

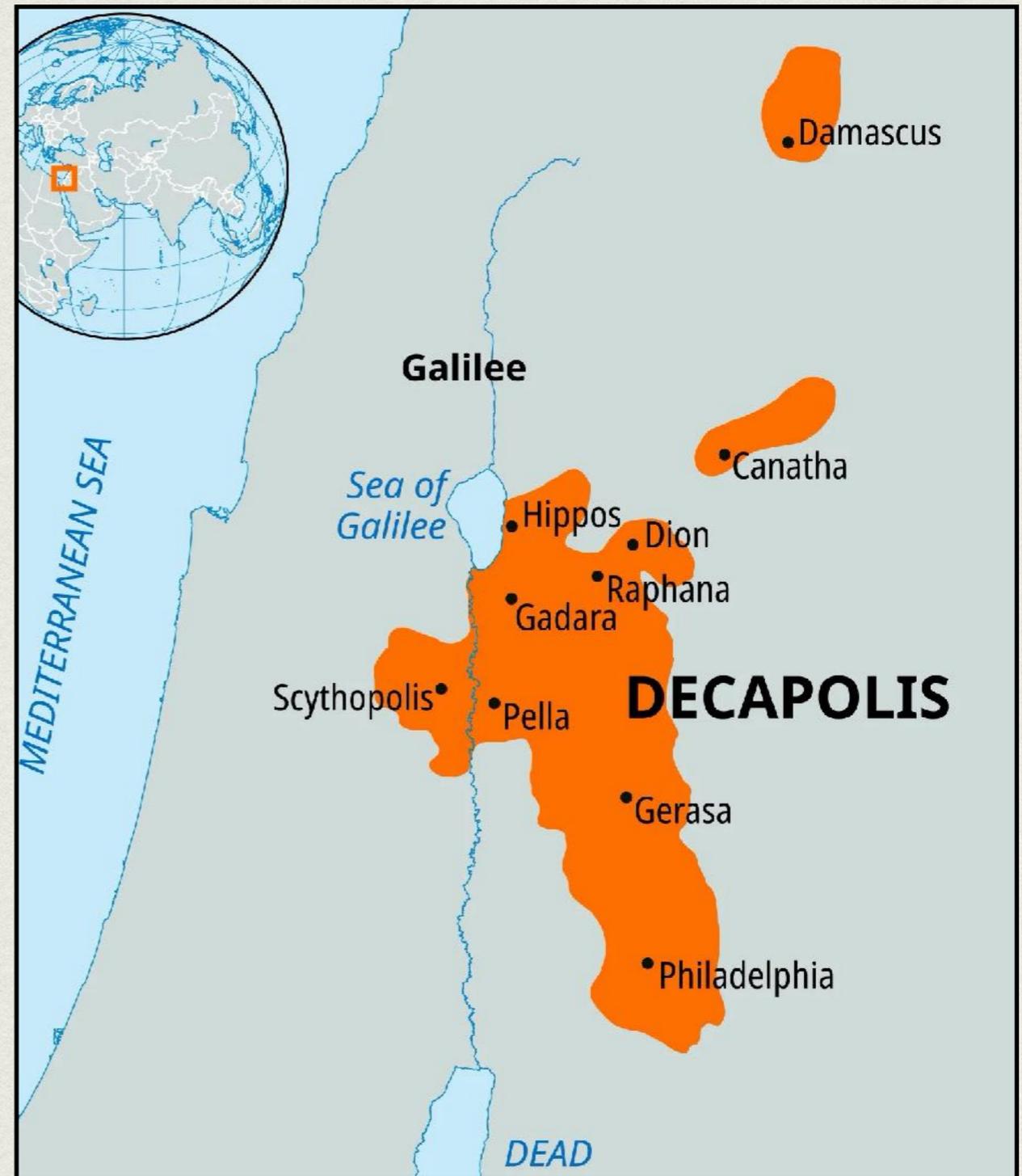


THE BOOK OF MARK

Lesson 7—Mark 5:1–20—The Demoniacs

- Mark 5:1–20
- Matthew 8:28–34
- Luke 8:26–40

Decapolis, a group of 10 ancient Greek cities in eastern Palestine that was formed after the Roman conquest of Palestine in 63 BC, all but one of which lay east of the Jordan River. Gadara was the original capital of the league, but it was replaced by Damascus.



