

# Vacation Bible School @ Holy Comforter/St. Cyprian Roman Catholic Church

## A Reading According to the Gospel of Mark (Chapter 5:1-20)

"...\* They came to the other side of the sea, to the territory of the Gerasenes. When he got out of the boat, at once a man from the tombs who had an unclean spirit met him. The man had been dwelling among the tombs, and no one could restrain him any longer, even with a chain. In fact, he had frequently been bound with shackles and chains, but the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles smashed, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the hillsides he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones. Catching sight of Jesus from a distance, he ran up and prostrated himself before him, crying out in a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, \* Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me!" (He had been saying to him, "Unclean spirit, come out of the man!") He asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Legion is my name. There are many of us." And he pleaded earnestly with him not to drive them away from that territory.

Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside. And they pleaded with him, "Send us into the swine. Let us enter them." And he let them, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine. The herd of about two thousand rushed down a steep bank into the sea, where they were drowned. The swineherds ran away and reported the incident in the town and throughout the countryside. And people came out to see what had happened. As they approached Jesus, they caught sight of the man who had been possessed by Legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind. And they were seized with fear. Those who witnessed the incident explained to them what had happened to the possessed man and to the swine. Then they began to beg him to leave their district. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him. But he would not permit him but told him instead, "Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you." Then the man went off and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him; and all were amazed. ..."

### Main Points in the Gospel Reading

1. Jesus is in Gentile Territory
2. The man possessed has had many trials and tribulations
3. Amazingly, the demon knew exactly who Jesus is, the Son of the Most High God.
4. Jews would be really interested in what Jesus does. NO true Jew would:
  - o cross into gentile territory
  - o talk to a gentile, or
  - o have anything to do with swine or swine herders
5. Man commanded to Go Home to his family
6. Man has a mighty testimony
7. Man proclaims the Good New to the Decapolis
8. The people of the day would recognize initial steps in Christianity to include the Gentiles
9. Marks teaching is to be adhered to by Jew and Non-Jew
10. Christianity has no limiting boundaries of race or nationality
11. Jesus Word is for all God's people

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## OUTLINE OF TODAY'S LESSON

### I. **Brief Review of Past Two Sessions – Christ Our Hope**

- a. **Realistic Perceptions** – Examination of Scripture that summon us to the Urgency of accepting salvation
- b. **Prescriptions** – Examination of Scripture that prescribe for us what we must do to cooperate with God's saving work: Prayer, Sacraments, Repentance, Scripture Reading, and *Metanoia* (New Mind)

### II. **Prophets** – The biblical term of one who spoke, acted, or wrote under the extraordinary influence of God to make known the divine counsels and will. Although a prophet was commonly associated with the primary function to proclaim the work of God, he also prophesied by foretelling future events. His role, then, was to both proclaim and to make the proclamation credible.

One sent by God to form the people of the Old Covenant in the hope of salvation. The prophets are often authors of books of the Old Testament (OT) [Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) para. 702].

- a. **Definition of Prophecy** – A prediction of a future event that cannot be known by natural means. However, biblical meaning is more general, namely, "vision" or "revelation interpreted." Prophecies as predictions are part of God's supernatural providence.
- b. **History and Background of Prophecy** – See Handout for more info

### III. **Message in Today's Gospel Mark 5:1-20**

### IV. **Our Prophetic Mission**

- a. **LEARN/PASS** on the Good News
- b. **PROCLAIM/TESTIFY** to the Good News
- c. **LIVE/PRACTICE THE LIFE STYLE** of the Good News
- d. **EXPECT TO SUFFER FOR THE SAKE** of the Good News (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 2:1-3)

### V. **Do we live up to our HCSC Parish Goal and Mission Statements?**

- a. At Home
- b. At Work or School
- c. With Family, Friends or Day-To-Day Living, or
- d. Just During Mass on the Weekends

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## Fulfilling Our Role as PROPHET to Others Summoning Them to Faith and Holiness

