

Mark 5:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

Analysis

The scene included 'a great herd of swine feeding' nearby. This detail confirms Gentile territory—Jews considered pigs unclean (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8) and wouldn't raise them. The 'great herd' (ἀγέλη...μεγάλη) suggests significant commercial operation. The swine's presence sets up demons' requested destination and illustrates possession's destructive nature. The detail is historically authentic—Decapolis region had substantial pig farming. The pigs become casualties demonstrating demonic destruction and Christ's priority: human souls infinitely outweigh commercial livestock. One man's liberation justifies entire herd's loss.

Historical Context

Decapolis was predominantly Gentile region with Greek-Roman culture. Pork was dietary staple, making pig farming profitable. Jewish prohibition on pigs didn't apply here. The herd's size (Mark 5:13 specifies about 2,000) indicates major commercial enterprise. Ancient agriculture relied on livestock—pigs provided meat, leather, religious sacrifices (in pagan contexts). The herd's destruction represents significant economic loss, explaining townspeople's later reaction (Mark 5:14-17). Early church encountered this Gospel in Gentile regions where the economic cost would resonate. The account demonstrates Jesus' priority: human salvation transcends material wealth.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' priority (human soul over material wealth) challenge contemporary materialistic values?
2. What economic or material sacrifices might following Jesus require, and how do you respond?
3. How does this passage help you evaluate proper values—eternal souls versus temporal possessions?

Interlinear Text

Ἄντες ἦσαν εἰς τὴν νύχταν ἤρχοντο ἀγέλη χοίρων
there was Now there nigh unto the mountains herd of swine
G2258 G1161 G1563 G4314 G3588 G3735 G34 G5519

μεγάλη βοσκούμενη·

a great feeding
G3173 G1006

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