look in the mirror every day, and try and be honest with myself as to what this world is doing to me and to my mind), I know there are people who are passing through the storms of life. What we need to do is to behold

this man; and to listen to His words, to look at His works, to stand in awe of Him as His disciples did, and to receive the healing power that is there for us just as it was for them. We won't be cured of our physical ailments necessarily, but that's not really important; the important thing is that we be cured of our mental ailments. And that's, of course, where Legion stood, a man with many problems, let's look at this next chapter, Mark chapter 5.

Let me ask you a couple of questions to get your mind working on the subject. Why in the record of Mark is there only one demoniac? whereas in the record of Matthew, there are two; and I'm sure all of you recognize that, we read these contexts twice a year! Why is it that there is only one mentioned in Mark? Well, it's clear, isn't it? that this is the same incident when you compare the two records, so why just the one? And the next question, why is it that in Mark chapter 5 and verse 19 the Lord says to Legion, when He had been requested that Legion might accompany Him, He said to him, 'No, you go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee', and that's what he did. But, in the same chapter, Mark 5 and at verse 43, when Jairus' daughter had been raised from the dead, and there was an incredible astonishment, He says in that verse, 'He charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that she should be given something to eat'. So, why does He say to Legion, you go out and tell everybody you can find, your friends, what the Lord has done for you, but to Jairus and his family He says, don't you tell a single soul what I've done. Why would He do that? Well, there's got to be a reason, doesn't there? there are miracles and miracles as it were, different outcomes, different responses, and there must be a reason and that's why we're doing this study. I'm not going to go through in a mechanical way and deal with one miracle after another, I'm going to try and get behind, b&s, why these miracles occurred. What was the divine reasoning behind them, and there is a divine reasoning.

Well, here's one of the answers at least to the first of those questions: the answer lies in the reason for Mark's writing in contradistinction to Matthew. Matthew wrote for Jews while Mark wrote for Gentiles and particularly for Romans. Mark chapter 1 verse 1 begins with the statement, as you well know, 'that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. Mark got his information from his uncle Peter; I only know of two men who made the statement that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. One of them was Peter, as we shall see in our studies in Matthew 16, and the other one was a Roman centurion, who stood at the foot of the cross; and, Mark, who is writing his gospel for Romans, perhaps is alluding to that fact. So, here he is with a specific purpose in writing, he's going to include the Gentiles; and we're going to see that Legion represents the Gentiles. Now, there are these two men in actual fact there, but only one of them is referred to by Mark; they were probably Jews but the one that he chooses to focus upon is a type of the local Gentiles and others who will come after him. Let's just bear that in mind, b&s, you see, there's a deliberateness about the way the Spirit records these things; certain things are put in, certain things are left out.

Now, let's just do a quick overview of Mark chapter 5 in terms of the classes of humanity

that occur here. We're going to be talking very quickly about these 3 classes of people (we won't have time to go into great detail, of course). There is Legion, we read about him this morning in the first 21 verses, he represents the Gentiles who were not under the Law, and they were therefore, as far as the Jews were concerned, outside the pale of salvation. There is Jairus' daughter, she represents religious Jews under the Law who regarded themselves to be in harmony with God; they were safe, they were inside the synagogue, everything was comfortable for them, so they thought. And, there is the woman with the issue of blood for 12 years, who represents those Jews who were considered unclean; they were locked out of the synagogue, they were like the publicans and sinners in the sight of the leaders of Jewry, who had no hope. And, it's these three classes of humanity that the Lord Jesus Christ came to save, all of them, if He could! And we're going to see that they represent those He could save. Isn't it interesting, b&s, that they're all in the one chapter! Now, I'm not suggesting to you that everything that's recorded in Mark 5 occurs on the one day, because it is apparent that it didn't, but one thing is apparent in the way the Spirit records it through Mark, and that is: they are put together as though they did occur on the one day. We are intended to see, that there is a work being performed here amongst these three classes of humanity.

Well, then, let's just take this a step further. Let's take the last section of Mark 5 first. It begins in verse 22 with the record of a ruler of the synagogue coming to Jesus. Now, we could consider and we could do the mechanical side of this, but get behind this record, get into the shoes of these people, b&s and young people, put yourself in the position of Jairus. Here is a man who has a job, a very important job, he's the ruler of the synagogue. Now there were two principle people in the synagogue in those days. There was what was called the Archisunagogos - the ruler of the synagogue (that's this man). His role was to take charge of the affairs of the synagogue and to regulate its services, including keeping people out who the Law said shouldn't be there! the unclean, the lepers, those with an issue of blood, etc. It was his job to keep them out. And he had spent the 12 years keeping a woman out of the synagogue because she had an issue of blood; and everybody knew she had it. She'd been to all the doctors and physicians in the area, spent every cent that she had and was still not cured; and it was this man's job to keep her out. There was another man called the angel of the ecclesia, the Sheliach hazzibbor, who was there as the constant minister of the synagogue, to pray, to preach, and have charge of the Law and appoint its readers and so on, just like our bro. Skip does for the bible school.

