

Mark 5:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

Analysis

Jesus asked: 'What is thy name?' The demon answered: 'My name is Legion: for we are many.' The question demanded identification—ancient belief held knowing names gave power. The answer 'Legion' (*Λεγιών*) is Latin military term—Roman legion contained 6,000 soldiers. Whether literal or metaphorical, 'Legion' indicates massive multiple possession. The phrase 'we are many' (*πολλοί ἐσμεν*) confirms numerous demons. This explains supernatural strength and failed human attempts at restraint. The case's severity makes Jesus' victory more impressive. One word from Christ defeats thousands of demons—demonstrating overwhelming superior power.

Historical Context

Roman legions were well-known military units—Gentile regions experienced Roman military presence directly. The term would resonate with Mark's Roman audience. The idea of multiple demon possession appears elsewhere in Scripture (Mary Magdalene had seven demons, Luke 8:2). Jewish tradition recognized degrees and types of demonic activity. The sheer number—whether literal 6,000 or symbolically 'many'—emphasizes both the man's desperate condition and miracle's magnitude. Early church recognized corporate demonic activity. Church history records that severely demonized persons sometimes manifested multiple personalities or entities, though discernment is needed to distinguish spiritual from psychological issues.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding the enemy's numbers (while vastly less than Christ's power) affect your spiritual warfare perspective?
2. What does Jesus' victory over 'Legion' teach about His ability to overcome any spiritual opposition you face?
3. How should recognizing demons' organized, corporate activity inform prayer and spiritual warfare strategies?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν Tí σοι ὄνομά καὶ ἀπεκρίθη
And he asked him What is thy name And he answered
G2532 G1905 G846 G5101 G4671 G3686 G2532 G611

λέγων, Λεγεών ὄνομά μοι ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν
saying is Legion name My for many we are
G3004 G3003 G3686 G3427 G3754 G4183 G2070

Additional Cross-References

Luke 8:30 (Parallel theme): And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

Mark 5:15 (Parallel theme): And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Matthew 26:53 (Parallel theme): Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 12:45 (Parallel theme): Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

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