

Mark 5:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

Analysis

Mark elaborates: 'Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces.' The repetition emphasizes supernatural strength and human helplessness. 'Often bound' shows repeated attempts; 'plucked asunder' (διεσπιάσθαι) and 'broken in pieces' (συντετριφθαι) demonstrate irresistible force. The conclusion: 'neither could any man tame him' (οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι). The verb 'tame' (δαμάζω) is used for wild animals—the demoniac was beyond human control, dangerous, untamable. Only divine power could liberate him. This sets up Christ's victory.

Historical Context

Ancient world recognized degrees of demonic possession—mild influence to complete control. This case represents extreme possession: superhuman strength, self-destructive behavior, social isolation, failed human interventions. Gentile regions practiced various exorcism methods, all ineffective against severe cases. The inability to 'tame' him reflects hopeless prognosis—society could only isolate, not cure. Mark's vivid details (possibly from Peter's eyewitness account) emphasize miracle's magnitude. Jesus' upcoming exorcism will demonstrate power surpassing all human and demonic forces. Early church used such miracles evangelistically—proving Christ's deity and authority.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing spiritual enemies' power (while less than Christ's) guard against naivety?
2. What situations seem 'untamable' in your life, and how does Christ's authority address them?
3. How does this passage demonstrate the gospel's power in seemingly hopeless situations?

Interlinear Text

διὰ	τὸ	αὐτὸν	πολλάκις	πέδας	καὶ	ἀλύσεις	
Because	G3588	him	had been often	the fetters	and	chains	
G1223		G846	G4178	G3976	G2532	G254	
δεδέσθαι	καὶ	διεσπάσθαι	ὑπ'	αὐτὸν	τὰς	ἀλύσεις	
bound	and	had been plucked asunder	by	him	G3588	chains	
G1210	G2532	G1288	G5259	G846		G254	
καὶ	τὰς	πέδας	συντετριῖφθαι	καὶ	οὐδεὶς	αὐτὸν	ἴσχυεν
and	G3588	the fetters	broken in pieces	and	G3762	him	could
G2532		G3976	G4937	G2532		G846	G2480
δαμάσαι·							
any man tame							
G1150							