But this man, Jairus, had a problem! Verse 22 says, 'That when he saw Jesus he fell at His feet'. (He's desperate!) 'And he besought Him greatly saying, my little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray thee, come, and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed; and she shall live (He was confident about that). And Jesus went with him, and much people followed Him and thronged Him'. There was a storm you might say, there was certainly a storm going on in the house of Jairus at that time; there was a storm going on in his mind, would he or would he not take this huge step, to do what no other leader of the Jewish people could afford to do. Nicodemus came by night frightened of

the consequences of his actions; would this ruler of the synagogue take the risk of approaching Jesus and appealing for help from the man whom his leaders despised? It was a giant step for him but he wasn't prepared, b&s, for the outcome of taking that step. You see, he was a ruler of the synagogue, and he thought that if he took this step that Jesus would perhaps respond and if He did respond and agree to come, that Jesus would focus exclusively upon that particular problem. But the record says in verse 24, 'much people followed Him and thronged Him'; there were many other problems around, and one of them was there standing in that crowd, desperate. A woman with an issue of blood.

Verse 25, 'for 12 years', and she was to hold the Lord up on His trip to the house of Jairus; so much so that by the time the Lord got there, (in fact, before He got there), the news came that Jairus' daughter had died! Can you imagine what it was like for Jairus? He's standing there, b&s, he's made the appeal, the Lord has said, 'yes I'll come', and the time is ticking by, and the Lord is being crowded and thronged by people, and a woman touches His garment and she is healed, and the Lord stops to talk with her, because it's important that He does. And the time is ticking by; and there's desperation in the mind of Jairus, there's a storm going on there. Can you imagine what it was like in his home? 'Please, Lord, hurry, hurry!' and as the minutes perhaps grew into an hour or more, hope began to fade in the mind of Jairus. And the Lord has to say to him, over in verse 35, 'While He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? It's all over, Jairus, she's dead'. Can you imagine his heart? it would have sunk! he'd taken the step and his daughter was dead. What would the rulers of the nation do now, to a ruler of the synagogue who had thrown in his lot, as it were, with this imposter from Nazareth, to gain something which he had now lost? Have you thought about that? And Jesus, when He heard the word in verse 36, 'He said to the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid', and as the literal Greek could perhaps be rendered, it's in the present tense, just go on believing, Jairus'. 'Just go on believing'; it's very necessary, isn't it b&s, in the times of difficulty in our lives? We believed, sometimes that belief is shaken, it's tested, sorely tested; sometimes we've taken a huge step, we've made a great sacrifice to commit ourselves to something, and the wheels fall off, and we wonder whether or not we made the right choice. **JUST GO ON BELIEVING**, you had reason to believe, you'll be given more reasons to believe, just go on believing. And he did!

What about the woman with the issue of blood? Well, what we've got here, b&s, is a very interesting parable of redemption in Israel. Let's have a look at it briefly. There were two classes under the Law who could be saved. And these two people, the woman with the issue and Jairus and his daughter (taken as one together), these two groups, you might say, represent those two classes of people under the Law whom Jesus came to save. The woman with the issue of blood afflicted for 12 years was matched by Jairus' daughter who was now 12 years old and was about to experience (if she hasn't already experienced it) an issue of blood, as the natural course of human life. It's about that age of puberty that that experience begins for a girl, isn't that remarkable!

12 is the dominant theme and they are both women because they both represent Israel, Yahweh's bride. One with an issue of blood was an outcast from the synagogue, the other at 12 years of age was about to enter the synagogue as an adult. You'll recall that Jesus went to Jerusalem with His parents at age 12; so there's a contrast being drawn, isn't there? and there's a contrast in the way that Jesus deals with these people.

