


# Jesus in Battle

MARK 5:1-20; 9:14-29

*Jesus came not only to deal with the problem of sin in the world, but also to deal with God's prime supernatural opponent—Satan himself!*

—CLINTON ARNOLD, *Powers of Darkness*

 ne cool, overcast afternoon I was teaching a science class to high-school students in Swaziland, a small country in southern Africa. Suddenly, a girl cried out, began to shake and moan, and fell to the floor writhing. Though I suspected there was demonic involvement, I did not know how to act on my suspicion. I managed to calm the girl down, and we let her lie on a couch in one of the school offices until she returned to normal. I later learned that she had in fact been the target of a form of “love magic” practiced in Swaziland. My science training had taught me to solve many physical problems, but it had not prepared me to deal with demonic power when I encountered it.

There are several accounts in the Gospels in which Jesus faced demons. Jesus knew the demonic from the physical, and he knew what to do when confronted directly with the powers of evil. In today's study we will see three components of spiritual warfare: Jesus' power over demons, his frustration with the

disciples' inability to minister effectively, and his compassion toward those facing the reality of the demonic in their own lives.

1. Why do you think people are so fascinated with the occult and the supernatural?

**READ MARK 5:1-20.**

- ✦ 2. One aspect of being human is bearing God's image (see Genesis 1:27). In light of this truth, in what ways were the demonized man's actions inhuman (verses 2-5)?

- ✦ 3. What do you see as the main characteristics and goals of the demons based on verses 1-13?

What were the evil spirits afraid of in this confrontation with Jesus (verses 7,10-12)?

- ✦ 4. Did the spirits come out at Jesus' first command?

What lesson or clues for spiritual confrontation might this fact provide?

5. Why did Jesus not permit the man to accompany him (verses 18-20)?

6. The man in this account never actually professed faith in Christ. What evidence is there of his belief?

**READ MARK 9:14-29.**

- ✦ 7. What symptoms of demonic control do you see in this passage?

- ✦ 8. Whom was Jesus addressing in verse 19?

Why was he so frustrated with them?

9. Why do you think Jesus took the time to question the father rather than immediately rebuking the demon?

10. Why did the disciples fail (verses 18-19,23,28-29)?

What can we learn from their failure?

✎ 11. Some say that demons are not real and that Jesus was simply accommodating himself to the people and culture of his time. How would you respond to this idea?

12. Which of the main characters do you relate to more: the father or the disciples? Why?

13. Summarize in a sentence or two what you see as the most important lesson for your life from these two stories.