

# A Sea of Full of Stories

## *Jesus Calms the Storm and Sends Out Legion*

**Luke 8:22** One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out,  
<sup>23</sup> and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.

<sup>24</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

<sup>27</sup> When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.

<sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me."

<sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)

<sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him.

<sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission.

<sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

<sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

<sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.

<sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

<sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,

<sup>39</sup> "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

(Luke 8:22-39)

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## Two Famous Stories

The stories of **Jesus calming the storm** and then **casting out Legion** are both well known. They clearly show Jesus' mastery of nature and power over psychological problems. But they do so much more. They show in an amazing, and to many people today, hidden way Jesus' Lordship and control over all the forces of chaos in **the supernatural realm**. But they do more still. They prove that he is the God of **Genesis 1, 3, 6**, and all the Old Testament. Allow me to show you these things now.

These two stories appear together in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (see the Appendix for the Harmony). Luke 8 begins with an **introduction to the twelve** followed by a **demon possessed** woman and **two other women** which are then paralleled in the parables we looked at last week and Jesus' family, but then also in the calming of the sea with the **twelve**, the **demon possessed** man, and the healing of **two females**. Though I would love to do these four stories together to show how they relate to this introduction, there is too much in these first two to get through it all at one time. There is much we need to do today, for there is a lot going on in these first two stories that people miss.

Beginning and Ending of Luke 8 Parallels	
1b: The twelve were with him	22-26: The disciples and calming the sea
2: Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out	27-39: Legion and the demon-possessed man
3: Joanna and Susanna	40-56: Jairus' daughter and the bleeding woman

To truly **appreciate what Jesus is doing** and **who he is claiming to be**, we need to think about some **background material** that will fill in gaps in our knowledge. To help us, I want to begin by telling you about **sacred geography**, a very

important idea in the Bible. This is a concept both familiar and unfamiliar to most people. Perhaps they've not heard of the phrase, so in that sense it is unfamiliar. However, it is **familiar** at a raw emotional gut-level sense. When you tour any of the islands of Hawaii, when you sit at the base of El Capitan, when you walk through the Garden of the Gods, or even when you drive to our church on a crisp, clear Sunday morning and stare up at the Flatirons and Indian Peaks from Lookout Road, you know instinctively what sacred geography is.

And yet, **sacred geography is more** profound than just a beautiful landscape. Anywhere in the Bible that **God appears** is considered sacred geography. When the Angel showed up to Abram at the Oak at Mamre; when Jacob saw the LORD at Beth-El, the House of God; when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to meet with God; when Jesus was born at Bethlehem or died on Mt. Calvary or ascends on the Mt. of Olives; these are all considered sacred places. This is why we find **altars or churches** or other commemorative activities taking place at them. They are claiming this turf as sacred. I'll mention one more place here. **Psalm 73:17** refers to the "sanctuary of God," which is Zion. "**Sacred geography**" which one scholar puts it this way, "**The Holy Rock of Zion was very**

early understood as the cosmic cornerstone which forms the summit of the world-mountain and which restrains the rising waters of Chaos.”<sup>1</sup> We will return to the waters of chaos a bit later.

First, it isn't just *God's* presence that caused peoples of long ago to consider a place sacred. When the fallen angels (Watchers) descended on **Mt. Hermon** in Jewish and Babylonian stories, the entire region became infused with the idea, *in a bad way*. The **highest pagan temple on earth** was located on its summit. The **Cave of Pan** at its foot, located at Caesarea Philippi (ancient Baniyas or Paneas) is called the **Gates of Hell** by Jesus. The ancient pagan megalith the **Wheel of Giants and Serpent Mound** temple complex were erected precisely due south of Mt. Hermon in Bashan, the **Place of the Serpent**. Most likely this vast *wilderness* area is the Valley of the Shadow of Death famously sung about by David, thanks to there being a higher concentration of pagan burial dolmens (sacred *tombs*) here than any other place on earth. At the bottom of all this, we have the **Sea of Galilee**, described by the Canaanites as the **abode of El**—the source of the two

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<sup>1</sup> **Othmaar Keel**, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hallett; New York: Seabury, 1978), 181. Cited in **J. Nathan Clayton**, “An Examination of Holy Space in Psalm 73: Is Wisdom’s Path Infused with an Eschatologically Oriented Hope?,” *Trinity Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 118.

deeps and [home of Leviathan, the chaos monster](#). Sacred geography like this is, of course, a world-wide phenomenon, and obviously there are many more places we could consider; but this is the area we find our passage taking place near today and so these are most relevant. All were considered sacred places by the pagans of old, but [things that must be conquered by God](#) if they are to be redeemed.