John 4:46–54

Mark 1:21–28

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. (John 4:46)



The inhabitants of Capernaum had been greatly astonished by the sudden and effectual cure of the ruler's son at a word from Jesus, when he was more than twenty miles distant from the sufferer. They were rejoiced to learn that he who possessed such miraculous power was in their own city. On the Sabbath day, the synagogue where he spoke was packed with people, and yet many who desired to enter were unable to do so. As usual, a great number came through curiosity, but there were many who earnestly desired to learn regarding the gospel of the kingdom of God.

(2SP 176.3)



And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. (Mark 1:21–27)

All who heard him were astonished, “for he taught them as one having authority, and **not as the scribes.**” His words were a demonstration of the Spirit of God, and they struck home to the souls of men with divine power. The teaching of the scribes and elders was cold and formal, like a lesson learned by rote. They explained the law as a matter of custom, but no authority from God sanctified their utterances, no holy inspiration stirred their own hearts and those of their hearers. (2SP 176.4)



There was a man in the synagogue who was possessed of the spirit of Satan. He broke in upon the discourse of Jesus with a piercing shriek, that chilled the blood of the hearers with a nameless terror. "Let us alone!" he cried. "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God!" (2SP 177.2)



Devils even believed and trembled, but the Israel of God had closed their eyes and ears to divine evidences, and knew not the time of their visitation.

Satan's object in leading his wretched victim to the synagogue, was to distract the attention of the people from Jesus to the paroxysms of the poor sufferer and prevent the words of truth from reaching the hearts of the people. But the darkened understanding of the man comprehended that the teachings of Jesus were from Heaven. The power of divinity aroused the terror of the demon which controlled his mind, and a conflict ensued between it and his remnant of reason. (2SP 177.3)



As the victim realized that the Healer was near to release him, his heart was aroused to long for freedom from Satan's power. The demon resisted this power and held control over the poor wretch who was wrestling against him. The sufferer tried to appeal to Jesus for help, but when he opened his lips, the demon put words in his mouth so that he shrieked out in an agony of fear, "Let us alone! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" The darkened reason of the poor man partially comprehended that he was in the presence of one who could free him from the bondage that had so long enslaved him; but when he sought to come within reach of that mighty hand, another's will held him back, another's words found utterance through him.

(2SP 178.1)



By his own sinful course, this man had placed himself on the enemy's ground, and Satan had taken possession of all his faculties, so that when the gloom of his understanding was pierced by feeble rays of light from the Saviour's presence, the conflict between his desire for freedom and the devil's power threw him into terrible contortions, and drew from him unearthly cries. The demon exerted all his hellish power to retain the control of his victim. To lose ground here would be to give Jesus a victory. He who had, in his own person, conquered the prince of the power of darkness in the wilderness of temptation, was now again brought face to face with his enemy. (2SP 178.2)



It seemed that the tortured man must lose his life in the terrible struggle with the demon that had been the ruin of his manhood. Only one power could break this cruel tyranny. Jesus spoke with a voice of authority and set the captive free. The demoniac spirit made a last effort to rend the life from his victim before he was forced to depart. Then the man who had been possessed stood before the wondering people happy in the freedom of self-possession. In the synagogue on the Sabbath day, before the assembled congregation, the prince of darkness was again met and conquered. (2SP 178.3)



Remorse came too late, and though he would then have sacrificed wealth and pleasure to regain his lost manhood, he had become helpless in the hands of the evil one. Satan had allured that young man with many charming presentations; he had cloaked vice with a flowery mantle that the victim might clasp it to his breast; but when his object was once accomplished and the wretched man was in his power, the fiend had become relentless in his cruelty, and terrible in his fierce and angry visitations. So it is ever with those who succumb to evil; the fascinating pleasure of their early career ends in the darkness of despair, or the madness of a lost and ruined soul.

(2SP 180.1)



But he who conquered the arch-enemy in the wilderness, wrested this writhing captive from the grasp of Satan. Jesus well knew that although assuming another form, this demon was **the same evil spirit** that had tempted him in the wilderness. Satan seeks by various devices to gain his object. The same spirit that saw and recognized the Saviour, and cried out to him, "Let us alone! What have we to do with thee?" possessed the wicked Jews who rejected Christ and scorned his teachings. But with them he assumed **an air of piety and learning**, seeking to deceive them as to their real motives in refusing the Saviour.

