

Even the Demons Obey!

Brandon Phillips / General Adult

The King and His Glory / Supernatural; Jesus; Miracle; Fear / Matthew 8:28–34

In Matthew 8:28-34, Matthew provides the second of three amazing proofs that Jesus is the sovereign King over all of His creation.

Pre-sermon Comments

1 Thessalonians 1:1 LSB

¹ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, **To** the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

That there is a devil is a thing doubted by none but such as are under the influences of the devil. ~ **Cotton Mather**

The devil is God's devil. ~ **Martin Luther**

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. ~ CS Lewis

Introduction to our Text

Hebrews 4:15 LSB

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things like *we are*, yet without sin.

James 2:19 LSB

¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Section Proposition and Outline

In [Matthew 8:23-9:8](#), Matthew provides three amazing proofs that Jesus is the sovereign King over all of His creation. Matthew offers proof of:

- His Authority Over the Physical World
- His Authority Over the Spiritual Realm
- His Authority to Forgive Your Sin

Review

Matthew 8:16 LSB

¹⁶ Now when evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill

Matthew 8:27 LSB

²⁷ And the men marveled, and said, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

Sermon Text

Matthew 8:28–34 LSB

²⁸ And when He came to the other side, into the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. ²⁹ And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” ³⁰ Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. ³¹ And the demons *began to* plead with Him, saying, “If You *are going to* cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” ³² And He said to them, “Go!” And coming out, they went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. ³³ Now the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴ And behold, the

whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region.

Sermon Proposition and Outline

In [Matthew 8:28-34](#), Matthew provides the second of three amazing proofs that Jesus is the sovereign King over all of His creation. Matthew offers proof of:

- **His Authority Over the Spiritual Realm**
 - The Demon's Power ([Matt 8:28](#))
 - The Demon's Petition ([Matt 8:29](#))
 - The Demon's Profession ([Matt 8:29](#))
 - The Demon's Plea ([Matt 8:30-31](#))
 - The Lord's Power ([Matt 8:32](#))
 - The People's Panic ([Matt 8:33-34](#))

The Demon's Power ([Matt 8:28](#))

Matthew 8:18 LSB

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side *of the sea*.

The Region of the Gadarenes

Matthew 8:28 LSB

²⁸ And when He came to the other side, into the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

The Demon Possessed Men

Matthew 8:28 LSB

²⁸ And when He came to the other side, into the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

Romans 1:25 LSB

²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Fallen Angels

Jude 9 LSB

⁹ But Michael the archangel, when he, disputing with the devil, was arguing about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Zechariah 3:2 LSB

² And Yahweh said to Satan, “Yahweh rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, Yahweh who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand delivered from the fire?”

Ephesians 6:11 LSB

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Acts 19:13–17 LSB

¹³ But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to invoke over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I implore you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” ¹⁴ Now seven sons of one *named* Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” ¹⁶ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them, subdued all of them, and utterly prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.

The Men Were Extremely Violent

Matthew 8:28 LSB

²⁸ And when He came to the other side, into the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

Mark 5:4–5 LSB

⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ And constantly, night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gashing himself with stones.

Luke 8:27–29 LSB

²⁷ And when He came out onto the land, a man from the city met Him, one who was possessed with demons and had not put on any garment for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. ²⁸ Now seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.” ²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times, and he was bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard. And yet breaking his bonds, he was driven by the demon into the desolate regions.

The Demon’s Plea ([Matt 8:29](#))

Matthew 8:29 LSB

²⁹ And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

Matthew 8:24 LSB

²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was sleeping.

| The devil is a better theologian than any of us and is a devil still. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

Judges 11:12 LSB

¹² And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon, saying, “What is between you and me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?”

1 Kings 17:18 LSB

¹⁸ So she said to Elijah, “What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!”

The Demon’s Profession ([Matt 8:29](#))

Matthew 8:29 LSB

²⁹ And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

Mark 5:6 LSB

⁶ And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

James 2:19 LSB

¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

The devil is under the control of Christ, because he has absolute power and even the devil is subject to it. Christ has conquered, and what the devil does is under the sufferance of God, for God’s inscrutable reason and purpose. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

The Demon’s Petition ([Matt 8:30-31](#))

The Pigs

Matthew 8:30 LSB

³⁰ Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.

Leviticus 11:7 LSB

⁷ and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud; it is unclean to you.

The Request

Matthew 8:31 LSB

³¹ And the demons *began to* plead with Him, saying, “If You *are going to* cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.”

Matthew 8:29 LSB

²⁹ And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

The Kingdom is Already, But Not Yet

Psalms 106:36–38 LSB

³⁶ And served their idols, Which became a snare to them. ³⁷ They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, ³⁸ And they shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood.

