

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"A Biblical View of Demons – Part III."*

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves in the account of Jesus meeting the demoniac who said his name was Legion. We looked at the first few verses last week, and we'll continue where we left off.

Let's back up to **verse 26** to get the context...

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 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. 28 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."

Last week we covered most of **verse 28**, but there is one part I want you to notice...

The demon called the Messiah, **Jesus, Son of the Most High God**, and this brings us to Lesson 1.

LESSON 1: DEMONS: (PART III) KNOW JESUS...

As a note I left Parts I and II from last week.

This account is truly fascinating, and I don't want us to miss the uniqueness of what we're reading...

There are records of Jesus casting out demons, and there are times Jesus spoke to demons, but this is the lengthiest account of Jesus actually conversing w/ a demon.

Now let me ask you something: if you never read these verses and you tried to imagine what a demon would say to Jesus, what would you expect?

- Probably threaten Jesus—tell Him all the horrible things He's going to do to Him.
- Probably blaspheme Him—curse Him and call Him any number of terrible names.

But when the demon meets Jesus he falls on his face and bursts out w/ a title that's pretty much the opposite of what we'd expect. He calls Him, **"Jesus, Son of the Most High God"**

The demon actually showed significant theological understanding:

- He calls the Messiah **Jesus**, using His human name, showing he recognized Jesus' humanity.
- He also calls Him **Son of the Most High God** showing he recognized Jesus' deity and divine Sonship.
- And not only does the demon show he knows who God the Son is, he shows he knows who God the Father is—he calls God the Father the **Most High God**.

Something else to notice is the demon's words are almost identical to an angel's words at the beginning of Luke...

In **Luke 1:31-32** an angel told Mary, “**Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.**”

The reason Legion’s words are similar to the angel’s words to Mary is both are angels:

- Demons are fallen angels.
- Before the demons joined Lucifer in his rebellion, they spent some period of time – we aren’t told how long – in heaven worshipping God.

As a result, demons know who Jesus is!

If you remember two weeks ago we briefly looked at the girl who was possessed by a demon. Some men used her to make them money as fortune-tellers.

Anyone remember what she was saying as she followed Paul and Luke around?

Acts 16:17 She [cried] out, “**These men are servants of THE MOST HIGH GOD, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.**”

More great theology from this demon.

Let me show you Jesus’ interaction w/ a number of demons a few chapter earlier. Look at **Luke 4:41**...

Luke 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying, “**YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD!**” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

All these demons know who Jesus is too. Seems like as they’re cast out they call Him **the Son of God.**”

And this brings us to the next part of lesson 1...

LESSON 1: DEMONS: (PART III) KNOW JESUS (PART IV) BETTER THAN MANY PEOPLE.

I want to prove this from Scripture...

While we’re in **Luke 4**, notice **verses 16 to 30** record Jesus’ visit to His hometown of Nazareth. If you’re familiar w/ that account, you know that’s where Jesus experienced His worst rejection. Look at **verse 29**...

29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

When people want to throw you off a cliff, you know you’re experiencing pretty bad rejection.

The obvious question is, why would the people of Nazareth respond this way? This is the one place you'd expect Jesus to receive His greatest reception.

The simple answer is they didn't know Jesus like the demons did!

- They thought He wasn't the Messiah; they thought He wasn't the Son of God.
- They thought He was claiming to be someone He wasn't.

Instead of being the Son of God, they thought He was only the son of Joseph...which is what they said in **verse 22**.

Right after this account in Nazareth Jesus encounters the demon in the synagogue. Look at **Luke 4:33**...

Luke 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I KNOW WHO YOU ARE—THE HOLY ONE OF GOD."

You notice the number of similarities to the account w/ Legion:

- In **Luke 8**, Legion said, "**What have you to do with me?**" and this demon says, "**What have you to do with us?**"
- Legion said, "**Jesus, Son of the Most High God?**" and this demon said, "**I know who you are—the Holy One of God.**" The third part of the lesson is, "DEMONS KNOW JESUS" and this demon isn't wondering who Jesus is...he knows!

And here's the point...

You've got the people of Nazareth who don't know who Jesus is, and you've got this demon who definitely knows who Jesus is.