(2SP 180.2)



You have even supposed that power is given you to cast out devils. Through your influence over the human mind, men and women are led to believe that they are possessed of devils and that the Lord has appointed you as His agents for casting out these evil spirits. **I have been shown** that just such phases of error as I was compelled to meet among Advent believers after the passing of the time in 1844 **will be repeated in these last days**. In our early experience, I had to go from place to place and bear message after message to disappointed companies of believers. The evidences accompanying my messages were so great that the honest in heart received as truth the words that were spoken. The power of God was revealed in a marked manner, and men and women were freed from the baleful influence of fanaticism and disorder and were brought into the unity of the faith. (23LtMs, *Lt 358, 1908*, par. 3; to Mr. and Mrs.

Ralph Mackin) (*2SM*)

My brother and sister, I have a message for you: You are starting on a false supposition. There is much of self woven into your exhibitions. Satan will come in with bewitching power through these exhibitions. It is high time that you call a halt. If God had given you a special message for His people, you would walk and work in all **humility**—not as if you were on the stage of a theater, but in the meekness of a follower of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth. You would carry an influence altogether different from that which you have been carrying. You would be anchored on the Rock, Christ Jesus. (23LtMs, *Lt 358, 1908*, par. 4)

Last night instruction was given me for our people. I seemed to be in a meeting where representations were being made of the strange work of Brother Mackin and wife. **I was instructed** that it was a work similar to that which was carried on in Orrington, in the State of Maine, and in various other places after the passing of the time in 1844. I was bidden to speak decidedly against this fanatical work.

(3SM 378)

I was shown that it was not the Spirit of the Lord that was inspiring Brother and Sister Mackin, but the same spirit of fanaticism that is ever seeking entrance into the remnant church. Their application of Scripture to their peculiar exercises is Scripture misapplied. **The work of declaring persons possessed of the devil, and then praying with them and pretending to cast out the evil spirits, is fanaticism which will bring into disrepute any church which sanctions such work. (3SM 378.2)**

I was shown that we must give no encouragement to these demonstrations, but must guard the people with a decided testimony against that which would bring a stain upon the name of Seventh-day Adventists, and destroy the confidence of the people in the message of truth which they must bear to the world. [Several communications regarding the Mackin experience are published in *Selected Messages* 2:41–47.]—*Pacific Union Recorder*, December 31, 1908 (Republished in *Selected Messages* 2:46.) (3SM 378.3)

Toward the close of our interview Brother L proposed that we unite in prayer, with the thought that possibly while in prayer his wife would be exercised as they had described to me, and that then I might be able to discern whether this was of the Lord or not. To this I could not consent, because I have been instructed that when one offers to exhibit these peculiar manifestations, this is a decided evidence that it is not the work of God. (2SM 42.3)

Since visiting your house Sabbath afternoon, August 23, some things have rested on my mind to say to you. I have no hesitancy in saying that Annie's visions are not of God. The **dreams** that the members of your family have had are a deception of Satan. (6LtMs, *Lt 11, 1890*, par. 2; to Brother & Sister Garmire)

Several times during our conversation, in which you became very much in earnest, you repeated the sentence, “O consistency, thou art a jewel!” I repeat the same with decided force to you. **You say that Annie’s visions place the forming of the image of the beast after probation closes.** This is not so. You claim to believe the testimonies; let them set you right on this point. The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. Your position is such a jumble of inconsistencies that but few will be deceived. (6LtMs, *Lt 11*, 1890, par. 10)

In (Revelation 13) this subject is plainly presented: “I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” [Verse 11.] Then the miracle-working power is revealed: “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” [Verses 14–17.] (6LtMs, *Lt 11*, 1890, par. 11)

This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious Sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday Sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast. What need will there be of the solemn warning not to receive the mark of the beast, when all the saints of God are sealed and ticketed for the New Jerusalem? “O consistency, thou art a jewel!” (6LtMs, *Lt 11*, 1890, par. 12)

The Lord has plainly shown me that what you regard as communications from God to you and others through your child Annie, are not from Him. They do not bear the divine credentials. It is another spirit that controls the child. It is the enemy that works in her. Such manifestations will be more and more common in these last days. They do not lead to unity, into all truth, but away from the truth.

