



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Gospel of Matthew

“ ‘Jesus is No Ordinary Person’ – the Demons,” Matthew 8:28-34 – TRANSCRIPT

Before turning to the passage from the Gospel of Matthew that I want to attempt to expound this morning, let me read a portion of 1 John chapter 3 and verse 8, which will form a kind of theme statement for the message this morning. 1 John chapter 3 and verse 8 contains these words,

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

With that in mind, let's turn now to Matthew chapter 8, and the Scripture reading for today is verse 28 through verse 34. Matthew chapter 8 verse 28 through verse 34. Remember in the context the Lord Jesus has just crossed the Sea of Galilee, and while crossing has faced the storm and stilled it, and now in verse 28 we read,

“And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with demons, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come

hither to torment us before the time?’ And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the demons besought him, saying, ‘If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine (or as the original text puts it, send us away into the herd of swine).’ And he said unto them, ‘Go.’ And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to those possessed with the demons. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders.”

Now Matthew does not tell us what happened afterwards with reference to the men who had been healed, but the other two gospels who recorded this event do. And now to continue and conclude this Scripture reading, I want to read a few verses from Luke chapter 8, in which is contained the Lukan account of this same incident. And beginning with the 35<sup>th</sup> verse of Luke chapter 8, these the evangelist’s words,

“Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the demons were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the demons were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘Return to thine own house, and show what great things God hath done unto thee.’ And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how

great things Jesus had done unto him. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.”

May God bless this reading from his word.

The subject for this morning is, “Jesus is No Ordinary Person’ – the Demons.” Now, I know you won’t understand that title if you don’t see it in print, and I’m not sure you’ll understand it if you see it in print. But what I mean by that is that it is the opinion of the demons that the Lord Jesus is no ordinary person.

There is a well-known citation by C.S. Lewis, which I have seen quoted more than once, in which Mr. Lewis says, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe and feel an excessive, unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”

For years, the devils have been hailing the materialist, for our Western world has largely ignored the devils until quite recently. Matters have changed. We are seeing a most amazing resurgence of interest in the occult, in superstition, and in spiritism and Satanism. Baudelaire said that the devil’s strategy in the modern world was to get men to so concentrate on the forked tail and the cloven hoofs that they could easily deny the devil’s existence, and then, Baudelaire contended the devil could do his work efficiently as an undercover agent. If Baudelaire was right, then Satan will have to change his strategy, for the contemporary world has swung to an extreme interest in the occult.

Why this sudden and unusual interest in the occult? Well, there have been a number of suggestions. Some have said that perhaps the death of rationalism has led to an occupation with the occult. And it is true that rationalism does not appeal to our particular society as it did fifty years ago and on back into the Age of the Enlightenment. Others have said it is the increasing recognition of mystery in modern physics, and when

we deal with the realms of the sub-atomic and the super-galactic, perhaps it’s true to say there has come an increasing recognition, even by physicists, of the mystery of our human existence.

Still others have suggested that the current psychic and para-psychological research has been partially responsible for the rise of interest in the occult, or, the skepticism of the supernatural in liberalism, has led people who are looking for reality to look there instead of looking into the word of God.

We know, too, that we have been greatly influenced in our day by Eastern religions, and it’s a rather amazing thing that in the United States of America, part of the Western world, which has received its traditions from Calvinism and the influence of Calvinism, should be so strongly influenced by Eastern religions. And it’s well-known that Eastern religions contain a great deal of occupation with the occult.

And still others have said it’s the chaos and complexity of modern life, and some individuals are so disturbed by that that they have become occupied with the occult. And then I think that we should also mention – for it is true – that the conviction of the reality of the angelic world by the orthodox has perhaps contributed to the resurgence of the interest in the occult. All of these things together – which is the leading influence? I would not be able to say – have contributed to this resurgence in interest in the devils and the demons, and we have seen it in many, many of its manifestations in our society.

William Peter Blatty’s novel, *The Exorcist*, and the film made from it, have multiplied reports of witchcraft and Satan-worship and demon-possession. And not only have the cults been occupied with the occult, but even the Roman Catholic Church is involved in exorcisms. Many have been performed in the Church, and shortly after the film reached its popularity there was a great deal of interest in that. And in the evangelical churches in recent years, there has been an interest in the exorcising of devils and demons. Satanic worship and marriages have become commonplace.

We have *The Omen*. *The Omen* is a picture, one of whose advisers is an evangelical minister. In *The Omen*, according to a modern review of it, the plot is basically that Rosemary’s baby is back, and Gregory Peck is the one who has him [laughter]. It’s the country’s horror movie, and if you have seen *The Omen*, you know that it is the story of the baby anti-Christ. But it illustrates the fact that there is a great deal of interest in the occult, and what we are seeing is the resurgence of occupation with Satan and his forces.

Whatever we may say about the Age of Aquarius, with its Ouija Boards and horoscopes, the Bible validates this world of Satan and his demons. And furthermore, as one looks at the Scriptures in the light of this interest in the occult, we must grant that there is an area of reality that is of the greatest importance for the Christian believer. Because when you study the word of God, from the beginning of the Book of Genesis to the conclusion of the Book of Revelation, one of the great themes of the word of God is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to Satan and his vast hordes of angelic beings, spirits and demons.

In the opening promise of the word of God, in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15, we are told that the seed of the woman should crush the serpent’s head. We are told that the work of atonement has definite relationship to Satan and his particular ministry. And on through the whole of the Old Testament, on through the New Testament, and particularly in the ministry of the Lord Jesus—it reaches its conclusion in the Book of Revelation—we have the story of how the Lord Jesus has overcome the devil and his demons.

In fact, one of the earliest theories of the atonement, and one that finds substantiation in holy Scripture, is that the work of the Lord Jesus is seen in holy Scripture as terminating upon Satan and his work. And this morning, in the opening Scripture reading, I read 1 John chapter 3 and verse 8 in which the Apostle John states, the Son of God was manifested in order that he might destroy or undo the works of the devil, and

any kind of explanation of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus that does not contain within it an explanation of how it relates to the work of Satan is an insufficient explanation of what was accomplished when the Lord Jesus Christ died. The Lord Jesus is the Lord of the other world. He is also the Lord of the underworld.

The encounter that he had with the two demon-possessed men – for while Luke and Mark tell us that there was one man, Matthew tells us there were two – illustrates for us the victory of the Son of God over the serpent. And you’ll notice that as you look at these chapters, chapters 8 and 9 of the Gospel of Matthew, that the Lord Jesus is presented as the one who overcomes disease. He overcomes demons. And then shortly we shall see him overcome death itself.

The incident is related by Matthew as having occurred in the country of the Gadarenes. Now there is a great deal of discussion among the commentators and scholars over the precise location of this miracle that the Lord Jesus performed, and some of the texts have the word, Gerasene – it is related to the town Gerase, which is located a good ways inland from the Sea of Galilee. And this text probably contains the word, Gadarenes, and the reason I say probably is because the text of the Greek New Testament at this point contains some variant readings, and actually some of them contain the same words that are found in the other gospels.

The chances are that the scribes who copied the New Testament text, early after the writing of the New Testament were confused about the geography of Palestine and that is responsible for the rise in the textual tradition of these two words: Gadara, and Gerase, and still a third possibility.

As far as I can tell, from the study of the geography of the section and the study of the text itself, we probably are to conclude that Gadara, the larger town, gets its name to the whole district. And as a result, it could be spoken of as located in the country of the Gadarenes or the Gerasenes, and there would be no contradiction, just as many of us are

Dallasites and Texans. And to say that he’s a Dallasite, and to say in another circumstance that he’s a Texan is not to contradict ourselves.

The Lord Jesus had crossed the Sea of Galilee, and after having reached the other side, he’s met by two possessed men. They dwelt in the tombs of the burial caves. These were natural places for the demons to live. Luke and Mark tell us other facts about him. One of them tells us that these two men did not contain any clothes. They were original streakers (laughter), and furthermore, the others tell us that they were fierce men who were difficult to control. In fact, the people in the communities had attempted to control these two men by putting chains upon them, but they were so strong in their demoniacal strength that they were able to break the chains and terrify the whole of the community.

The ancient world believed very strongly in the existence of demons. They had great conviction, and their convictions were held with great intensity of purpose. The air was so full of the spirits, that it was not even possible to insert a needle into the air without coming against one. It is estimated – some have held – that there were seven and one-half million demons in the ancient world, according to their beliefs. 10,000 of them were on one’s right hand, and 10,000 of them could be on one’s left hand. All were anxious to do harm to men. They were supposed to live in unclean places where there was no cleansing water, and they were especially dangerous, men thought, to the lonely traveler, the woman who was in childbirth, children out after dark, and the voyagers by night. They were dangerous in the midday heat, and between sunset and sunrise.