- ✓ **A Prophet** – is someone who has access to the counsel/experiences of God. One who speaks the message of God to the people. Some prophets foretold future events, while others preached against the unholiness of their own time.
- ✓ The Major Prophets were Isaiah I, II and III, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Each experienced a calling from God. The term Prophet means from the Greek - PRO = on the behalf of, and PHANAI = to speak; and in Hebrew -NABI = to cause to bubble up, to pour forth abundantly.
- ✓ NABI was first, and the most generally used for a prophet in the time of Samuel another word, *ro'eh*, "**seer**," began to be used (1 Sam 9:9). It occurs seven times in reference to Samuel. Afterwards another word, *hozeh*, "**seer**" (2 Sam 24:11) was employed. In 1 Sam 29:29 all three words are used: "Samuel the **seer** (*ro'eh*), Nathan the prophet (*nabi*), Gad the **seer** (*hozeh*). In Josh 13:22 Balaam is called (Hebrew) a kosem "**diviner**," a word used only of a **false prophet**.

### ✓ **Other Old Testament Scripture Concerning Prophets**

Deuteronomy 18:9-22  
Exodus 4:16-17

Jeremiah 1:9  
Exodus 7:1

Numbers 12: 6, 8  
1 King 18

Isaiah 51:16  
2 King 2:23-25

### ✓ **New Testament Scripture Concerning Prophets**

2 Peter 1:20, 21  
1 Corinthians 12:28

Hebrews 3:7  
Ephesians 2:20, 3:5

Acts 4: 25, 28: 25

Luke 13:33, 24:19

- ✓ The prophets **did not** speak their **own words** and **breathe (spirit)** they **SPOKE WITH THE BREATH OF GOD**

### ✓ **The Prophetic message had two parts:**

(1) **Word** – Father speaks the word and Breath – **Spirit**

Therefore, when a prophet spoke he spoke the Word of God, with the Breath/Spirit of God.

(2) **Criteria** for determining a true prophet:

- a. Did what he said line up with the Torah
- b. Does his word come to pass

### ✓ **Other Recommended Readings**

The **Pre-exile prophets** were Amos 1-9, Hosea 1-6; 9:11-14, Isaiah 1-12, 28-30, Micah 1-6 & Jeremiah 1 -7; 18-24; 26-33.

The **Exile prophets** Ezekiel 1-6; 8-11; 18; 21; 34; 36-37; 47; Isaiah 40-55

### ✓ **Biblical time line is provided to help you keep the each prophet and message in prospective**

- a. Patriarchal/Matriarchal period (**19-18 Century**)

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- b. Sojourn in Egypt, (17 -13 Century)
- c. Exodus (13 – 12 Century) the people went from a family, to a tribe, a mob, to a nation; only time in Exodus when they became a nation
- d. Settlement (12 – 11 Century) – under Joshua and the Judges. Judge is someone who enforces or brings justice. Period of the Judges 1200 – 1020 BC. The challenge of the Judges was to make the people realize there is only one God not Ba'al.

### ✓ MONARCHIES

#### TIMELINE

1020 – 100 BC Saul	Only three kings who reign over the people for a period of 100 years. They reign over a united Israel Split Monarchy 920 BC – splits after death of Solomon
1000 – 960 BC David	
960 – 920 BC Solomon	
920 BC	Ten Tribes in the north Israel and 2 tribes in the south Judah
720 BC	Assyrians conquered the Northern tribes
598 BC	The Babylonians conquered the Assyrians and the south people in exile in Babylon. Jeremiah at home and Ezekiel in exile
522 BC	The Persians conquered the Babylonians and the exile ends. Many stay in Babylon
444 BC	the final return of the House of Israel and Judah to its' native soil.

- ✓ **The Prophetic mission always had the purpose of calling the people back to Yahweh.**

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## BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF MAJOR & MINOR PROPHETS

**Isaiah** has some of the clearest prophecies of the coming of Christ in the Old Testament. The first part of the book warns of the disaster that will befall Judah if the people do not turn back to God. The rest of the book possibly edited and compiled during the Exile, promises redemption to the people even though they have sinned.