One decided evidence we have that these exercises are not of God is that they concur with your views, which we know to be erroneous. Things she says she sees in vision are not sustained by the Word of God, but are contrary to it. (6LtMs, *Lt 12, 1890*, par. 24, 25)

Yet many things they told, came to pass as they predicted.

I was asked how this could be if the visions were all false. I told them that it was Satan's purpose to **mingle truth with error**, that through these deceptive exercises he might make of none effect the genuine work of God. From that time all their <many> visions ceased.

. . . but four of the children now living are skeptics, have no belief in the gifts of the church, no faith in the truth, no religion at all. Such, **I have been shown**, is the sure result of spurious visions. (6LtMs, *Lt 12*, 1890, par. 41–43, to the Garmires)

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” [Proverbs 29:18.] Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in **spurious visions** to mislead and mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions, as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.

(6LtMs, *Lt 12*, 1890, par. 45)

My dear brother, [A.T. Jones] I wish to present before you some things concerning the dangers that threaten the work at the present time. The work of Anna Phillips does not bear the signature of heaven. I know what I am talking about. In our first experience in the infancy of this cause we had to meet similar manifestations. Many such revelations were given, and we had a most disagreeable work in meeting this element and giving it no place. Some things stated in these revelations were fulfilled, and this led some to accept them as genuine. Young, unmarried women would have a message for married men, and in no delicate words would tell them to their face of their abuse of the marriage privileges. Purity was the burden of the messages given, and for a while everything appeared to be reaching a high state of purity and holiness. But the inwardness of these matters was opened to me; I was shown what would be the outcome of this teaching.

(9LtMs, *Lt 103, 1894*, par. 16; to A. T. Jones)

God has not called Anna Phillips to follow on after the testimonies
He has given to His people, and repeat their purport. Such her
work is and has been. Persons did exactly the same thing in the
first experience in this cause. We had every phase of these false
revelations to meet. (Ibid., par. 19)

How is it, my brother, that you have taken up these communications, and presented them before the people, weaving them in with the testimonies God has given Sister White? Where is your evidence that these are of God? You cannot be too careful how you hear, how you receive, how you believe. You cannot be too careful how you talk of the gift of prophesying, and state that I have said this and that in reference to this matter. Such statements, I well know, encourage men, women, and children to imagine that they have special light in revelations from God, when they have not received such light. This, **I have been shown**, would be one of Satan's masterpieces of deception. You are giving to the work a mold which it will take precious time and wearing soul labor to correct, to save the cause of God from another spasm of fanaticism. These unadvised movements tend to a demoralized state of things which will give unbelievers an opportunity to reproach the precious cause of God. May God in His infinite mercy give you clear spiritual eyesight, that you may see distinctly the dangers which threaten us as a people. (Ibid., par. 20)

A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received **special revelations** from Heaven, and claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation which, they declared, had been but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished. They rejected the great principle which was the very foundation of the Reformation—that the word of God is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; and for that unerring guide they substituted the changeable, uncertain standard of **their own feelings and impressions**. By this act of setting aside the great detector of error and falsehood the way was opened for Satan to control minds as best pleased himself. (*GC 186.2*)

One of these prophets claimed to have been instructed by the angel Gabriel. A student who united with him forsook his studies, declaring that he had been endowed by God Himself with wisdom to expound His word. Others who were naturally inclined to fanaticism united with them. The proceedings of these enthusiasts created no little excitement. The preaching of Luther had aroused the people everywhere to feel the necessity of reform, and now some really honest persons were misled by the pretensions of the new prophets. (*GC* 186.3)

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it, When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* (Isaiah 30:21)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psalm 32:8)

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. (Jonah 1:3)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (I John 4:1–3)

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

1 Kings 13

Well would it have been for the prophet had he adhered to his purpose to return to Judea without delay. While traveling homeward by another route, he was overtaken by an aged man who claimed to be a prophet and who made false representations to the man of God, declaring, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water." **Again and again the lie was repeated and the invitation urged until the man of God was persuaded to return. (PK 106.1)**

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. (Mark 13:22)

Perilous times are before us. Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given through **the spirit of prophecy**. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through **His word**. He has spoken to us through the **testimonies** to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer? (*8T 298.1*)

I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. **God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.**

(8T 298.2)