With the woman with the issue of blood, we see private conviction but a public healing. You have a look at that in Mark chapter 5 verse 27, 'When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole'. So, there's a private conviction there, which she's going to try to privately use. So, she touched His garment (she didn't want Him to know), she was absolutely convicted that she would be healed, but she didn't want Him or anybody else to know. It would be nice, wouldn't it? b&s, if we were able to deal with the sins that we commit, privately, never have to worry about anybody else ever finding out about them; but that's not the way to deal with sin. Oh, yes, we need to cover sin, says James and others; we need to cover them, we don't need to advertise people's sins; but we're talking about what happens in our own individual lives, b&s. I am best cured from my sins by someone else knowing about them; and that's exactly what Jesus does here. She came behind him in the press, how would He know that someone had touched Him? But He knew because virtue had passed from Him, power had coursed through Him into her, and she was cured, and she knew she was cured and He knew that she was cured. And He said, 'who touched Me?' and there's a multitude of people thronging and He looked around, (He knew just as He knows what's going on in your life and mine, b&s), He knew; but what He wanted was for the woman to acknowledge that she also knew, that she might have the opportunity to, as it were, confess the reason why she had had to come. It had to be open, as it were, to put it in terms that we're familiar with, an open confession of her (to use this term) guilt; of course, she had not necessarily guilt from a physical affliction, but we look behind the meaning of it, the spiritual meaning of it. There had to be a confession of sins, as it were, before there could be a wholeness, just as David found out. 'I have sinned against Yahweh' he said, and it wasn't until he openly confessed 9 months or more after his heinous crimes in the family of Uriah, that he felt forgiven and that Yahweh had forgiven. You see, b&s, this woman who represents the publicans and sinners, who did have obvious problems, was compelled to confess for that reason, that a basis might be laid for a newness of life.

What about Jairus and his daughter? Well, with Jairus there is a public conviction, because he comes to the Lord in the throng of the multitude and says, 'Lord, I need your help!' This is the ruler of the synagogue, you can imagine the Jews looking on, 'hey, a ruler of the synagogue appealing for help from Christ!' Doesn't happen very often, but when it came to the healing it was a private affair. Mark chapter 5 verse 37, 'He suffered no man to follow Him, (it's matched by verse 40), 'They laughed Him to scorn when He said she was only sleeping; but when He had put them all out (see that? it was a private affair) and He raised her from the dead', and in verse 43 as we read, 'He said to the house of Jairus, He straitly charged them' (this wasn't some sort of a request), the

Lord wasn't saying to Jairus, 'now look, it would be nice if you just didn't mention this to anyone'; He said, 'now listen here don't you dare tell one soul, got it?', He straitly charged them. Why would He do that? Well, you see, b&s, the answer is simple, and it's the answer to our second question. Jairus was among the rulers of the Jews, a man of prominent position, who had made a giant step to place himself in the camp of Jesus of Nazareth; and the Lord Jesus Christ knew that it wouldn't matter what He did, as He said later on, 'it wouldn't matter if one rose from the dead, you will not believe'. Do you know why they wouldn't believe? because they wouldn't believe the Word of God! and we're going to see that that is the nexus between miracles and the hearing of the Word that is going to be emphasized over and over again; miracles are useless to you, b&s, they are absolutely useless to you, if you do not open your mind to the Word of God. I know thousands of people, I know Christadelphians, some of them ex-Christadelphians, who will say to you, 'Jim, I believe that the truth is the truth; I believe that Israel is the greatest sign of all time, that they are a miracle that God has provided for us to tell us that Christ is coming. But I can't live the truth!' Answer, reason - **THEY DO NOT OPEN THEIR MINDS TO THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH IS THE ONLY POWER THAT CAN DEVELOP FAITH.** Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, and if we leave this book closed, b&s, we are dead. It's as simple as that! And Jesus knew that the leaders of His nation, the scribes, the priests, the Pharisees were dead, they were dead from the shoulders up; there was no way that you could appeal to them, and He said to Jairus virtually, 'you're wasting your time; don't you tell a soul of your acquaintances what's happened, but to Legion it was different!

Legion, who represents the Gentiles, was told in verse 19, 'you go home and tell your friends, you tell every person you come across what's happened to you, because I know that amongst the Gentiles there will be those that will respond; but I won't get that response from the leaders of the Jews; that's the reason for that, b&s. So, what we come to now is this remarkable parable of Gentile redemption in the early part of Mark chapter 5 (and I've got 15 minutes to deal with it, so it's going to be pretty tough, so stay with me). Legion came from the region of Gadara; Gadara was on the eastern side of the Lake of Galilee, one of the ten cities of the Decapolis (Roman frontier cities) built to protect the Roman boundary to the east. The city was about 10 kms from the Sea of Galilee, so Legion was actually living in a city, he lived in the region of Gadara. And he lived, of course, near to the lake called in Isaiah 9 verse 1, 'Galilee of the nations'. Very important that we remember that! Galilee of the nations, the Gentiles! This was a Gentile region. Now, he might have been a Jew, but he lived in a Roman area and he had a Roman name, 'Legion'. And there are about 6,000 men in a legion, thus he represents all mankind in its history over the last 6,000 years. You and I are included in this man, we have his same problems or we had his same problems; and he had some real problems. Mark 5 verse 2, 'There met Him a man', (and this is after the storm), Legion had been watching these events; he had seen the vicious and violent storm and the raging of the waves upon that sea that previous night. He had seen the boats leave the opposite shore, he had wondered about their destiny in the midst of that storm, and now he sees one boat arrive at the shore, in the calm that had suddenly

descended upon that place. And that's exactly what was to happen to this man who experienced so many storms in his mind, storms almost of insanity, and we'll see the reason for that in a moment.

He lived among the dead, said verse 2, he came out of the tombs, and he had an unclean spirit. We know from Luke chapter 8 and verse 27 that he was naked when Jesus found him; he had no clothes. All of those things have a spiritual import and you can see them, can't you? Ephesians 2 verse 1, 'we were dead in trespasses and sins', all of us before we came to Christ were naked, (our sins exposed our nakedness, b&s, like Adam in the garden), and we were ashamed, and we had an unclean spirit, (that is, an unclean way of thinking because our mind thought carnally), there was no spiritual input there that could cleanse the way we thought. That was Legion's problem, but of course, the Jews were there and they had tried to bind this man. Recall the record? the record says in verse 4, that he'd often been fettered with irons and chains, but he plucked them asunder and no man could tame him. You see, the Jews with their Law tried to impose that on the Gentiles, but without success, they couldn't tame the Gentiles, the Law was not the answer. Law is not the answer in our lives today, neither, b&s, as bro. Richard said, you don't tame the flesh by Law, by 'thou shalt not', it can only be tamed, as it were, when it is crucified, 'crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts'. Change the way you think, that's how you tame it.

Legion was tormented day and night by his disease because, as you see in the record of verse 5, 'and always night and day he was in the mountains' (can you see the excruciating agony of this life) 'crying and cutting himself with stones'; why would he do that? Crying his way out, cutting himself with stones, blood oozing out of his body, it's almost as though in his demented state he knew where the source of his problem was, b&s. And, if you haven't experienced something like that, at some time in your life, if not now, crying out because of the workings of our nature, then you're not my brother or my sister, because that's my life, I want to be done with this body, and so do you; that's why we come to bible school, isn't it? it's almost as if we can transport ourselves beyond the present into another time. Keep away from the filth of this world for just a week, I want to be done with it! too many hours crying, cutting myself, as it were, with stones.

But he wasn't mad: you look at verse 7, 'He cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high, the most high God?' You know, if I had time, I could spend the next week talking about that phrase, and you would see the depth of it, b&s, in scripture, and you would understand the depth of understanding that this man had! He wasn't just using that phrase because it was something to say, he had a depth of understanding, he heard about Jesus, he perceived who He was, b&s, he knew exactly who he was dealing with, 'thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that Thou torment me not!' It's true, isn't it? that when the Word approaches, when the Word approaches, b&s, the flesh has to take flight. It doesn't enjoy the experience, the sharp two-edged sword is uncomfortable for natural thinking; why are you coming to torment me? look at my life, it's a shambles. He said unto him in verse 8, 'come out of the man, thou unclean spirit!', but the man says in verse 9,

when he'd given his name, 'He says, I am Legion for we are many'. He besought them in verse 10, that He would not send them away out of the county; why did he ask that? wouldn't he want to get rid of the problem? Absolutely! but isn't this the way it works, b&s, isn't this practical real life? When people, for instance, come in from outside, is it not observable that they take some very tenuous steps and they take a very zigzag approach to coming into the truth, and sometimes you think you're just not going to get them there; it's almost as if there's a wall of resistance up, they know the truth is right, they know they've got to come to it, but there's something there that's hanging on, the past clings on, the flesh will not give up easily. It's not going to give up, b&s, without a fight! and Legion represents that characteristic: 'he besought Him much, that He would not send the spirits (or his problem) too far away. But it needed to go a long way away, it needed to be put to death.