**Jeremiah** is called by God to foretell the destruction of Judah and call on the people to repent. They hate him for what he said. We know a lot about Jeremiah because this book, unlike most of the prophets gives us many details of his life.

**Lamentations** is a book of poems (attributed to Jeremiah) bemoaning the destruction of Jerusalem. Some scholars think these poems were used in Jewish liturgies celebrated on the site of the destroyed temple.

**Baruch** supposed to have been written at Babylon by a disciple of Jeremiah, prophesies a New Covenant with the people of Israel – this time an everlasting covenant. It also contains a lot of wise advice similar to what we find in the Wisdom books.

**Ezekiel** wrote at about the time as Jeremiah. His book is full of strange visions, in which the message from God is given in symbolic pictures. But, even though he foretells destruction, his message is ultimately one of hope: no matter how impossible it seems, God can bring dead Israel back to life.

**Daniel** tells the story of a Jewish prophet who gained a high place in the court of Babylon during the exile. The book also records his prophecies. Some of his prophecies like Ezekiel's, come in the form of strange visions.

*The prophets from Hosea to Malachi are traditionally known as the “minor prophets.” That does not mean their messages are less important. They are called “minor” (Latin for smaller) only because their books are shorter.*

**Hosea** tells us not only the prophet Hosea's words, but also the story of his marriage. His wife was unfaithful, but he took her back nevertheless. His marriage is a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel. Israel is unfaithful, but God takes her back.

**Joel** warns of the divine judgment that will come to Judah. But he also speaks the famous words that have comforted God's people ever since: “Return to the lord, your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.” In addition, he foretells a time when the Spirit of God will be poured out on all people.

**Amos** brings a stern message of repentance to Israel at the height of the northern Kingdom's prosperity. Naturally, that does not make Amos popular – Israel seems to be doing just fine. However, his prediction of doom will soon come true. Nevertheless, he also predicts a time when the ruined kingdom of David will be restored.

**Obadiah** the shortest book of the Old Testament, foretell the downfall of Edom, traditional enemy of Judah. Edom takes advantage of the destruction of Jerusalem, but God brings justice at last.

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**Jonah** tells a story about a very reluctant prophet who tried to run away when God sent him to the wicked city of Nineveh. You can't run away from God, of course, as Jonah finds out. The story gives us a good idea of how hard it must have been to be God's chosen prophet.

**Micah** pronounces judgment against the wicked who take bribes and exploit the poor. But he also foretells that a savior will come to rule Israel – and that savior will come from the little town of Bethlehem.

**Nahum** foretells the end of Nineveh, the center of the bloody Assyrian Empire. Nineveh the conqueror will be conquered, because the Lord himself is against her (i.e., Assyrian Empire).

**Habakkuk** again pronounces judgment against the wicked, but also preaches comfort for the righteous, who will live by faith.

**Zephaniah** moves beyond Israel and Judah to pronounce God's judgment against the whole earth. But he also brings messages of joy: the judgment against God's people will be taken away, and "he will renew you in his Love.

### **The last three prophets come from the time after some of the Jews returned from exile in Babylon**

**Haggai** leads the effort to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. He chastises the people for living in luxury while the Lord's house is in ruins.

**Zechariah** lives at the same time as Haggai, also works to have the temple rebuilt. In his visions, he sees the coming of a new king to Zion, "humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass."

**Malachi** warns the returned exiles that God is not satisfied with just the forms of worship, those who prosper by evil do not please God with token offerings from their ill-gotten goods. But he predicts the coming of the Lord's messenger, who will be a refiner's fire," purifying his people.

***The two books of the Maccabees fill the gap between the Prophets and the New Testament. They tell the story of a revolt led by the family of the Maccabees against the Greek ruler of Palestine, who tried to force the Jews to worship pagan gods. Many Bibles place these books at the end of the historical books, between Esther and Job.***

***1 Maccabees*** – tells the story of the Maccabean revolts as a historian would tell it, starting with the background (Alexander the Great's conquest of the East) and telling the events in order.

***2 Maccabees*** – tells part of the same story from a religious point of view. Everywhere, the authors see the hand of God in the successes of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers.