

Mark 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Analysis

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. This verse transitions from Jesus' calming the storm (4:35-41) to confronting demonic forces—both demonstrating Christ's authority over supernatural powers. 'The other side of the sea' (τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης, to peran tēs thalassēs) refers to crossing the Sea of Galilee from Jewish territory to Gentile regions. 'The country of the Gadarenes' (τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν, tēn chōran tōn Gadarēnōn) identifies the Decapolis region—predominantly Gentile territory where pigs were raised (forbidden in Jewish law).

Jesus' deliberate journey into Gentile territory reveals His mission's universal scope—salvation extends beyond ethnic Israel to all nations. The fact that He crossed a dangerous storm (4:37) to deliver one demon-possessed man demonstrates the infinite worth of every soul and Christ's determination to seek and save the lost. This geographic movement anticipates the gospel's global expansion recorded in Acts. Reformed theology emphasizes that Christ's saving work encompasses elect persons from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Revelation 5:9). The narrative that follows showcases Jesus' absolute authority over Satan and demons—no spiritual force can resist His command.

Historical Context

The Gadarenes (also called Gerasenes in some manuscripts) lived in the Decapolis, a confederation of ten Greco-Roman cities east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

This region was culturally Hellenistic with significant Gentile population, though some Jews also resided there. Archaeological excavations at Gadara (modern Umm Qais) reveal extensive Roman ruins including theaters, baths, and temples to pagan deities. The presence of pig herds (v. 11) confirms this was Gentile territory, as Jews considered pigs unclean (Leviticus 11:7). First-century Jews generally avoided Gentile regions to prevent ritual defilement. Jesus' willingness to enter this area was countercultural and foreshadowed the church's mission to the Gentiles. The journey across the Sea of Galilee took several hours, making this a deliberate mission rather than accidental encounter.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' deliberate journey through a storm into Gentile territory to save one demon-possessed man reveal the value God places on every individual soul?
2. What 'other side' territories—culturally, relationally, or geographically—is Christ calling you to cross with the gospel?

Interlinear Text

Kαὶ	ῆλθον	εἰς	τὸ	πέραν	τῆς	θαλάσσης	εἰς
And	they came over	into	G3588	the other side	G3588	of the sea	into
G2532	G2064	G1519		G4008		G2281	G1519

τὴν	χώραν	τῶν	Γαδαρηνῶν
G3588	the country	G3588	of the Gadarenes
	G5561		G1046

Additional Cross-References

Mark 4:35 (Parallel theme): And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

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