And the record says in verse 11, 'Now there was nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding': swine feeding, have you ever seen swine feeding? heads in the trough, slurping, slopping, burping, ever seen that, b&s? Pass by a hotel on a Friday night and you'll see swine feeding, an old way of life, b&s, it needs to be left behind permanently, not to be clung onto; don't send them away too far. Do you know that principle? But Jesus had the answer, and it was a very real answer! There was the violent plunging of 2,000 swine down a steep slope into the water to create a turbulent storm upon the sea of nations, as it were, and then there was a dead calm, and there are 2,000 carcasses of bloated beasts floating around stone dead. What's that all about? That's what happens when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, b&s, and you're prepared to take the giant step. You go into the water and the old man is put to death (the swine) and a new man emerges (and he's here in the record) and there are 2,000 swine, I believe, because, you see, Legion represents the Gentiles, who were to receive the truth over the 2,000 years since that time to this. And you and I are included in that, aren't we? We've taken the plunge, b&s, we've left the old way behind, we've plunged down into the water of baptism, as it were, and the old man is dead.

And what do we see in the record of Mark 5? Verse 15, 'And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting', (sitting with Christ in heavenly places, Ephesians 2 verse 6), 'and clothed'. Who gave him the garment? Clothed with a Christ garment and in his right mind, the unclean spirit is gone. And they were afraid! 'What fearful things, what wonderful things, what awesome things can be done in the lives of individuals by our Lord Jesus Christ, b&s and young people, if we are prepared to take the step. But some weren't and those that were there said 'get out of our country', verse 17, and being asked to leave, He left, but He told Legion, 'you go and you preach to everybody you encounter about what God has done in your life; leave no stone upturned, to tell every Gentile you come across. And he did! and the record of verse 20 says, 'that all men did marvel'.

Now, I've got just a couple of minutes, and I'm going to twist Greig's arm just a little bit, not too much, because I want to talk about Legion's disease. Let's do this quickly! Legion's disease, what was it? Well, it was a disease called Cysticercosis. It was an

infestation of man by the larval stage of the tapeworm; the pig is the normal host of the larvae, man usually of the adult worm by eating uncooked pork (hence the Law which said don't eat swine). Man excretes pieces of the fertilized worm and eggs, so if a man has got on board (if he's eaten pork) the adult worm, he excretes bits and pieces of that. Swine come along and ingest that stuff and larvae develop and lodge in their flesh, so the cycle continues. But where there is poor hygiene, contamination of water, food and so on, flies rushing around carrying germs, etc., man can ingest the eggs of the tapeworm and can become the host himself like the swine, to the larvae - then he's got a real problem. A real problem!

The larvae attach throughout the body and are walled off by the body's defence system except in the brain. That's just the way God made it: the brain has the largest blood supply so most larvae lodge there, that's the way God made it. The brain cells attack the intruders and toxins are released causing softening and degeneration of the brain tissue which becomes fluid. So, a battle goes on in the brain, the larvae are lodging there and the brain says, I want you. Fluidity results in a pressure build up which destroys more tissue. And an enormous pressure builds up inside the cranium, but it waxes and wanes; some days it's worse than others, that's what happened to Legion, wasn't it? some days he sat there calm, you could talk to him; you could put chains on his arms; you could reason with him about the scriptures, he knew about the most high God; but then he would go almost insane, almost insane, why would he do that? Well, the pressure would build up inside the brain, he couldn't stand it anymore and he would cast the chains off, he would tear things apart with his hands.

The symptoms of advanced Cysticercosis include epilepsy, hysteria, psychoses, schizophrenia, dementia and maniacal outbursts. Not hard to see what that's all about, is it? Poor 'spiritual hygiene' b&s, results in the mind being impacted by swinish influences destructive of spiritual structure and spiritual health. Enormous pressures build up in the brain and people do silly things; they burst out of their bonds, they do stupid things. Oh, they can be rational people most of the time, b&s, of the three classes of humanity that the Lord can say, you and I belong to the 'Legion' class; it's obvious, isn't it? it's obvious that what we need to do, is to repeat and replicate every day in our lives what we did in baptism, and leave behind the old man, to leave him dead, and to cultivate a newness of life and to sit in the heavenlies with our Lord Jesus Christ, fully clothed with the garment that He provides, and in our right mind. And we can be thankful for this, we can be extremely thankful for this, that 2,000 years after those events, it's still true, b&s, so wonderfully true, in verse 21, 'that after these things He passed over to the other side, and much people gathered unto Him; and He was nigh unto the sea'. Stay, b&s, in the vicinity of Galilee of the nations!