CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

OCTOBER222022

Scripture Story: Mark 5:1-19.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy,* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 31, 32.

good over evil



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"Were not miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles? The same compassionate Savior lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural. It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 525).

keytext

"Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid."

(Mark 5:15, NKJV)

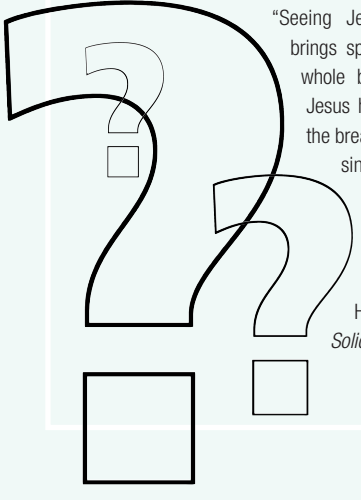
what do you think?

Do you think that many people today are aware of the angels that are sent to help, guide, and protect God's children? What evidence do you know of in Scripture that conveys the idea that God sends His angels to help us?

did you know?

Satan is using many avenues to turn our eyes from God's love and truth. It is in TV shows, movies, books, and the media. It is important that we guard the avenues to our soul and keep our eyes on Jesus.

"Seeing Jesus in Scripture brings spiritual vitality to our whole being. In the Gospels Jesus heals the sick, multiplies the bread, raises the dead, forgives sin, delivers demoniacs, and calms storms. He brings healing, happiness, and hope. He overcomes disaster, demons, and death. He defeats sorrow, suffering, and sickness. He triumphs over sin and Satan."—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground,* p. 23.



INTO THE STORY

"They went across the Sea of Galilee to the area of the Gerasenes. Jesus got out of the boat. A man controlled by an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. The man lived in the tombs. No one could keep him tied up anymore. Not even a chain could hold him. His hands and feet had often been chained. But he tore the chains apart. And he broke the iron cuffs on his ankles. No one was strong enough to control him. Night and day he screamed among the tombs and in the hills. He cut himself with stones.

"When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, 'Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? Swear to God that you won't hurt me!' This was because Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you evil spirit!'

"Then Jesus asked the demon, 'What is your name?'

"'My name is Legion,' he replied. 'There are many of us.' And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

"A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs. Let us go into them.' Jesus allowed it. The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned.

"Those who were tending the pigs ran off. They told the people in the town and countryside what had happened. The people went out to see for themselves.

"Then they came to Jesus. They saw the man who had been controlled by many demons. He was sitting there. He was now dressed and thinking clearly. All this made the people afraid. Those who had seen it told them what had happened to the man. They told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

"Jesus was getting into the boat. The man who had been controlled by demons begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him. He said, 'Go home to your own people. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Tell them how kind he has been to you.'"

(Mark 5:1-19, NIrV)

OUT OF THE STORY

As you read the story of the demoniac, what are some of the key sentences/phrases that are central to this story?

Why do you think this story is included in the Gospels? What purpose does it serve? Why would the message in this event be important?

What is demon possession? How would you describe it? How do you think it happens?

What are some other examples in Scripture that discuss this phenomenon?

What is the reaction of evil angels when Christ is near?

Why do you think the people reacted the way they did? What was their motivation in asking Jesus to leave the region?

Why do you think the man who had been freed of the demons did not want to part company with Jesus?

punch lines

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" **(1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV).**

"When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation" **(Matthew 12:43-45, NIV).**

"So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me" **(Romans 7:21-23, NIV).**

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" **(Galatians 5:16, 17, NKJV).**

further insight

"It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 555

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson.

What do you think is the biggest reason you don't see demon possession as is witnessed in the Gospels? On one hand, the world we live in seems too comfortable with the notion that there may be supernatural forces at work in relationship to humanity. On the other hand, there does not seem to be a healthy respect for the war that is raging beyond what the human eye can see. From our reading today note how real the struggle between good and evil is. The question is, How important is it? How much different would your daily life be if the curtain of spiritual battle were pulled back and you could see what is really going on?

Sunday

Read Philippians 2:10.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section, you will find one of the most amazing stories of deliverance in Scripture. What part of the story speaks to you personally? How is the demon-possessed man like people you may know today? How does his testimony impact others? What do you think God is trying to say to the church in this story?

Monday

Read Mark 5:15.

What does this text tell us about people whom the church or a community may "write off" or "set aside" because their problems are so severe that they could never be restored? Whom do you know in your church/community who never gives up on those who are oppressed by the spiritual war discussed in this lesson? How do they interact and work on behalf of those who seem bent in the direction of evil?

Tuesday

Read John 16:24; Matthew 17:20-22.

Read the quote from *The Great Controversy*, page 525, that makes what might be the boldest claim in the entire book, saying: "It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask." Reflect on this idea for a moment and imagine what Ellen White is saying. Is it true that there are things God is "waiting to do" but is not going to do until we ask prayerfully and faithfully? Is it possible that we think too small or pray too little? Consider what bold things you need to be praying for in your life. With your mind on this spiritual war, begin praying boldly for God to do what He won't do unless you ask. Perhaps you might keep a notebook or a journal devoted to praying for such an outpouring of God's power in your life.

Wednesday

Read the verses listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson. Put them in order as if you were preaching a sermon on those four texts or using them for a Bible study on the spiritual battle taking place with angels and demons and people. What are some other stories you would add or verses you can recall that might be helpful in sharing what the Bible says about the agencies of good and evil? Take some time to write out an outline or list the texts in the back of your Bible and pray for an opportunity to share what you are praying for or even give a Bible study in the coming week to someone who is struggling with a spiritual battle. Be ready for God to answer your prayer.

Thursday

Read Psalm 91:11.

As you make your way through the coming week how might you live confidently, but purposefully aware of the spiritual friends and enemies that are at work? Some have placed artifacts of angels or reminders written on note cards to stay aware of the unseen helpers and enemies that are close by. It is not insane to talk to God about angels whom God has placed in charge of caring for you nor is it inappropriate to be mindful of the reality that evil angels seek a foothold in the lives of people. What are some "footholds" that you want to surrender and relinquish today? It could be a habit or a form of entertainment. Perhaps it is a relationship that urges you to forget that you are a child of God. Find a tangible way to release your connection to that temptation and cling to the promise of God's plan for your life.

Friday

Read Hebrews 1:14.

Take some time to reflect on how important the angels are in the plan of salvation. Reflect for a while on how they are sent from God's throne room to assist and protect and fight for the rights of humanity to know their Creator and receive the salvation provided by heaven. It is likely the whole of heavenly forces are busy beyond our mind's imagination with moving humanity toward a decision about where they will spend eternity. What is your choice regarding this plan?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 31, 32.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.