Now it’s obvious to us, at least, that much of this belief is mythical, but the essential thing is that men accepted the existence of the demons. And, we should also add that that is a valid belief, according to the Scriptures. So they were fearfully afraid of the demons, and particularly at nighttime. Always reminds me of the story of the man who was attempting to take a shortcut one night, coming home, and he was running along and decided that he would run through the cemetery. And unfortunately there was an open grave. So as he ran along, he fell into the open grave. It was rather deep.

He tried for an hour or so to get out of it, tried to climb up the side, and finally, after he had tried for about an hour he fell back exhausted in the grave and leaned up against the side, until shortly afterwards he heard another fellow coming along, and then the thump, and he looked, and there was the man in front of him. And the man got up and started to do the same thing he did. And he began to attempt to climb out, and finally, after he had tried for five or ten minutes, the fellow in the back said, “You’ll never be able to make it.” But he did. [Laughter]

The demons were thought to be responsible for all kinds of disease, mental illness, physical illnesses. They lurked beside a man while he ate, and in order to get inside of him, it was thought that they loved to settle upon a piece of food so that when a person ate, he not only consumed the piece of food, but he also consumed a demon. And that’s how men became possessed.

The demons of the Bible, of course, are of a different kind. They were originally part of the angelic host. As far as we can tell from the angelology in the Bible, there are two classes of demonic beings – or several classes, really – but one large class composes the angelic beings who fell when Satan fell. And having fallen when Satan fell, they are the non-elect angels and the demons, and it is their freedom at the present time to exist on the earth and in the upper atmosphere as part of an elaborate organization under Satan himself.

He has a particular organization and hierarchy of organization. There are princes, if we may reason and infer from statements made in Scripture, over various parts of the geography of this earth of which we are a part. These spiritual beings are beings which were created with an intellectual and moral nature. And when Satan fell, they fell with him. They inhabit the earth and the air, and their ultimate doom, according to Scripture is the Lake of Fire. They are untiring and unflagging in their pursuit of their work under their great head, the prince of the demonic hosts, Lucifer himself.

Their existence is something that we accept by faith through the revelation of God in holy Scripture. We have not seen demons. We do not see these spirit beings. I have a good friend who is a professor of church history at a theological institution in the South; a very good man. But he also is a very practical man. He says – and he has told me this personally – that this resurgence of interest and occupation with the occult has interested him considerably. And he has all kinds of friends who claim to have contact with the demons. But he said, “As far as I’m concerned, I have had no contact with the demons.”

Incidentally, Don Williams, who is the evangelical adviser to the film *The Omen*, has said that he has never had any experiences with the demons, either, though he says, I’ve met a great many of his people. [Laughter] Well, my friend, the professor of church history, says, “If I could just have one little experience, if I could just see one little demon, then I might have a little more faith in the so-called experiences of my friends for having such great experiences with the demons.”

Now we do not believe in the existence of the demons because we have had experience with them. It would appear, as far as our Western world were concerned, and the history of the last hundred or two hundred or three hundred years, that it is not the method of Satan at the present time to engage in a great deal of demonic manifestation. It would seem to me that represents something of a change in the method of the archenemy of the souls of men from that which we see in the New Testament records.

He’s able to deceive men today far more easily and successfully as an angel of light, and as a result, he seems to concentrate on that manifestation of his activity. And the easiest way to deceive people today is not to have some angelic, demonic manifestation in which a man is torn by a spirit in him, and is so occupied by the demonic that he froths at the mouth or carries on as people do who are possessed by demons, but he succeeds much more successfully if he can lay hold of the man who ascends the pulpit, and who preaches the word of God, and if he can so distort and

corrupt the message of the word of God, it is in that way that he is able to deceive our sophisticated society of the Western world.

And so when a man enters the pulpit and opens up the word of God, and speaks as a Christian by profession, it is in this way that he leads us astray, and he acts, as Paul tells us, as an “angel of light.” It’s no wonder that he, the angel of light par excellence should be able, though his ministers of righteousness, Paul says, to deceive the unwary who do not test the things they believe by the word of God.

The other day, I was asked to speak to someone concerning Mormonism. Mormonism is not a Christian teaching. Mormonism is not a Christian religion at all. Mormonism is a Satanic system of truth which is designed to debase the biblical doctrine concerning the Father, concerning the Son, and concerning the Holy Spirit. It is an attack on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is an attack on the Christian deity of Christ. It is an attack, a very essential attack, on the atonement accomplished by the Lord Jesus. It is an attack on the program of God. It is an attack on the biblical moral teaching. The Lord Jesus, for example, is the product of the intercourse of Adam-God with the Virgin Mary. And as a result of this, we have the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not very like God at all.