Next, I want to us to think more specifically about this [abode of El](#). First, let's look at the deity. [El](#) is a very common word usually translated as "God" in the OT. And it often means him. Scholars usually say it derives from a word meaning "[to be strong](#)," hence, *Mighty God*. But [the Canaanites](#), whom Israel so often interacted with and followed after in their lusts, had their own understanding of El. El was [the high god of their pantheon](#) of deities. Himself just older but also created, he presided over their divine council and had seventy sons with his consort Asherah, of whom were included [Baal](#) (meaning "lord") the storm-god and [Yam](#) (meaning "sea"), the sea-god.

My friend Derek Gilbert<sup>2</sup> has done great work showing us how El may very well be the same entity as [Dagon](#) in the

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<sup>2</sup> The following discussion is found throughout [Derek P. Gilbert](#), *The Second Coming of Saturn: The Great Conjunction, America's Temple, and the Return of the Watchers* (Crane, MO: Defender Publishing, 2021). Two works by the scholar Amar Annus are also important in this discussion.

Bible (the deity who had to bow before the ark of the covenant) and **Molech** (whose name means “king”) to whom Israel sacrificed their children. He was later called by the Greeks **Cronus/Kronos**, the Titan and father of Zeus and **Saturn** by the Romans. Cronus was imprisoned by Zeus in Tartarus when the Olympians overthrew the Titans. Curiously, this has a parallel in the Hebrew world when **Shemihazah**, the main instigator of the angelic rebellion on Mt. Hermon in the days before the Flood (see **1En 6:3**) was locked up (by Michael; **1En 10:11**) in Tartarus for that rebellion (**2Pet 2:4**).

Shemihazah (meaning “the name has seen”; i.e. *God knows what you did*) was known by the Sumerians as an *ap-kallu*, their equivalent of the watchers. The word means “big water man” which refers to their home, which was believed to be the freshwater ocean beneath the earth—the Apsû or **abzu**, from which we get our word **abyss**. Curiously, the god Marduk threw *them* into the equivalent of Tartarus (the

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**Amar Annus**, “Are There Greek Rephaim? On the Etymology of Greek Meropes and Titanes.” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31 (1999); **Amar Annus**, “On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions.” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 19.4 (2010): 277–320.



Apsû as a consequence of the great flood). All of this demonstrates that [Shemihazah is another name for El](#).

This big-water home of these gods takes us to the *abode* of El. In the *Baal Cycle*, a Ugaritic myth, we learn that El pitched his tent “[at the midst of the springs of the two deeps](#)” (KTU 1.4.iv.21-22). This is brought up in [Psalm 42:6-7](#) when it says, “[My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar, Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me.](#)” The Psalmist is [stuck in this ancient territory of evil](#) that we mentioned earlier and that is why he is downcast. The word “deep” is *tehom* (Gk: *abyssos*) from which we often translate as abyss. These are the words we find in [Genesis 1:2](#), “[The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.](#)” In the Psalm, [God is the Lord of the sea and the storms](#).

In another text, they locate the entrance literally [under the Sea of Galilee](#).<sup>3</sup> This is Canaanites, remember, not Jews, though they obviously knew about it. They saw something

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<sup>3</sup> “The context here in 1.19:111 permits no equivocation on two essential points: (1) the phrase BT. IL refers to El's mythological rather than cultic abode, and cannot therefore be rendered 'temple' or the like; (2) this mythological abode lies in the general vicinity of, if not actually in (or under) the Kinnereth itself.” [Baruch Margalit](#), *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqbt*, Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 412.



very important as being under this sea. It is the home of their high god, and a chief rival to the True God. Jesus understood what they believed.

It is at this point that I want to return to the idea of *chaos*, raised earlier. We saw that Mt. Zion was the foundational place from which the Psalmist saw God as restraining chaos. **What is chaos?** It literally means *a chasm or a yawning space*. In a modern sense, it means *disorder*. Besides also being the first god of the Greek pantheon, which in my mind is equivalent to the atheists view that everything arose from a pure random chance of disorder somehow “creating” everything, in the Bible and virtually every ancient culture, the **archetypal image of chaos is the sea, the deep**.

The struggle to overcome chaos is so ubiquitous and embedded that it has been given a name: *Chaoskampf* (German: *Struggle against Chaos*). In their stories, it is always a hero-god defeating chaos which is personified as a sea-monster. **A god-man crushing a serpent. Hmmm.** In the *Enuma Elish*, **Marduk** defeats Tiamat, the dragon. In the Epic of Anzu, Anzû the sea monster made by the pure waters of the apsu, is taken down by the hero **Ninurta**. **Alexander the Great** must first defeat a huge dragon before he can build Alexandria. In *My Little Pony*, Discord creates chaos by causing

chocolate rain to fall from cotton dandy clouds until he is eventually stopped and incarcerated by Celestia and Luna.<sup>4</sup>

Closer to home, in the Bible, this sea monster is Rahab or more often **Leviathan**, whom John likens to **Satan**. **Yahweh** destroys Egypt, whom he calls Leviathan, in the Red Sea (**Ps 74:14**). In **Daniel 7**, a huge sea-monster is defeated by one like **a son of man**. In Isaiah 27, God says he will destroy Leviathan the straight and twisting serpent on the Great Day.<sup>5</sup> In **Revelation 12**, the Dragon seeks to destroy the church in the sea, but **Michael** defeats him. This motif is found everywhere. The difference between the pagans and the Bible is that God proves himself to be the true master of chaos in real history in front of ordinary people and changes the world through it.