1 Corinthians 10:19–20 LSB

¹⁹ What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they SACRIFICE TO DEMONS AND NOT TO GOD. And I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

The Lord's Power ([Matt 8:32](#))

Matthew 8:32 LSB

³² And He said to them, “Go!” And coming out, they went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

The Lord's Command

1 Corinthians 7:15 LSB

¹⁵ Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave. The brother or the sister is not enslaved in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:36 LSB

³⁶ But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.

The Message of Matthew Matthew 8:28–34

The main points are first that Jesus exercises God’s almighty power over the demons, and secondly that human beings are of much more value than a herd of pigs.

The Fate of the Pigs and Demons

Animals were created for man’s use and consumption, and those pigs were destined for slaughter anyway. Their being drowned brought considerable financial loss, but if the owners were Jews—as they may well have been—they had no business raising pigs in the first place. The souls of the two possessed men were of infinitely greater value than the two thousand animals, and Jesus did not hesitate to permit such a relatively small sacrifice to be made on the men’s behalf. ~ John MacArthur

Matthew 12:24 LSB

²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, “This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”

Luke 11:20 LSB

²⁰ “But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

The People’s Panic ([Matt 8:33-34](#))

Matthew 8:33–34 LSB

³³ Now the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴ And behold, the whole city

came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region.

Mark 5:15 LSB

¹⁵ And they came to Jesus and observed the demon-possessed man sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had the “legion”; and they became frightened.

Matthew 8:34 LSB

³⁴ And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region.

Perhaps they resented His righteousness exposing their sin, His power exposing their weakness, or His compassion exposing their hardness of heart. Perhaps they could not tolerate Jesus because of His perfection.

The local reaction is thoroughly understandable; Jesus was not a comfortable person to have around! ~ R.T. France

P. P. Levertoff ~ All down the ages the world has been refusing Jesus because it prefers its pigs.

Conclusion:

Discussion Questions

When you think about Jesus calming the storm (vv. 23–27) and then casting out demons (vv. 28–34), what picture of Jesus’ authority stands out most to you?

Why do you think Matthew links these two stories back-to-back?

The demons immediately recognized Jesus as the Son of God (v. 29). How does their recognition contrast with the disciples’ limited understanding at this point?

[James 2:19](#) says, “Even the demons believe—and shudder.” What’s the difference between demonic belief and saving faith?

What does this teach us about the danger of knowing about Jesus versus having faith in Jesus?

Why do you think the demons begged to be sent into the pigs rather than being cast into the abyss? What does this reveal about their understanding of God's judgment?

Pastor Brandon mentioned the "already but not yet" nature of God's Kingdom. How do you see this tension play out in this story—and in our world today?

Jesus valued two demon-possessed men more than two thousand pigs. What does this reveal about God's view of human worth?

Why do you think Matthew emphasized this miracle as proof that Jesus is God?

How might this passage encourage you when you feel the weight of spiritual opposition or evil in our world?

The townspeople asked Jesus to leave after seeing His power (vv. 33–34). Why do you think they responded in fear instead of faith?

What are some ways people today still "prefer their pigs" (as P.P. Levertoff quipped) rather than welcoming Jesus' presence and authority?

Have you ever experienced a moment when Jesus' authority felt uncomfortable or even threatening to your plans? How did you respond?

If Jesus walked into your city (or your church or home) today with the same authority He displayed here, how do you think you would respond? Fear? Worship? Avoidance?

In what ways does this passage challenge you to deepen your reverence for Christ?

How can our group pray for one another to stand firm in Christ's authority when confronted with temptation, spiritual warfare, or fear and doubt?

The Gospel

God

Created and owns everything

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalms 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

Is Perfectly Holy

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Requires perfect obedience to His Law

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Man

Has broken God's law

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Cannot save himself by his good works

[Titus 3:5](#)—*He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

Christ

Came to earth both as God and sinless man

[Col 2:9](#)—*For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form*

Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty

[Rom 5:8](#)—*But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Rose from the grave and is alive today

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—*And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*

Sinners

Must repent of all that dishonors God

[Isa 55:7](#)—*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

[Luke 9:23](#)—*if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior

[Rom 10:9](#)—*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*

Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—*therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.*

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

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Additional Quotes

Jesus' motive in silencing the demons was to prevent them from revealing who he was. ~ **R. T. France**

The expectation on the part of the demons that Jesus' purpose must be to torment them assumes that his relation to them is one not only of superiority but also of hostility. ~ **R. T. France**

Where sin is confessed and put away, Satan and his demons are expelled. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

No one could make him submit, but the presence of the Lord Jesus cuts him to his knees. The man goes down because the demons go down. And the man goes down under their power. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

The demons call God "the Most High" because that is what they want to be. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

This is a human being, a creature made in the image of God, who is being destroyed day and night by these demons; whatever it takes, I'm going to redeem this human being. ~ **R. C. Sproul**

This is the supreme illustration of how Christians are to deal with Satan and demons. Believers are not to address them, but rather to seek the Lord's intervening power against them. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Jesus allowed the demons to enter the swine to indicate beyond question that their real purpose was the total destruction of their host. ~ **William L. Lane**

Interestingly, it seems that the first ones to fully recognize the identity of Christ hidden in His incarnation were the demons. ~ **R. C. Sproul**

Idols are nothing and idol food is nothing, but *demons* are at work where there are idols—and demons are not a figment of the imagination but are all too real. ~ **Thomas Schreiner**

Just as the winds and the ocean waves obey Him, demons from hell tremble before Him. The Son of the Most High God transcends all other gods in His power and authority. ~ **R. C. Sproul**

The demons do more than believe a fact. They shudder at it. ~ **Archibald Thomas Robertson**

Only God could destroy demons. ~ **D. A. Carson**

You might be interested to learn that there is no illustration in the entire Bible of anyone casting demons out of a believer. The only people who ever legitimately cast out demons were Christ and the apostles. All the demon-possessed people they dealt with were unbelievers. Furthermore, they usually cast out demons totally apart from the will of the unbeliever. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Jesus allows the demons to continue their destructive work, but not upon a man. ~ **William L. Lane**

In the area of knowledge, *we should not think that demons can know the future or that they can read our minds or know our thoughts.* ~ **Wayne Grudem**

They preferred the company of dangerous demons to that of the divine Deliverer. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Both the demons and the people were sinful. Yet, only the demons shrieked in fear. They understood Jesus was their Judge who would cast them into hell. The people certainly did not. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Only God is in control in the spiritual realm; He is in control of the demons. ~ **J. Vernon McGee**

Nowhere in Scripture are believers told to “bind Satan” or exercise authority over demons. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Even before the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin was present in the angelic world with the fall of Satan and demons. ~ **Wayne Grudem**

God’s Word is our only reliable source of truth about Satan and demons. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Before the 300s, exorcisms proved to be a major factor in the spread of Christianity; in the 300s, exorcisms and miracles are the most explicit cause of conversion to Christianity mentioned in early Christian sources. ~ **Craig Keener**

Prophecy, exorcism and miracles can be counterfeited. ‘Charismatic’ activity is no substitute for obedience and a personal relationship with Jesus. ~ **R. T. France**

Rather than engaging in exorcisms, believers today are called to engage in evangelism. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Jesus’ exorcisms instantiate his victory over Satan and demons, indicating that the kingdom is now present and that Jesus has triumphed over the reign of evil. ~ **Thomas Schreiner**

And when God gave the Son authority over the angelic realm and over the realm of Satan, He gave us that authority *because* we are in Christ Jesus. ~ **J. Dwight Pentecost**

So why are things as they are now? And the Bible has its answer. It tells us that there was a rebellion in the angelic places, than an unusually bright angelic spirit, in his pride, rebelled against God. The Bible calls that spirit ‘the devil’, and tells us that when he fell, a number of angels fell with him. That angelic spirit is now God’s great antagonist: he hates God with all his being. He came to

God's perfect creation and he tempted the highest being there. It was Eve who was first tempted by the devil, and she led Adam to agree with her. The temptation was to defy God. And they did. Adam and Even listened, they rebelled, they sinned against God and in doing so they fell. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

We must get rid of the notion that we are only wrestling against 'flesh and blood' on earth. Our wrestling is essentially in the spiritual realm, the realm of the heavenlies. It is simply another way of emphasising ... that we must always think of the enemy who is fighting against us as one who is not only personal, with his personal agents, but also as one who lives in the realm of the spirit. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

Idle Christians are not tempted of the devil so much as they tempt the devil to tempt them. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Satan knows right well that one devil in the church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

For where God built a church, there the devil would also build a chapel. Thus is the devil ever God's ape. ~ **Martin Luther (Founder of the German Reformation)**

Sin is worse than the devil, for sin made the devil a devil. He would have been an angel if it had not been for sin. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

2673 The devil cannot lord it over those who are servants of God with their whole heart and who place their hope in him. The devil can wrestle with but not overcome them. ~ **The Shepherd of Hermas**

Nothing provokes the devil like the cross. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

If you do not submit to God, you never will resist the devil. And you will remain constantly under his tyrannical power. Which shall be your master, God or devil? One of these must. No man is without a master. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

We cannot stand against the wiles of the devil by our wits. ~ **Oswald Chambers**
(**Lecturer and Missionary**)

If the Lord will not suffer it, neither men nor devils can do it. ~ **Charles**
Spurgeon