- The people of Nazareth thought Jesus was nothing more than a Man from Nazareth.
- But the demon said, "**I know who you really are—you're the Holy One of God.**"

Something interesting is a number of Bibles – like the ESV, BSB, BLB, ISV – begin **verse 34** with the demon saying, "**Ha!**" They're probably trying to communicate that the demon knows who Jesus really is...unlike the people of Nazareth.

Let me show you another example. Turn back to **Luke 8** and look at **verse 25**...this is after Jesus calmed the storm...

Luke 8:25 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?"

The disciples – who were Jesus' own followers – didn't fully know who He was. They knew He was the Messiah, but they didn't know He was God in the flesh.

Then you read **verse 28** and the demoniac – or Legion – says Jesus is **Son of the Most High God**. No question in his mind!

So it's pretty interesting to see the understanding demons have and then contrast that w/ the ignorance of the people of Nazareth and even the disciples.

One thing I'd add is I don't feel frustrated when the world or the culture denies who Jesus is. We should expect the world and the culture to reject the truth about Christ.

But when liberal churches – or liberal people who call themselves Christians – start questioning who Jesus is, that's the real frustration.

And sadly whether it's...

- The people of Nazareth in Jesus' day...
- Liberal scholars or liberal churches in our day...

When people don't recognize Jesus is the Son of God, they're showing a foolishness even the demons wouldn't consider:

- It's tragic when demons have more reverence for the Son of God than people who claim to be Christians.
- It's sad when you hear certain people and think, "They could learn a lot from the demonic realm."

Next look at **verse 29**...

29a For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

Let's pause here so I can give you the next part of Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: DEMONS: (PART V) ARE UNCLEAR SPIRITS.

Demons are spirits too, but to distinguish them from angels – or good spirits – they're sometimes called **unclean spirits**. The Greek word for **unclean** occurs 30 times in the NT, and 24 times it refers to demons; it's the same Greek word that's also translated as **foul** to say **foul demons** or **foul spirits**.

It might sound odd to hear demons called **unclean** - as opposed to evil or wicked - but if you think of the word **unclean** biblically – instead of thinking of dirtiness or filthiness – it actually makes perfect sense.

But to understand the word **unclean**, we have to make sure we understand the word **holy** and what it means biblically...

Holiness doesn't relate to morality or righteousness. Something isn't moral or righteous just b/c it's holy.

Instead, holiness means something is set apart for God's use. Understandably when something is set apart for God it's often morally good or righteous, but that's not always the case. Here are two examples...

In **Exo 3:5** when Moses approached the burning bush, God said, **“Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is HOLY GROUND.”**

- It's not that this ground was morally good or righteous.
- It's just that this ground was set apart for God's use...at least at that moment. When God was no longer in the bush we can assume the ground was no longer holy.

The furnishings in the temple obviously weren't morally good or righteous, and they could've been exactly like other candles or bread or containers outside the temple, but they were holy b/c they were set apart for God's use.

Let me briefly give you some synonyms for holiness and some antonyms or opposites:

- **Clean, sanctified, and uncommon** are all synonyms for **holy**. **Uncommon** is a synonym b/c most things are not set apart for God, so those things set apart for Him are **uncommon**.
- **Unholy, unclean, or common** are opposites of holy. Most of the world is not set apart for God, so it's **common**.

Let me connect the dots by asking you to think of a spectrum:

- On one side is holy or clean
- On the other side is unholy or unclean

What would be FURTHEST on the holy – or clean – side? God. He's not just holy, He's holy, holy, holy:

- Holiness is the attribute of God that's repeated in a threefold fashion.
- He's the standard for holiness.

Holiness is determined by closeness to God, and who – or what – is closest to God? The angels. They're set apart for God; they serve Him.

What would be FURTHEST on the unholy – or unclean – side? The devil and closest to him would be the demons, and that's why they're called unclean spirits:

- They're not set apart for God.
- They don't serve Him.

So one other thing that makes Jesus' encounter w/ Legion fascinating is it's a meeting between:

- The picture of holiness – Jesus is the Holy One of God.
- The picture of unholiness – or uncleanness – in Legion.

But look how Jesus was able to handle this meeting: it says He **commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man**.

That's it. A command. And this brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 2: JESUS DOESN'T SHOW OFF.

Let me remind you of an account in the OT...

There was a powerful Syrian commander named Naaman, and he had leprosy. He was sent to Elisha the prophet's house to be cleansed of his leprosy. Listen to this...