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<sup>4</sup> See **Rosanna Rackley**, “Kingship, Struggle, and Creation: The Story of *Chaoskampf*,” Thesis to the University of Birmingham (Sept, 2014), <https://theses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/6145/1/Rackley15MRes.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Because of this straight and twisted idea, the Rabbis saw two Leviathans in Isaiah 27:1. “**Here, in Babylonia, they interpreted this as a reference to the sea oryx. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This is leviathan the slant serpent, and leviathan the tortuous serpent, as it is stated: “In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the slant serpent, and leviathan the tortuous serpent” (Isaiah 27:1).**” *Bava Batra* 74b. This translation is from **Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz**, **בבא בתרא א** *Bava Batra \* Part One*,” תלמוד בבלי Koren Talmud Bavli The Noé Edition (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2016), 345.

Comment: “**R’ Yochanan, in Eretz Yisrael, said: -- These (the great sea-monsters) are the Leviathan, the straight snake – and the Leviathan, the curved snake. – As it says: On that day, God with his hard, great and mighty sword will judge etc. Leviathan, the straight snake, and Leviathan the curved snake.**” The comment is in **Hersh Goldwurm**, Nossou Scherman, *Talmud Bavli: Tractate Bava Basra*, vol. 1-3 (Mesorah Publications, 1994).

Chaoskampf was originally defined as a story of a god defeating a chaos sea monster at a creation battle. However, it has now become clear that these stories involve something more, and are not in fact always dealing with creation. In them, the victor is almost always viewed as becoming the King because of his victory. Chaoskampf is about kingship.<sup>6</sup>

One final piece of information is important to bring up here, I think. This is the idea that Genesis 1, which I mentioned earlier, begins with the deep, the abyss, which becomes a metaphor for chaos throughout the rest of the Bible. Genesis 1 is very often misunderstood. We've turned it into a huge science debate. The problem is, this chapter of the Bible is setting God up as the King who builds his temple and then rests in it when he's finished. That never comes up in these debates. Indeed, the rest of Genesis and the Bible is all about proving to us who is the King of kings.

## Luke 8:22-25 – Jesus Calms the Storm

That's enough background material for now. Let's turn to the two stories. The first is Luke 8:22-25. It is a brief story but famous story of Jesus amazingly calming a storm on the

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<sup>6</sup> This is Rackley's main contribution to the subject.

Sea of Galilee. The story is self-contained, beginning and ending with Jesus going to a new place (22, 26). In vv. 23 and 25, the words “wind” and “water” repeat. Vv. 24a and 25 have the disciples talking and then Jesus. This gives us a center at 24b where Jesus “rebukes” the storm and silences the sea.

- A. 22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, **Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.** And they launched forth.
- B. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of **wind** on the lake; and they were filled with **water**, and were in jeopardy.
- C. 24 **And they came to him,** and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish.
- D. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.**
- C'.25 **And he said unto them,** Where is your faith?
- B. And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the **winds** and **water**, and they obey him.
- A'. 26 **And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.**<sup>7</sup>

Luke begins by telling us that “one day he got into a boat with his disciples...” (Luke 8:22). This matches up with the introduction of the chapter where he has twelve disciples who were with him (1). Of course, we already know that Peter and Andrew, James, and John are all fishermen, so boats aren't a problem. Besides, it is a beautiful place, so why

<sup>7</sup> Admin, “Luke 8:22-26,” *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (March 17, 2016), <https://www.chiasmusexchange.com/2016/03/17/luke-822-26/>.

wouldn't you get into a boat and go out on that lake for some peace and quiet (Matthew adds that he saw the crowd and wanted to escape)?

Luke continues, "... and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake'" (22b). It's a bit of a journey, especially in a fishing boat, to do this. So it is going to take a little time. "So they set out."

Luke now takes something that is at the end of the verse in Matthew and on into the next verse in Mark, and puts it up front. "And as they sailed, he fell asleep" (23a). Why would he do this? We are not yet able to see why this is significant, but it will be made clear soon enough.

