

## Unit 24

# Jesus the Miracle-Worker

## *Gospels*

### Memory Verses

“But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”

—MATTHEW 14:30-31

# Jesus Casts Out Demons

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** Jesus demonstrated His authority over evil by driving demons out of a man.

**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** Luke 8:26-39

The concept of superheroes has intrigued storytellers, comic-book readers, and moviegoers throughout the ages. In ancient Greek myths, Hercules and Achilles captivated the imagination with their strength and near-invincibility. Today we have an explosion of interest in superheroes thanks, in large part, to the popularity of movies that depict special people and teams taking on the greatest foes of the earth and the universe. You don't have to go far to find a child dressed up and pretending to have superpowers to fight the evils of the world. You might even find an adult wishing for superpowers to break up the monotony of the workday or to secure justice for the oppressed.



What superpower would you like to have, and what would you do with it?

# Group Time

## Point 1: The demons recognize the Son of God's authority (Luke 8:26-33).

<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. <sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." <sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. <sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

Based on this wild man's experience, demonic possession torments, wounds, endangers, and isolates its victims. To see this man in action would cause fear and revulsion in us; to witness him running toward us and screaming would send us running away in terror. But as much as we would have been afraid of the demon-possessed man, the man-possessing demon was even more afraid of Jesus.

**Demons** \_\_\_\_\_ God and seek to destroy His work. Though demons have power, they are \_\_\_\_\_ by God's control and can only act within the constraints of what God \_\_\_\_\_.

Why was the demon—or demons, as it turned out—afraid of Jesus and groveling at His feet? Because the "Legion" of demons inhabiting the man recognized Jesus' *identity* and *authority*. Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, and He Himself will cast all demons, including Satan, into hell for all eternity, once the time has come.



What will a faith response to the authority of Jesus look like, as opposed to the forced submission displayed by the demons?

## Point 2: The people fear the Son of God's authority (Luke 8:34-37).

<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

The demons left the man, entered the pigs, and destroyed the whole herd, around two thousand pigs, according to Mark's Gospel (Mark 5:13). Later, everyone in the region came out to see what had happened, and what they saw blew their minds and scared them to their core. They saw pig corpses bobbing in the Sea of Galilee, but that's not what scared them. They heard about the herd going crazy and rushing into the sea, but that's not what scared them. They saw a formerly wild and naked man sitting still and in clothes—this was the display of power and authority from Jesus that was too much for them.



How might the authority and power of Jesus cause fear in people today?

The Gentiles saw the peaceful fruit of a great miracle sitting at Jesus' feet, so they asked Him to leave! What would have possessed them to make that choice? Jesus had just liberated a demon-possessed man; what more could He have done for them had they only believed? But since they had fear without faith, they rejected the miracle-worker in their midst. It seems they preferred their own slavery to sin and Satan over submission to the Savior.



### Voices from the Church

"To fear the Lord is not to be scared of Him. It's to adore Him. Worship Him. Honor Him. It's to put Him in the right place in our thinking. The fear of the Lord is in many ways to honor the first commandment."<sup>1</sup>

—Trillia Newbell



What might you say to address someone's fear of submitting to Jesus in faith?

### Point 3: The man obeys the Son of God's authority (Luke 8:38-39).

<sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

As Jesus got back in the boat with His disciples to leave, He had a brief conversation with the man whom He had freed. Naturally, the man wanted to go with Jesus. He wanted to be with his Savior and learn from Him. He begged Jesus for this. This "begs" the question for us: How eager are we to be in the presence of our Savior? Do we seek Him out through the Scriptures and prayer? Do we join regularly with His body, the church? Or do we only seek Him when we think we need Him? Or worse, are we content merely to claim salvation and then move on with our lives independent of Jesus?

What is your level of desire to commune with the Savior, Jesus Christ?



No Desire

Eager Desire

**New Identity of the Believer:** When a person places faith in Christ, no longer is the person a \_\_\_\_\_ to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The old, sinful self is passed away and the new, \_\_\_\_\_ self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like \_\_\_\_\_.

The man begged to go with Him, but Jesus said no. How could Jesus deny someone's desire to be with Him in the flesh? We don't know all the details, but we do know Jesus is faithful and true, so we can trust His decision. At least one major consideration was His mission on earth: to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). So while the man could not join Him on the road to the cross, Jesus sent the man home as an extension of His mission—"tell all that God has done for you"—and the man joyfully obeyed.



Why might we be reluctant to share our testimony of the gospel of Jesus in our lives?



# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read Luke 8:26-33

In His brief conversation with the demon-possessed man, Jesus asked for the demon's name, perhaps to highlight the complexity of the scenario for His disciples who were with Him. He certainly did not do this as a means to gain power over the demon. He already had the power. This is not an example of naming your oppressor to have victory over it. Jesus needed no magic, talisman, or ritual to free the man from his oppressor. He is the Son of the Most High God, and one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). But it is worth noting that at this moment, the demon-possessed man fell at Jesus' feet. While the fullness of Jesus' rule has not yet come to earth due to the patience of God, Jesus remains sovereign nonetheless, a truth even the demons know full well.

Because Jesus is sovereign over this world, over all things both physical and spiritual, we can know that nothing, including the sinful and scary work of demons, has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39). By faith in Jesus, we are forever free to live, run, fall, and crawl in His never-ending love.



How does Jesus' sovereignty over all things encourage you to step out in the obedience of faith?



### Voices from Church History

"Although Christ held his peace, their own evil consciences accused them. For just as when thieves are brought to court or the place of judgment, they imagine in their own minds what punishment they deserve, so it is that the devils and all the wicked ones tremble and quake with fear at the sight of God, the celestial, mighty and terrible Judge, as if they were already feeling the pains and torments of hell fire. Because the devils knew that Christ will be the Judge of the whole world, it is no marvel that they were afraid of torment even at the very sight of him."<sup>3</sup>

—Philipp Melanchthon  
(1497-1560)

## Day 2: Read Luke 8:34-37

The people in the Gerasene region asked Jesus to leave, and it is natural to wonder why. He could have healed people; He could have cast out more demons; He could have provided satisfying meals. But the Scripture passage simply says they were afraid.

It is common here to analyze the people's state of mind and conclude that perhaps they were a bit upset and unnerved that a large herd of pigs had just been destroyed in the sea. The idea is that financial concerns weighed heavy upon them and that Jesus just couldn't be trusted not to cause the destruction of other sources of income, so they asked Him to leave.

But our main goal in reading and studying the Bible is to go where the authors and the Author—God Himself—want us to go. The text says they were “afraid” and had “great fear.” This fear was not aimed at the loss of pigs but at the One who had the power to command demons.



How have you experienced fear directed toward God? How did you respond to that fear?

## Day 3: Read Luke 8:38-39

This brief passage contains a subtle yet beautiful statement about the deity of Jesus. As the Son of the Most High God, Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity. The “legion” of demons possessing the man knew this to be true, and it seems their spiritual knowledge rubbed off on him.

Jesus refused the man's request to join in His travels, but He gave him a mission instead—go home and declare what “God has done for you.” This the man gladly obeyed; after all, he had been freed from his demonic oppression. But curiously, his obedience involved a slight adjustment in the message he was told to proclaim. He did go home, and he did tell what God had done for him, but he did so by proclaiming what “Jesus had done for him.” Previously, Jesus' disciples had wondered “Who is this?” when Jesus calmed a storm on the sea with a word (Luke 8:25). The man whose soul had been calmed and saved with a word had no need to question—Jesus is the divine Son of the Most High God.



What are some ways you will honor the Son of the Most High God with your thoughts, words, and actions?



## Day 4: Read Luke 11:14-16

What sort of ailments are demons responsible for? They drove a man mad in Luke 8 and here prevented a man from speaking. Demons were also attributed with seizures and deafness in the Gospels (Mark 9:17-27). Satan was guilty of causing natural disasters and boils that affected Job (Job 1–2). It seems there could be no end to the mischief, torment, and destruction perpetrated by demons in the spiritual realm.

But we must be careful not to give demons more credit than they are due. Not every ailment is the direct result of a demon's work (see John 9). We ought not forsake doctors and hospitals solely for exorcists. Nor should we ignore the reality that spiritual forces do manifest their work in tangible ways, for good or for ill. Beyond these points, we must remember that God alone is sovereign. Demons can only go as far as God allows them to go, and they can never hold ultimate control over God's children.



How do you reconcile the activity in the spiritual realm with what you see and experience in the physical realm?

## Day 5: Read Luke 11:17-23

Jesus knew people were questioning His power to command and exorcize demons. But logically, this made no sense. If Jesus cast demons out by the power of Beelzebul, another name for Satan, then this would have been evidence of an internal turf war among the demons. A kingdom divided from within has no strength to defend from without.

So logically, Jesus wasn't casting demons out by the power of Satan, and if not, then He must have been doing so by the power of God. Instead of a coup or infighting, Jesus was demonstrating His superior status and strength over spiritual matters. He marched into this world under the sway of demonic forces and began dismantling their power because He is the superior force.

So the question arises: With whom will you side? The demonic forces of this world that have lost and are losing or the victorious Son of the Most High God, the rightful and good ruler over all of creation?



How can you help people see the logic of siding with Jesus? Pray that they will see and believe in Him for salvation.



## *The Gospel Project*®

Adult Daily Discipleship Guide ESV  
Volume 8, Number 4 Summer 2020

**Ed Stetzer**  
Founding Editor

**Trevin Wax**  
General Editor

**Brian Dembowczyk**  
Managing Editor

**Daniel Davis**  
Content Editor

**Josh Hayes**  
Content and Production Editor

**Ken Braddy**  
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

**Brandon Hiltibidal**  
Director, Groups Ministry

### Send questions/comments to:

Content Editor by email to [daniel.davis@lifeway.com](mailto:daniel.davis@lifeway.com) or mail to Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments on the Web at [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com).

Printed in the United States of America

*The Gospel Project*®: *Adult Daily Discipleship Guide* ESV (ISSN 2330-9393; Item 005573553) is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2020 LifeWay Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com), or write LifeWay Resources Customer Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email [orderentry@lifeway.com](mailto:orderentry@lifeway.com), fax 615.251.5933, or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit [www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).

All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



## Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor—*The Gospel Project*  
AUTHOR OF *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry*  
AND *Cornerstones: 200 Questions and Answers to Learn Truth*

Jesus was born to die—a jarring statement indeed, but one that is quite true.

Christmas and Easter are fused together, linked hand-in-hand in such a way that each is dependent on the other for its meaning. The theology of such a statement is solid but incomplete, for Jesus was not born to die immediately but rather some thirty years later. Jesus' life, then, was not utilitarian—existing just so it could be taken away and picked up again—it had greater meaning and purpose. What Jesus did during those thirty years of walking the earth mattered; He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. He satisfied the demands of righteousness that we could not so He might take away our sin when we trust in Him and so His righteousness might be credited to us, making us fully pleasing to the Father (2 Cor. 5:21).

In this volume we delve deeper into the marvelous truth of the incarnation to see still further glimpses of Christ's glory on earth. His righteousness did not occur in a vacuum but rather among people, ordinary people like you and me. In each unit of this volume, we will look at Jesus' interactions with people as through a prism, making slight turns to see different yet equally brilliant perspectives of Jesus' works. In Unit 22, we will see Jesus' power to heal coupled with His deep compassion for people, even those who were marginalized in society. In Unit 23, we will see Jesus' riveting teachings empowered by His divine authority. And finally, in Unit 24, we will see Jesus' miraculous power over nature, revealing His identity as Creator God.

Each ray of light we will see points to the same truth: that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God given for our salvation. Jesus was indeed born to die, but He lived so that we too might live.

**UNIT 22****SESSION 1**

1. Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke, in Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009) [Wordsearch].
2. Charles H. Spurgeon, "'Where Are the Nine?' Where?" in *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon: Volume 51, Sermons 2916 to 2967* (Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2013) [eBook].

**SESSION 2**

1. Kim Huat Tan, *Mark, in New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015) [Wordsearch].
2. Ray Ortlund, "Jesus and Faith," *Renewal Ministries*, January 27, 2013, [renewalministries.com/message/jesus-and-faith](http://renewalministries.com/message/jesus-and-faith).

**SESSION 3**

1. Kelyn Soong, "Veteran who lost both legs completes 31 marathons in 31 days, runners trailing his every step," *The Washington Post*, November 12, 2017, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/dc-sports-bog/wp/2017/11/12/veteran-who-lost-both-legs-runs-31-marathons-in-31-days-in-31-cities-trailed-every-step/?utm\\_term=.8f45e3e7c805](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dc-sports-bog/wp/2017/11/12/veteran-who-lost-both-legs-runs-31-marathons-in-31-days-in-31-cities-trailed-every-step/?utm_term=.8f45e3e7c805).
2. Balthasar Hubmaier, *On the Freedom of the Will*, quoted in *John 1–12*, ed. Craig S. Farmer, vol. 4 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014) [Wordsearch].
3. Joni Eareckson Tada, *Heaven: Your Real Home* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995) [eBook].
4. Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 4 (London: W. Baynes, 1806), 526.

**SESSION 4**

1. EnChroma®, "How EnChroma Glasses Work," October 23, 2019, [enchroma.com/pages/how-enchroma-glasses-work](http://enchroma.com/pages/how-enchroma-glasses-work).
2. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1546.
3. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 44.8, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
4. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.1, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

**UNIT 23****SESSION 1**

1. Charles Quarles, *The Sermon on the Mount*, in *NAC Studies in Bible & Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 333.
2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "The Salt of the Earth," November 30, 2019, [www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/salt.html](http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/salt.html).
3. Frank Thielman, "Matthew," in *Gospel Transformation Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1275, n. 5:13–16.

**SESSION 2**

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 87.
2. J. C. Ryle, "What It Costs to Be a True Christian," December 4, 2019, [www.the-highway.com/cost\\_Ryle.html](http://www.the-highway.com/cost_Ryle.html).

**SESSION 3**

1. John Bunyan, "Discourse on Prayer," in *The Works of That Eminent Servant of Christ, John Bunyan*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: John Ball, 1850), 80.
2. John Onwuchekwa, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 43.

**SESSION 4**

1. Leo the Great, Sermon 90.4.1, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Arthur A. Just Jr., vol. III in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Rebecca Faires, "Consider the Ravens," in *She Reads Truth Bible*, gen. eds. Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1763.

**SESSION 5**

1. Martin Luther, House Postil (1544): Sunday After Easter (1544), quoted in *John 1–12*, ed. Craig S. Farmer, vol. 4 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014) [Wordsearch].
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (New York: HarperOne, 1976), 26.
3. John Piper, "My Abandoned Life for Your Abundant Life," *Desiring God*, August 6, 2011, [www.desiringgod.org/messages/my-abandoned-life-for-your-abundant-life--2](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/my-abandoned-life-for-your-abundant-life--2).
4. See C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 52.

**UNIT 24****SESSION 1**

1. Trillia J. Newbell, *Fear and Faith* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2015), 119.
2. Tertullian, *On Flight During Persecution*, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 65.
3. Philipp Melancthon, *An Ecclesiastical Exposition upon Saint Mathewe* 8, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

**SESSION 2**

1. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 270.
2. Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 134.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1538.
4. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 3.4, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 211.
5. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. ed., in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 317.

**SESSION 3**

1. John Newton, *The Aged Pilgrim's Triumph over Sin and the Grave*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Baker and Fletcher, 1825), 33–34.
2. J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973, reprint 2018), 32.

**SESSION 4**

1. David Brainerd, in *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd* (New-Haven: S. Converse, 1822), 125.
2. C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1866), 137.