As I sat down and spoke with the person I was asked to speak with, a very lovely person, I was amazed to discover that this individual had been with an evangelical church – if I named the church you would know it, almost all of you would know it; it’s located not far from here. This individual had been in an evangelical church for fifteen years, and had heard the teaching of the word of God, the word of God taught plainly and clearly and to the point, and she’d also heard me preach a number of times, too.

I was amazed, and she was thinking of becoming a Mormon, and I asked her, had you considered the teachings of the Mormon church in their four primary documents in the light of holy Scripture? No, Dr. Johnson, I must confess I had not done that. Now

you can see, that if Satan is able to so affect a person who has attended an evangelical church in that way, how easy it is for the saints of God to become confused and misled.

Marie Corelli has written a book called *The Sorrows of Satan*, and in this book she has attempted to present her idea of a Satanic person. And so she has portrayed the devil, as he was with horns and hoofs, appearing as a cultured person and emerging from the House of Commons.

These two men were demon-possessed. The ancient world believed in that. And so they came out of the tombs when the Lord Jesus came by. They were so exceedingly fierce that no man attempted to pass that way. It’s a tribute to the courage of the Lord Jesus that he even went down the pathway where these men would confront him.

Well just like a sunbeam that shines upon the crawling creatures, the Lord Jesus Christ’s coming brings torture to the demons. It’s just as if you turn over a stone. And as you turn over a stone, you see the bugs and the creeping and crawling animals flee for the darkness. And so the Lord Jesus went into the ancient world turning over the stones, and we see, in the activities of the demons, their fear. They who struck terror in others are terrorized by the Lord Jesus. They who were feared by men fear in the presence of the Lord.

And not only that, they greet our Lord Jesus with the words, “What are we to do with thee Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come here to torment us before the time?” I want you to notice what these words say. They say, first of all, that the demons recognize the deity of the Lord Jesus. What have we do with thee, Jesus, the Son of God? The other manuscript texts say, “Thou Son of God Most High.” They recognize that the Lord Jesus is no ordinary person. They see immediately that he is to be distinguished from others. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus, Son of God Most High?

Now it’s evident from this that they have a great deal higher admiration and understanding of the person of the Lord Jesus than the cults do today. Isn’t it a strange thing that God recognizes the deity of the Lord Jesus, the angels recognize the deity of the

Lord Jesus, the demons see that he is the Son of God, men acclaim him as the divine second person of the eternal Trinity, but the Unitarians and the Mormons, they do not recognize him as the Son of God and they are able to pull the wool over the eyes of many professing Christians.

The demons would have confessed just as the Nicene Creed confesses him, that he was begotten of the Father before all the ages, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father through whom all things were made. Can we call the Unitarians Christians when they don’t recognize that which the demons recognize? Can we call the Jehovah’s Witnesses Christians when they don’t recognize that which the demons recognize? Can we call Mormons Christians when they don’t recognize that which the demons recognize? These demons see him as the second divine person of the great Trinity which we worship as our God.

I had a friend who was a member of a church that I was associated with many years ago. This friend is now the Mayor of San Antonio. Mrs. Cockrell had an experience with a local Unitarian. She told me about it a number of years ago. She asked the Unitarian in their conversation – I think they had both attended Southern Methodist University, and Mrs. Cockrell had come to be a professing Christian – she asked her friend if her religion met her needs. The Unitarian replied, “I don’t have any needs.”

Undaunted – if you know Mrs. Cockrell, you know she is undaunted [laughter] – undaunted, she asked, “What do you teach in Sunday School, then, in your Unitarian church?” She said, well, we frequently give them very practical lessons. Last week, for example, we gave them a lesson in astronomy. The teachers took them outside and showed them the sun and the sky and wonders of God’s creation. And Mrs. Cockrell said, “Well, then, do you tell the children that God created all these things in order to tie in this with the Bible?” Why no, she said, we let the children draw their own conclusions. Such is the poverty and shallowness of a religion that fails to deal with the question of

Christ as the divine Son of God and the Creator of all things. The demons have more theology than professing Christians in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

But that’s not all. Did you notice that they say, “Art thou come here to taunt us before the time?” They recognize their own destiny. And furthermore, they recognize that their destiny rests in his hands. They know that there is a time coming when they shall be tormented. Well the other texts say, don’t send us off into the abyss. They know that they face an eternity of separation from God, and so they call upon him to not torment them before the time at which they shall enter their torment.