The conflict arises soon thereafter. "And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger" (23b). In modern times, it has been reported that waves as high as 20ft. have arisen in bad storms. We heard 30ft. when we were there just a couple of weeks ago. If anything like this, it would be terrifying.

But more importantly, if Jesus was really this seer, why would he take his disciples out on a boat at a time like this? Did he not know what was coming? Furthermore, how can he be asleep at a time like this? And for that matter, why

would he be sleeping? This are **hugely important questions** that few people ask or know how to arrive at an answer to.

As you might expect, given all they've seen Jesus do, **“they went and woke him.”** But do they really think he can **do anything about the storm?** Or is this more incredulity that he could sleep at a time like this! Once awakened they say, **“Master, Master (*epistatēs*),<sup>8</sup> we are perishing!”** As master, they know he carries **authority and power.**<sup>9</sup> But as the rest of the story unfolds, we will see that they were clearly not thinking he had the kind of authority and power that he will very soon demonstrate. And this is to their great shame. If they knew their Scripture and who they were looking at, it would have been obvious to them.

The **center of the story's structure** now comes sharply into view. **“And he *awoke* and *rebuked* the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a *calm*” (24b).** The rebuke was some kind of **word** that Jesus spoke. He simply

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<sup>8</sup> Mark has *didaskalos* (teacher), perhaps emphasizing they are not asking for help. Matthew has *kurios* (Lord), perhaps telegraphing that he is God. Luke is perhaps somewhere in between.

<sup>9</sup> I like how Bovon and Koester put this. “Ἐπιστάτης means “foreman,” “master.” The disciples thus recognize in Jesus less a teacher (as in Mark) than a carrier of authority and power. In the juxtaposition of this title and the dramatic situation (“we are lost”), Christian hope comes to expression. The ἐπιστάτης is now no longer asleep (διεγερθεῖς, “he woke up”). On the contrary, the disciples experience how he is also the Lord of the elements and how they obey him. Through his word, he prepares an end to the raging of the wind and water. What happens thereafter is not the quiet of death, but the tranquility of peace.” François Bovon and Helmut Koester, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 321.



talked to the storm. And what happened? The raging waves stopped suddenly. We think almost **purely natural things** about wind and waves. Curiously, they both have entries in the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. We'll talk about this later.

As we've seen throughout the last two chapters, suddenly, **faith comes into view**. “**He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’**” (25). In Matthew, this reads more like a second (or rather first) **rebuke**. How long must he bear with these men after all they have seen? They are so slow to believe. This is quite remarkable in light of the previous parable of the **worries of life choking out the seed** of the word and the previous stories of those who should not have **faith** having it, trusting in Christ's mere word to heal. The ending of the story piles it on even more, “**And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?’**”

As they **marvel in fear**, what a comfort it is to know that these men, overcome by something that would certainly worry me, have a patient and gracious Master who does not throw them out of the boat like Jonah for their dullness of mind and heart. Because the fact of the matter is, this is not so much about them, **as it is about Him**.



## Luke 8:26-39 – Jesus Casts Out Legion

Before thinking more deeply about this story, let's look at **the second one**. It follows on the heels of this. “**Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee**” (26). This story is also self-contained. It can be viewed either as an **ABC-CBA** or an **ABC-ABC** pattern.<sup>10</sup> If the former, then the demons going into the pigs and then the abyss is the center. If the latter, then the two halves of the story are seen as **parallel**, meaning that the possession and exorcism is to be viewed in light of how everyone reacts to it.

The region appears to be the **northeast section of the Sea of Galilee**, that would be the western boundary of the **Bashan**. I brought up both places earlier. Now you see why. Key words help us see this better. “**When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had *demons*. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the *tombs***” (Luke 8:27). I said earlier that Bashan has the **highest concentration of megalithic tombs** on the planet. While this may or may not be referring

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<sup>10</sup> ABCABC: Admin, “Luke 8:26-39,” *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (March 16, 2015), <https://www.chiasmusxchange.com/2015/03/16/luke-826/>; ABCABC: “[46] Jesus heals the Gerasene demonica (Luke 8:26-39),” *Literary Structure of Gospel of Luke*, [http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/42\\_Luke\\_pericope\\_e.html](http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/42_Luke_pericope_e.html).

to one of those, the fact that a demon is in view is important to this, because according to 100% of the earliest Fathers (and Jews), demons are the **disembodied spirits of the nephilim-giants**, the very people since the days of Og who dwelt in this very region, the very people who created those megalithic tombs and who were later worshiped in a cult of the dead by those darkened people who lived there.

The identity of the man here is not important to any of the Gospels. All that we need to know is that he literally **out of his mind**. Mark adds at this point that he had tremendous **strength** (fitting of giants); Luke puts this as a parenthesis in **vs. 29**. The people tried to bind him with chains to keep him under control, but he would break the cuffs as if they were pretzels, something you could imagine a ten foot plus Og probably doing if you tried to bind him.

Next, let's notice that **Jesus isn't doing anything** except going there. It parallels the sleeping. But all it takes is for the demon in the man to *see* Jesus coming. "**When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him**" (28a). Not only does the demon have insane strength, but he has **supernatural knowledge**. This is not the man crying out. It is the demon. And he knows who Jesus is without having to be introduced.

And this is what it said “with a loud voice,” “What have you to do with me, Jesus, *Son of the Most High God*? I beg you, do not torment me” (28). Matthew adds, “Have you come here to torment us *before the time*?” (Matt 8:29). The Jews of that day understood this appointed time refers to **the Judgment Day** when God will judge the remaining demons that were allowed to remain on earth as told in **1En 12-16** and **Jub 5:6-10; 10:1-13**, and other places. So there is Jewish tradition of the story of the watchers (**Genesis 6:1-4**) and the time before the Flood that is clearly in view here.

This is seen more clearly in what the demon calls him. Notice: *the Son of the Most High God*. In Genesis 6:1-4 there are the “sons of God” who sinned against God before the Flood, which I mentioned took place at **Mt. Hermon**, the water source of the Sea of Galilee. Even more, these “**sons of God**” who remain after the Flood are then given to the nations as an inheritance in **Deuteronomy 32:8** by the “**Most High**” (7), while the **Son of God** (called simply Yahweh) receives Israel as his inheritance (9). In other words, this title is conjuring in our minds terrible things that God did in judgment in days past, even as he promised to exalt his Only Begotten Son in days future. This is vital background material

you need to know to see why this story occurs immediately after the calming of the storm. But let's continue for now.

Luke adds now, “For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man” (Luke 8:29). Jesus was in the middle of an exorcism when the demon asked his question. Luke adds here his point about the strength, “... (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert).” What Luke says here at the end is his addition and it is important. “Desert” here is, I think, a misleading translation. There really aren't anywhere near a desert. But, this is the very same word translated as “wilderness” when the devil tempted Jesus back in Luke 4.

The word *erēmos* resembles *hermon* so much that some scholars think that they are related to each other.<sup>11</sup> As I suggested then, so I suggest now. This man is being driven by the demon into the heart of the Hermon wilderness, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the very place the Psalmist be-

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<sup>11</sup> “It can reasonably be assumed that ‘Hermon’ is a misspelling of ‘Eremos.’ From a remark of Valerian (cf. n. 1) (“Hermon [or Eremos], in quo se Dominus cum discipulis resicere solebat), it may be deduced that here, as in...” *Christian News from Israel* (1985), 26. All I have for this is a snippet view from Google. It remains to track down the article.

came so downcast because he was stuck there. Sacred geography is very important in this story: Sea of Galilee, tombs, wilderness. Don't miss it.

During the exorcism, Jesus then asked him, “‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘*Legion*,’ for many demons had entered him” (29). This parallels Mary Magdalene and her *seven demons* at the beginning of the chapter, a number that one of you suggested to me last week reminded them of the perfect storm of demons that we will see in a story in Luke 11. There, Jesus tells us that when the *strongman* is involved (a title for *Satan*),<sup>12</sup> seven demons more powerful than the first can come back into a person.

*Legion*, of course, reminds us of a Roman military unit comprised of 5,600 infantry and 200 cavalry. Besides being a lot more than seven, the point is that this is a spiritual army of evil that is in this man.<sup>13</sup> A war. But this army is powerless against our Champion. Thus, “They begged him not to command them to depart into the *abyss*.” The Abyss (*abyssos*)

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<sup>12</sup> Jesus refers to Beelzebub as the Strongman and Satan in this very story. Also, “Bind the strongman” here is the same as “bind Satan” in Revelation 20.

<sup>13</sup> This story has a parallel in the Testament of Solomon 11. See H. D. Betz, “Legion,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 507-08.



is Luke's unique word and its supernatural importance cannot be underestimated. Recall [the Deep is the Abyss](#). And recall that the source of the two deeps is the [Sea of Galilee](#). Recall that this is [the home of El or Shemihazah](#).

The story then takes an interesting turn. “[Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside...](#)” (32). Obviously, this would not have been the herd of a Jewish man, for pigs are unclean animals, and they will have nothing to do with them. So it was [a Gentile farmer](#) of some kind. But [why pigs?](#)

Curiously, [the dolmens](#), those tombs of this region are [two vertical slabs covered by a horizontal slab](#) and the effect is that they look like a [table](#). There was a monthly practice of making an offering to the dead that the Amorites partook in once a month as a [food offering to the dead at the tomb](#). The oldest son called the “[pourer of the cup](#)” would offer bread, water, honey, and meat, which was almost always [a pig](#). It was utterly pagan and a practice of the



cult of the dead.<sup>14</sup> Isaiah explains this when he says, “I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; *who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig’s flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels; who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you”* (Isaiah 65:2-5). So now you can see a bit more clearly why the pigs are here near the tombs and the demoniac.

Luke continues, “*And they begged him to let them enter these*” (Luke 8:32). The demons wanted to go into the pigs, if they had to leave the man. Why? Because demons are by nature **disembodied spirits**. They once had bodies; now they don’t. As Jesus will tell us, they roam around in **waterless places** seeking rest until they find a house to inhabit (Luke 11:24). *Waterless places*, isn’t that interesting? They **don’t want to go into the abyss**, which is full of water; they want waterless places, so they lead the man into the wilderness to be among the tombs.

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<sup>14</sup> **Ron Carpenter**, “What are Dolmens? And Why Did Jesus Drive the Demons into a Swine Herd,” Nov 5, 2020, <https://teachingforsotzambia.com/2020/11/05/what-are-dolmens-and-why-did-jesus-drive-the-demons-into-a-swine-herd/>. Carpenter cites Gilbert. Derek has written about it in **Derek P. Gilbert**, *Veneration: Unveiling the Ancient Realms of Demonic Kings and Satan’s Battle Plan for Armageddon* (Crane, MO: Defender, 2019), 89 and notes. Also *Second Coming of Saturn*, 89-90. His scholarship on the gods is top-notch, but I do hold to quite a different eschatology than my friend, for those wondering about the subtitles.



Now comes the best part of the story. “So he gave them permission.” Mark says 2,000 pigs were possessed (Mark 5:13)! Even a legion of demons can only do what Jesus commands them to do. But at that moment, it tells us, “Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned” (Luke 8:33). Apparently, the pigs lost their minds too. But unbeknownst to the demons, in losing their minds, the pigs ran right down the hill towards the very abyss they did not want to go into. Literally. They drown themselves in the Sea of Galilee, the same place Jesus has just calmed the storm, the same place that was El’s, that is Shemihazah’s or Molech’s abode.

Let’s finish the story, “When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country” (34). I can only imagine what kind of a sight this must have been to onlookers. Especially to the man who owned all the pigs! He’s out a lot of money. Do you think he went there to see if he could get a mob to extort money from Jesus to pay for his loss?

It starts off like that might be the case. “Then people went out to see what had happened...” (35a). They are assessing the situation. But then “they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet

of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, *and they were afraid*. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were *seized with great fear*” (35b-37a). It’s **the same reaction** of the people that the disciples have just had. They aren’t going to do anything to a man with this kind of power.

“So he got into the boat and returned” (35b). This makes for **a nice finish** to our boat and lake stories. But this one isn’t quite finished. “The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him” (Luke 8:34-39). **What did he proclaim?** To answer that, we really need to understand now what we have just witnessed.

## Jesus: God and King of All

In telling these two stories together, or better, **in performing these two stories consecutively** like Jesus did, he is communicating to us some **crucial truths** for all people to

understand. They would not have been lost on the original audiences, but to us, we are far removed from so many of the things that are in the background here. Let's look at a few related things to help us understand these stories.

For starters, [Jesus calming the storm](#) on the Sea of Galilee is a [Chaoskampf](#).<sup>15</sup> Jesus is literally putting order to chaos on the very place that chaos is, throughout the Scripture, personified as sea and serpent, on the very place the Canaanites believed Leviathan dwelt. In the parallels to Genesis 1 in the ANE, the god kills the sea-beast and thus brings order from chaos. Furthermore, this is precisely what we find with God doing in the OT.

Someone might say, but there is no Leviathan in this passage. True enough. But remember Luke said that [Jesus “rebuked” the storm](#). This is the same word used for him [rebuking a different man with a demon earlier](#), also telling him to be still or silent (“[Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’](#)” [Luke 4:35](#)). As to demon, now to storm. Why? Because of supernatural evil that resides there. *God rebukes storms throughout the OT* ([2Sam 22:16](#); [Ps 18:15](#); [104:7](#); [106:9](#); [Isa 50:2](#); etc.). But more *in those storms*. Listen

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<sup>15</sup> Löfstedt says, “It is tempting to see the combat myth as a basic structure that underlies all the conflicts in the Gospels” and “the combat myth is central for Luke” (9, 166). [Torsten Löfstedt](#), *The Devil, Demons, Judas, and ‘The Jews’: Opponents of Christ in the Gospels* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2021)

to Job, “The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his *rebuke*. By his power *he stilled the sea*; by his understanding *he shattered Rahab*” (Job 26:11-12). Rahab is the twin of Leviathan, the chaos-monster. In a similar way, the Angel of the LORD also rebukes Satan (Zech 3:2). Luke using this language is unmistakable in light of the OT. Thus, one scholar thus says, “The Synoptic accounts [of Jesus calming the storm] suggest that here indeed we have a reference to an evil power” being rebuked on this lake.<sup>16</sup>

But there’s more here. Just like our story, in Genesis 1, there is no *overt* sea-monster. It is not until day 4 that God makes those great sea-monsters (21).<sup>17</sup> However, just like the words *rebuke* and *still* harken to a supernatural power at the Sea, the word *tehom* in Gen 1:2 is a cognate for Tiamat, the sea-monster, the equivalent of Leviathan.<sup>18</sup> *Tehom* is the deep. *But*, the deep—the formless void, the chaos, is in great need of being turned into order.<sup>19</sup> I think Moses *doesn’t* personify it to make clear that what God is doing compared to

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<sup>16</sup> Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, ed. D. A. Carson, New Studies in Biblical Theology vol. 12 (Downers Grove, IL; England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2002), 99. The entire discussion is excellent.

<sup>17</sup> Though, read as a weave, Day 4 parallels Day 1.

<sup>18</sup> See B. Alster, “Tiamat,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 867-69.

<sup>19</sup> Batto, recalling the obvious parallels in Genesis 1 to the Enuma Elish, admits the chaos is “less a personal foe” and more “the raw material.” Yet, Chaoskampf themes are “not so absent ... as is often asserted.” Specifically, this is what the god resting throughout ANE material is always about prior to being enthroned (e.g. Baal on Mt. Zaphon and Marduk in Esagila). This

what the gods are said to do at creation is not even comparable. There is no battle God needs to fight. He just speaks, and it is. Kind of like Jesus in the storm.

In creating all these things in six days, we come to the climax of Genesis 1. “And God *rested* from all his work” (Gen 2:2). God rested? What does this mean? It doesn’t mean he grew tired. It means that he completed his great building project, conquered the chaos of the primeval world, and is now ready to be enthroned as king in his temple. For this is what kings do when they are enthroned. *They rest*. “Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of *my rest*?’” (Isa 66:1).

In fact, this is precisely why Jesus goes to sleep in the boat over the great abyss, the home of the evil usurper god El/Shemihazah/Molech/Kronos/Saturn—the Big Water Man. He is showing his deity, his kingship, *by sleeping*, just as the LORD does often in the Psalms (cf. Ps 7:7; 35:23; 59:5-6; etc.). One scholar puts it this way, “The ability of

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is then bolstered by Psalm 8, which is a deep reflection upon Genesis 1 and creation. Vs. 2 can be translated, “You built a fortress for your habitation, having silenced your adversaries, the foe and the avenger,” a reflection upon the Genesis 1 creation account. See Bernard F. Batto, “The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty,” *Biblica* 68.2 (1987): 165. 153-77. See also Andrzej Mrozek Silvano Votto, “The Motif of the Sleeping Divinity,” *Biblica* 80.3 (1999): 415-19.

the divine king to sleep undisturbed was accordingly a symbol of his unchallenged authority as the supreme deity. A corollary concept was also present: to interrupt or to disturb the sleep of the supreme deity was tantamount to rebellion against his dominion.”<sup>20</sup> That puts **their arousing Jesus** in a different light, as it does **his merciful response** to them.

But it is more than even this. In sleeping at a time like this, Jesus is **showing himself to be the God of the OT**. It is **God who must awaken** to destroy the sea-monster in Isaiah 51, “*Awake! Awake! Robe yourself in Power, O arm of Yahweh* [that’s the title for the Commander, LORD Sabaoth, Christ in the OT]. *Awake* as in primordial days ... Is it not you who cleaves Rahab in pieces, who pierces the Sea-dragon?” (Isa 51:9-10). Jesus is embodying this story. It is **God** alone who **stills the raging sea**, as we saw a moment ago with **Job 26:12** (see also **Isa 51:15; Jer 31:35; Ps 89:9; 107:29**). It is **God** who **tramples upon the back of the sea** (**Job 9:8; Hab 3:15; Ps 77:20**). Jesus is Lord of the Deep as we saw in **Psalm 42**. Jesus sleeping, the only time we see it happen in the entire NT, proves his divinity. That’s why it is here. Jesus is God.

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<sup>20</sup> **Batto**, 159.



Jesus took them out on this boat to replay before their eyes the old stories **as a teaching lesson**. Zeus, the storm-god destroys Kronos; Baal the storm-god defeats Yam the sea-god. But who is the real storm-god? Zeus? Baal? No. They are usurpers, fakes and phonies to the throne. Jesus is the real God. And how do we know? Because **he did it in front of everyone, in real history**, proving himself powerful over not just forces of nature, but supernatural forces of evil—chaos personified, the gods of the underworld, the usurpers to his very throne. And he does it, **he domesticates chaos, essentially while doing nothing**. Just like Genesis 1. He just speaks. That's how powerful Jesus is. No wonder they were afraid of him.

Since elsewhere the sea is personified as the sea-monster, who is Leviathan, and since Levithan, the dragon, is equated with Satan or the devil in Revelation, we can make a case that Jesus is also **showing himself to be the God of Genesis 3**, the one who predicts that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. Even more, I believe that **Satan is the same entity as Baal**, the storm God. And in showing himself powerful over the storm, Jesus is proving that Baal or Satan or Levithan are usurpers, counterfeits, false gods that have no power over Jesus.



Finally, this idea of **Baal and Satan** is brought home in the story of **Beelzebub**, which I've already referenced, for it is at the end of this story where we learn about the **seven demons** more powerful that enter a house after roaming around **waterless places**. Jesus tells you explicitly that Beelzebub (from Baal-Zebul or Lord of the House/Flies) is Satan (**Luke 11:18**).

In that story, Beelzebub is the “**prince of demons**.” That is, **he controls the demons**; he is their lord. He has a horde of them that do his bidding in an attempt to overthrow the Most High. But if Jesus has just proven to be the superior of Baal by calming the sea, then what power do his minions have over him? They **hold no power over Jesus**. Their wilderness of death, their tombs, their sacrifices of pigs, their strength, their knowledge, it does them all not a whit of good.

And Jesus **proves himself powerful** by sending that particular horde to their early judgment *at their own bidding*, through the pigs, who send them **into the abyss, the Sea**. In this, Jesus shows himself the God of **Genesis 6**, for this entire story is about their origin and demise in the waters of the Flood. They hate the watery abyss, because this is where their brothers went into judgment in the Flood.

But little did they know that the Sea could end up being their new judgment, the very sea in which their **father El was now judged**. And in it, Jesus proved he is the **King of kings and Lord of all the creatures of heaven or earth or below the earth**. That's why these stories are here. That's why we needed to learn about all this background material. Everyone in those days would have known it and this is precisely **what the demonic man would have told them**.

Save for one last thing. Jesus had *recused* **him** from this great and very personal evil. This was an evil that took control of his mind and body. It forced him into that Valley of Death against his will. It caused him to terrify all those around him. It left him homeless, friendless, comfortless. That's what this evil world of fallen demonic entities does to all people, sooner or later.

But **Jesus is their Lord**, and there is no need for anyone to be held prisoner to their powers. Jesus overcomes them. By faith we enter into his victory. **Faith that Jesus is precisely who he continues to prove himself to be** in the Gospels. This is the good news of our Savior, the one who effortlessly defeats all his foes, be they natural or supernatural or some kind of amalgamation of the two. The one who went before us to death itself so that he might get the very keys to hell

whereby all who turn to him are freed from sin, death, and the devil.

Have you been delivered by him? If so, will you follow that man to his city and country and tell the whole world what he has done for you?

## Appendix: Harmony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke on Calming the Storm and Casting out Legion

<i>Calming the Storm</i>		
<i>Matthew 8:18, 23-27</i>	<i>Mark 4:35-41</i>	<i>Luke 8:22-25</i>
<sup>18</sup> Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.	<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."	<sup>22</sup> One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."
<sup>23</sup> And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.	<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.	So they set out,
<sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep.	<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.	<sup>23</sup> and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.
<sup>25</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing."	And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"	<sup>24</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"
<sup>26</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.	<sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"	And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup> He said to them, "Where is your faith?"
<sup>27</sup> And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"	<sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great fear and said to one another,	And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

	"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"	
<b>Casting Out Legion</b>		
<i>Matthew 8:28-34</i>	<i>Mark 5:1-20</i>	<i>Luke 8:26-39</i>
<sup>28</sup> And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes,	ESV <b>Mark 5:1</b> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.	<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.
two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way.	<sup>2</sup> And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. <sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup> for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.	<sup>27</sup> When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.
<sup>29</sup> And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"	<sup>6</sup> And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. <sup>7</sup> And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." <sup>8</sup> For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"  <sup>9</sup> And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."  <sup>10</sup> And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.	<sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." <sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.
<sup>30</sup> Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them.	<sup>11</sup> Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,	<sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,
<sup>31</sup> And the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs."	<sup>12</sup> and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."	and they begged him to let them enter these.
<sup>32</sup> And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters.	<sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep	So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

	bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.	
<sup>33</sup> The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men.	<sup>14</sup> The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.	<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.
<sup>34</sup> And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him,  they begged him to leave their region.	<sup>15</sup> And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.  <sup>17</sup> And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.	<sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.
	<sup>19</sup> And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.	<sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

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