2 Kin 5:9 Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." 11 But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the [leprosy].

Then Naaman ended up walking off angrily.

Naaman thought Elisha would put on some performance. He was expecting Elisha to come out and perform some dramatic, leprosy cleansing ceremony.

And the world is superstitious like this...

- When exorcisms happen in movies they contain some dramatic performance.
- There's an epic struggle that takes place over hours or days or weeks.

But when you read the Gospels there's no great conflict between the Lord and the demonic realm:

- Jesus doesn't need to wave His hands all over the place or perform some ceremony.
- He simply gives a command and that's it.
- It seems effortless to Him.

What you actually notice is the *lack of drama*:

- Jesus isn't a showman.
- He doesn't try to put on some performance.

Now we can see WHY Jesus cast the demons out of this man. The rest of **verse 29** says...

Luke 8:29b (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.)

Let me explain something interesting about this part of the verse...

It doesn't seem to go here. You'd think this description of the man would be up in **verse 27** when the demoniac was first described. Instead it's put here to say WHY Jesus cast the demons out of the man.

Look at it again...

It's saying Jesus cast the demons out BECAUSE – or **for many a time** – the demon had done this to him. Then the townspeople treated him the way the verse describes, chaining him up more like a wild animal than a human.

So here's the point...

Jesus wanted to help this man. He had compassion on Him. Jesus' feelings – and treatment – is quite the contrast w/ the treatment he received from the townspeople.

So the account isn't just about Jesus showing His authority over demons – although we definitely see that – the account is also about the compassion Jesus felt toward this man... a compassion the townspeople did not show him.

One other thing that's interesting is Jesus made the trip all the way from Israel to help him, but there's no record of Jesus doing anything else in this area besides delivering this man. If you look at **verse 40** it says **Now when Jesus returned**. That means when He returned to Israel. He came to deliver Legion. He battled – and calmed – a terrible storm to reach them and then He returned.

Next look at **verse 30**...

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

In Jesus' day a legion was the largest unit in the Roman army, averaging about 5,000 men. Commentators are divided about what exactly this means:

- Some commentators think this means the man was possessed by that many demons.
- Another possibility is the demons are cast out of the man and based on **Mark 5:13** they enter 2,000 pigs. This leads some commentators to think there were 2,000 demons in the man.
- Other commentators think it's ridiculous to say the man was possessed by thousands of demons.

As far as the exact number I don't think we can tell for sure. If someone pressed me, I would say **many demons had entered him**, b/c those are the exact words used in **verse 30**.

There's one other point I want to mention...

It's possible the demon said his name was **Legion** b/c of what it communicates:

- Legions of Romans soldiers used to occupy certain locations, and they would be fairly cruel and destructive to the inhabitants.
- So it could be the demon's way of saying, *"We own this man. We occupy him and act as cruelly and destructively to him as a legion of Roman soldiers."*

There is one bigger point though that I want you to take away from the demon identifying himself as Legion, and this brings us to Lesson 3...

LESSON 3: ANGELS AND DEMONS FORM SPIRITUAL ARMIES.

232 times in Scripture God is called the **Lord of Hosts**:

- 230 times in the OT
- 2 times in the NT

If you remember when I taught the Bible translations class during SS I said the NIV got rid of this title. Instead it says **LORD Almighty**.

I think this is unfortunate, b/c the title, **Lord of Hosts**, creates some wonderful imagery:

- It communicates God is the host – or commander – of heaven’s armies.
- God is pictured leading His army into battle or summoning them to fight.

This is why some translations – like the NLT, ISV, and GWT – say **LORD of Heaven’s Armies**.

The main point is heaven has any an army of angels, and God is the commander of them!

Interestingly there’s another instance in Scripture of angels being identified with **legions**...

Can anyone think of the other time angels are said to form legions?

When the mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter pulled out his sword to defend Him. He ended up chopping off the ear of one of the soldiers. Jesus healed the wound, told Peter to put his sword away, and then said...

Matt 26:53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS?

This might mean Jesus had 60,000 angels at His disposal.

The point I want you to notice though is angels and demons form legions.

Since a legion is a military term this fits the bible’s description in different places of God and the devil having spiritual armies.

Let me give you a few examples in Scripture to support this...

The Syrians hated the prophet Elisha, b/c every time they tried to attack the king of Israel, Elisha told him what the Syrians were going to do. It was so bad the King of Syria thought there was a traitor in their midst. He asked his men who the spy was and they said, *“It’s not us, it’s the prophet Elisha. He keeps telling the King of Israel what we’re going to do.”*

So the King of Syria sent a great army to capture Elisha. When that army arrived, Elisha's servant Gehazi was terrified. Listen to this...

2 Kin 6:15 When [Gehazi] rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots [surrounded them. He] said, "My master! What shall we do?" 16 [Elisha] said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

At that moment, it didn't look – at least physically – like anyone was with them!

17 Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see (this means see spiritually)." So the LORD opened the eyes of [Gehazi], and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

This was the army of God. That's who was with them!

A few chapters earlier there's another account of fiery horses and chariots...

2 Kin 2:11 As [Elijah and Elisha] went on and talked, behold, CHARIOTS OF FIRE AND HORSES OF FIRE separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

It seems like **chariots of fire and horses of fire** are the modes of transportation for God's army.

Daniel 10 gives us one of the most interesting windows in all of Scripture into the battle that takes place between God's army and the devil's army...

Daniel prays and an angel shows up in answer to his prayer, but it took 21 days for him to arrive. From an earthly perspective it looked like God wasn't answering or He was simply taking His time. When the angel finally showed up he told Daniel he'd been sent as soon as Daniel prayed, but listen to why he said he was delayed...

Dan 10:13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia (this is a demon) withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia.

This angel was engaged in a battle w/ demons known as **the prince – or kings – of Persia** for **twenty-one days** until Michael arrived to help him.

After talking w/ Daniel the angel said he had to leave. Listen to the reason he gave...

Dan 10:20 But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia (the demon from earlier); and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come.

This is another demonic soldier engaged in this battle who is fighting for control of the kingdom of Greece.

The final book in the Bible, Revelation, describes these two armies fighting in heaven itself. Listen to this verse...

Rev 12:7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon (this is the devil). And the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 [The dragon] was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

It's pretty fascinating to think about what this battle will actually be like!

There are places in Scripture – the most well-known is Job – showing the devil having access to heaven. It seems he has access until this defeat takes place.

One question we might have is what part do we play in this struggle between good and evil? Another way to say it is, do we play any part at all?

It seems Scripture wants us to see ourselves as soldiers God's army. We don't fight demons like the angels do, but we're still to see ourselves taking part.

Let me give you some verses to support this...

First, we're called soldiers...

2 Tim 2:3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. These two verses use strong military language.

Second, we have a weapon...

Eph 6:17 says we're given **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**

Third, we're given armor...

Eph 6:13 Take up the whole armor of God...

- **14 the belt of truth [and] the breastplate of righteousness**
- **15 as shoes for your feet...the gospel of peace.**
- **16 the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one**
- **And 17 the helmet of salvation**

Fourth, we're given a commander, and that's Jesus.

Let me close by sharing the account w/ you – that at least in my mind – most clearly presents the Lord as this commander...

Soon after the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the commander of Israel's army – Joshua – met the commander of heaven's army...

Josh 5:13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand (this sounds like it would've been a terrifying moment, but listen to what Joshua did...). **And Joshua went to him** (he walked right up to him...) **and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"** (Joshua wants to know who's side he's on...) **14 And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come."** **And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?"**

Joshua recognized this was no man. He knew he was the Lord, which is why he fell down and **worshiped Him.**

This is a Theophany or Christophany...an OT appearance of Christ before the Incarnation.

Jesus is our Commander:

- He's the One who met Joshua to lead the army of Israel in conquering the Promised Land.
- He's the One who cast Legion and some number of other demons out of the demoniac w/ just a word.
- He's the One who gives us the victory over the devil and the rest of the demonic realm.
- He's the One who gives us victory over sin and death.

But listen to what this Commander says in the NT...

In **Matt 12:30a** and **Luke 11:23** He says, **"Whoever is not with me is against me."**

Jesus doesn't allow us any neutral view of Him:

- We can't be on the fence.
- He says we're on His side or we're against Him, which is to say we're on the devil's side.

Being on Christ's side means having the humility...

- To recognize your sinfulness...
- Recognize your need for forgiveness...
- Recognize the Savior God the Father has provided in His Son...
- And repent of your sins and turn to Christ in faith.

If you haven't done that, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we would consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to speak with you.

Let's pray.