Luke 8:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

Analysis

Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. The deliverance occurs instantly and completely. "Then went the devils out of the man" (exelthonta de ta daimonia apo tou anthrōpou, ἐξελθόντα δὲ τὰ δαιμόνια ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) describes immediate exodus—no prolonged struggle, no gradual process. Christ's authority effects instant liberation. "And entered into the swine" (eisēlthon eis tous choirous, εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους) shows demons must go somewhere—they cannot simply cease to exist or remain disembodied comfortably.

"The herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake" (hōrmēsen hē agelē kata tou krēmnou eis tēn limnēn, ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν λίμνην) describes mass demonic-induced destruction. The verb "ran violently" (ὥρμησεν) indicates rushing stampede, uncontrolled frenzy. "Down a steep place" (κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ) fits the geography of the eastern shore where cliffs descend sharply to the Sea of Galilee. "And were choked" (apepnigē, ἀπεπνίγη) means drowned, suffocated. Pigs can swim, but 2,000 frenzied animals in rushing stampede would trample and drown one another.

This spectacular destruction serves multiple purposes:

1. Visible proof of deliverance—the man's transformation is confirmed by 2,000 dead pigs

2. Demonstrates demonic destructiveness—given opportunity, demons destroy whatever they inhabit
3. Reveals Satan's true nature—he comes to "steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10)
4. Prefigures demons' ultimate fate—as the swine perished in water, demons will perish in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

Historical Context

The geography of the eastern Galilee shore features steep limestone cliffs descending directly into the water—precisely the terrain described. Archaeological surveys confirm habitation in this region during the first century, with evidence of Gentile settlements. The Decapolis cities were prosperous commercial centers where pig farming was economically significant.

Mark 5:13 specifies "about two thousand" swine, indicating the herd's considerable size and value. At typical first-century prices, this represented catastrophic financial loss—perhaps 100,000 denarii (over 250 years' wages for a laborer). This explains why the region's people begged Jesus to leave (v. 37)—His presence, though bringing spiritual deliverance, cost them dearly economically. The tension between spiritual blessing and material cost recurs throughout Christian history.

Early Christian writers saw in this account a warning about demonic destructiveness. Origen noted that demons destroy whatever they possess—the demoniac's dignity, the swine's lives, the community's wealth. Augustine observed that Satan's ultimate goal is total destruction, but God limits demonic activity to serve His redemptive purposes. The swine's destruction, though tragic, pales compared to one man's deliverance from Legion—a vivid demonstration that people matter infinitely more than possessions.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the immediate mass destruction of the swine reveal about the demons' true nature and intentions?
2. How does the loss of 2,000 pigs for one man's deliverance challenge our valuation of souls versus material wealth?
3. What does this dramatic visible proof of deliverance teach about God's willingness to provide evidence for skeptics?

Interlinear Text

ἐξελθόντα δὲ τὰ δαιμόνια ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
went — Then — G3588 — the devils — out of — G3588 — the man
G1831 — G1161 — G1140 — G575 — G444

εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τοὺς χοίρους καὶ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη
and entered — into — G3588 — the swine — and — ran — G3588 — the herd
G1525 — G1519 — G5519 — G2532 — G3729 — G34

κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν λίμνην καὶ ἀπεπνίγη
violently down — G3588 — a steep — into — G3588 — the lake — and — were choked
G2596 — G2911 — G1519 — G3041 — G2532 — G638