So they recognize their destiny. They know it is not good. They know he is the great antagonist. And furthermore, they know that destiny rests in his hands. And my dear friend, sitting in this audience, your destiny, too rests in the hands of the Son of God, for all judgment has been committed into the hands of the Son of God.

Well the Lord Jesus responds to their request. He said unto them, as they looked off and saw the herd of swine – “Send us off into the herd of swine” – “Go.” That’s his simple reply: “Go.” And Matthew describes the consequences in the 32<sup>nd</sup> verse, “when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.”

There’s a great and interesting study here in answers to prayer. We’ll see in a moment that our Lord Jesus does not answer a prayer of the men who have been delivered from the demons. They say, let us stay with you. He said, no, go back to your own house. But he answers the prayers of the demons. It’s a great lesson in unanswered prayer, here. There are four petitions. He answers some of them, and he doesn’t answer others – that is, according to the words of the petition.

Well, the demons leave the two possessed men, and they enter into the herd of swine, and we discover that the herd of swine are less comfortable with the demons in them than some people. And as a result of it, they become so disturbed that they rush down a steep place into the sea and they perish in the waters. That would have great

meaning for the ancients, because the demons were known to hate water. They lived in dry, waterless places.

Now then, this creates another problem. How can spirit beings possess animals? Huxley refers to this contemptuously as the Gadarene Pig Affair [laughter]. Well, I don’t know how spirit beings can possess animals. I don’t think there’s any person who knows anything more about this than we have in holy Scripture. The facts are – and I say this with the concurrence of my friend in Jackson, Mississippi, the professor of church history – the facts are that we are so ignorant of the activities and the powers and capacities of spirit beings that we do not really know even if there is a problem here.

And that, in spite of the many voices who are saying they’re having occult experiences today. I do not deny that, incidentally; there is a great deal of superstition, however, about the occult. I used to play with a Ouija board. I played with a Ouija board before I was saved with my wife. We would put our hands on the Ouija board. I can still remember; I was about fifteen years of age. May have been the first date I had with my wife. She was thirteen and I was fifteen. We tried to find out what the future held for us [laughter], put our hands on the Ouija board and tried to move back and forth across the board and follow the spirits.

There is a more serious question, however, here. And that is, how can we explain the wanton destruction of 2,000 animals? We are told by Mark that 2,000 pigs rushed down that steep bank and into the water and were drowned – isn’t the Lord Jesus a heartless individual? What would the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals say about something like this if they knew about this incidence in the Bible? Well let me say this. The Creator is absolutely sovereign, and he does in accordance with his will. Who has resisted his will? And you can be sure that if this event took place, it is in accordance with the decretive will of our God, and if the Lord Jesus has sent those spirits off into the swine, there is a purpose for it, and it is justifiable before our sovereign God.

What always strikes me as rather foolish is a person who will engage in a very significant argument over something like this and then go out and eat a plate of bacon. [Laughter] Which I hope I’m able to do after this, incidentally.

Now others have suggested that the reason 2,000 animals are allowed to drown is that this would convince all of the completeness of the cure. William Barkley, who is well-known as a commentator and even better known by evangelicals for his explanations of the miracles of the Bible, he avoids this question entirely. He says that the shouting and shrieking of the demoniacs alarmed the pigs and in their terror they took flight and rushed down that precipice into the sea and were drowned, and the Lord Jesus – who was an opportunist with a great deal of intelligence – saw what happened and turned to the demon-possessed men and said to them, “Look at these swine; they are gone into the depths of the lake, and your demons are gone with them forever.”

So he simply took advantage of this stampede of the pigs, and it didn’t have anything to do with the demons at all. He didn’t destroy the herd; he just used the stampede to aid the poor sufferers to believe in their cure. Of course, to take an explanation like that, you cannot read this passage, you have to imagine what you think it ought to mean rather than what it says.

Why did the Lord Jesus do this? Well there is one great lesson we can learn from it. It is that people are of more value than pigs. And when we have two demon-possessed men who are delivered from these demons that are inhabiting them and that are persecuting them and are harming them and preventing them from responding to the message of the word of God, for the Lord Jesus to deliver two men indicates that these men are of more value than all of that herd of swine in the presence of God.

And there’s a great lesson that we learn from the response of the men of that city. When word comes to them that they have lost their herd of swine, they rush out and urge the Lord Jesus to leave the community. And thus, they say, our pigs are more important to us than the presence of the Son of God who is able to heal the demon-possessed men.

And so, in our Lord Jesus’ intention, he wants to teach the lesson that people are of more value than pigs, but we discover that the people care more about the material values than having in their presence the supreme Lord of the universe. It was an act of mercy on the part of the Lord Jesus to reveal to those men the condition of their hearts.

And you know, it is sad but true that there are people in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century who are more interested in their own material possessions than they are in their relationship to the Lord Jesus, and more interested in their own material possession – their pigs, their swine – than they are in the ministry of a Son of God who heals the oppressed, delivers the demonically-controlled, saves sinners and brings them into their right mind again. That’s the lesson of this incident.

The effects of this healing are not described so vividly in the Matthean account as they are in the Lukan account. We read in the Lukan account that when the demons left these two demon-possessed men – and there were many demons, for their name was Legion – when they left these two men, we have the picture of the two men sitting in the presence of the Lord Jesus. No more furious and raging, a terror to the community, but sitting. Those who had wandered all over the place in their fury are now sitting in the presence of the Lord Jesus. They are clothed; no longer naked. Immediately they desire clothes. They are sober, in their right minds, the word of God says rather than crazed maniacs, made so by the demons within.

And then, sitting in the presence of the Lord Jesus, they are praising him in gratitude for what he has done. This lesson illustrates that the thing that the Lord Jesus does is to call a man out of his natural state of sin and bondage and misery, just like Lazarus was called out of the tomb through the ministry of the Lord Jesus. This illustrates that it is the work of the Son of God to call us out of our natural state of sin and bondage and misery, and bring us to the place of devotion to the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus is the death knell of the forces of the evil one. He has been manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus the

occult world has become a defeated world. How did this come about? By virtue of the fact that the Son of God has on the cross at Calvary offered a ransom. That price has been paid to the righteousness and holiness of a great God, satisfying all the claims that he has against us. But Satan was a kind of executor of the divine judgments, according to his original constitution, as the head of the angels.

And by virtue of the work of the Son of God, a legal release of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus has been presented to the jailer, Satan, and he must open the prison house by virtue of what Jesus Christ has done, so that there is a satisfaction rendered to the Father, to our great God, and a legal release offered to the executor of the judgments of God, Satan, and now the oppressed, those in bondage, those in sin, may go forth through the work of the Son.

Isn’t it striking that this incident concludes with these two men who naturally wanted to stay in the presence in the Lord Jesus, but with our Lord saying, no, I want you to go to your friends and tell them the great things that the Lord has done for you, and that he had compassion on you? I want you to go out with this message of compassion from the Son of God.

And we read that, as a result of this, these men went off into their homes and into their city and told of the great things that Jesus had done for them. You know I read the word of God with great interest, because there is always something there that we missed on the first reading. The Lord Jesus said, “I want you to go, and I want you to tell all the great things that God has done for you.” And Luke says, in his account of it, that they went off into the city and told of the great things that Jesus had done unto them.

You see, for them, they had learned that the Lord Jesus was God. And when they praised God for what he had done, when they praised the Lord Jesus for what he had done, they were saying the same thing. If you are here this morning and you have never responded to our Lord Jesus Christ, through the gospel message of the Lord Jesus, there is offered to all deliverance from the Satanic hosts, deliverance from the bondage of sin,

deliverance from all the oppressing forces which hold our spirits in subjection as a result of the fall of man.

And so this morning, if you are here, and you do not have a relationship with the Lord Jesus, through the saving work of the Son of God, it is offered to you, right where you are, right where you are sitting. If you recognize that Christ has died for sin, and has also by that great work [against] sin has also destroyed the work of the devils and Satan, you too may have that freedom and that deliverance and that justification of life that comes from the Son of God through simple trust in him.

I thank Thee, O God, that Thou has given the Lord Jesus for sinners. I am a sinner. I do take the salvation that you freely offer in grace.

And so I invite you this morning as an ambassador in the Lord Jesus to put your trust by the grace of God. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] We are so grateful, Lord, that we have these marvelous incidents that reveal the saving work of the Lord Jesus and illustrate that he has not only overcome the power of sin, but also the power of Lucifer himself, and through the blood on the cross deliverance is offered to men.

And O Father, by the grace which is manifested to us, move in the hearts of men who are oppressed and bring them to him.

And now may grace, mercy and peace go with us throughout this day and this week.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.