



# Prayer Resources

## Online Articles

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### Prayer Resources

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## The Other Side – A World of Demons and Prosperity

*And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. Mark 5:1*  
(see Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39)

Whereas the name *Jerusalem* sparked within every Israelite a sense of awe and joy, the term *Gadara* had the opposite effect. Gadara was a forbidden region – an eerie place of tombs, unclean animals, fertility customs, and demons. The Jews referred to it as *the other side*. Much as today's phrase *the other woman* has a certain connotation, so in Jesus's day the phrase *the other side* had a connotation of death and demons.

When Jesus told His disciples that they must go to *the other side*, they reluctantly launched their boat into the sea. Even to the most experienced fishermen, the Sea of Galilee maintained its mysterious aspect and was often called the *Abyss*. As they crossed, the disciples encountered one of those violent storms that Galilee was known for. Desperately, the disciples called out to Jesus. To this cyclonic squall, Jesus commanded, "Peace," and immediately there was a soothing calm! Surely the disciples wondered if this fearful experience was a forewarning to them as they were about to embark upon the shores of Gadara? Or was this a foreshadowing of the calm that Jesus was about to bring into such a chaotic place? Indeed, Jesus was going to bring a blessed peace into the life of a Gadarene, but it would not be a peace welcomed by those whose monetary prosperity would be impacted. The dark world of the Gadarenes and their response to Jesus' light give understanding to the world in which we live.

### A. A World Dominated by Demons and Enjoying Prosperity

On *the other side* Jesus was confronted by a demon-possessed man of Gadara. Nearby were those who raised swine for pagan sacrifices. Gadara was controlled by demons that compelled people to do violent atrocities and unimaginable perversions. Yet, this world prospered monetarily! Much of the world today is content to live dominated by demonic forces influencing perverted, violent behavior as long as it remains financially prosperous!

### B. A World Liberated from Demons and Maintaining Prosperity

Jesus freed the Gadarene from the demons and sent them into the swine where they immediately took control. Though the swine reacted violently, the owners were still not concerned about their investment. To many today, the scene of a man freed of demons presents a tolerable situation as long as it does not interfere with their life and prosperity.

### C. A World Liberated from Demons and Loosing Prosperity

The man immediately showed evidence of change and at Christ's command the swine ran headlong into the depths of the sea. The economic loss to the owners of the swine created such a fear in the lives of the Gadarenes that they insisted Jesus leave. Today, both in the

world and in the church, tolerance toward the work of the Lord often ends when His work threatens prosperity.

#### **D. A World Cultivated by One Believer and Ignoring Prosperity**

The Gadarene, desiring to escape the demonic world in which he had lived, asked to join Jesus' disciples. Jesus realized that a once-demon-possessed Gentile would be ineffective as a witness in orthodox Judaism. So He sent him back to his friends and

family as a witness to the light of the Gospel. His testimony to the Gadarenes was so powerful that when Jesus returned to the area, He found them waiting for Him and they gladly received Him giving no consideration to their lost prosperity. What a challenge for believers today to impact *the other side* of their prosperity driven culture!

Matthew 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*