

“ENCOUNTERS ~ Demon-possessed Man” [10.18.09]

[Question] Have you ever had a personal encounter that changed your life?  
To my knowledge, I've only had (1) that I know about.

Bible says in Hebrews 13: 2

“Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers,  
for some have entertained angels without realizing it!”

The (1) ENCOUNTER that helped alter the course of my life was in H.S.

Junior year in High school = week of Homecoming; tore my ACL in my left knee that required major surgery; I felt like I had lost everything important to me.

The night after my surgery, the 11:00 News reported a story about a family a family in Knoxville who had barely survived a horrible house fire! That night this family was brought to St. Mary's Hospital & was put in the room beside me.

2 days after surgery, I was studying Chemistry; feeling sorry for myself. My knee surgery was severe & for next six months full cast & meant I couldn't compete in Track nor could I ever play football again. I thought life was pretty tough = that's when God allowed me to ENCOUNTER one of the most amazing persons that I had ever met.

Around 2:00 pm, a knock came @ my door; I thought it was a nurse coming to check in on me; I didn't even stop reading; when the person spoke, I looked up.

There she was = an elderly woman who had lost every earthly possession she had except her husband & invalid daughter in that tragic fire. She quietly came in just to check on me = “Honey, I don't mean to bother you, but is there anything I may do for you?”

This (1) ENCOUNTER changed my life forever = I wanted to have what she possessed; she had lost everything of worldly value but still had something more to give!

Have you ever had an ENCOUNTER like this, which changed your life?

Today we are going to spend some time with a man whose life was changed forever when he met Jesus!

PRAY [Come Holy Spirit, Come!]

The Demon-possessed Man

(R) Luke 8: 26 – 27 or p. 789 in pew Bible

2 elements we want to high-light in this story:

1<sup>st</sup> element is this experience take place in Gentile territory; which is strong evidence that Jesus' ministry went beyond the Jewish nation of Israel.

2<sup>nd</sup> element introduces the idea of DEMON POSSESSION:

This subject raises eye-brows + suspicious in our community & culture:

Controversy & Doubts surrounding “Angels & Demons”

12.27.93 edition of TIME Magazine

69% believed in the existence of angels  
55% believed that angels are 'higher spiritual beings created by God with special powers to act as God's agents on earth.'

49% believed in the existence of 'fallen angels or demons.'  
46% believed that they have a personal guardian angel.

Survey in 2007 among Evangelicals =  
Answered this question: Do you completely agree that demons & angels are active in the world?  
Only 41% of evangelical Christian completely agreed w/this statement.

George Barna survey on April 10, 2009  
A new nationwide survey of adults 'spiritual beliefs' among Americans who consider them to be Bible-believing Christians:  
59% strongly agreed that Satan is not a living being but is a symbol of evil  
58% evangelical Christians surveyed = majority, do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a living force, either.

These are stats in our community - - by all probably some here @ WRCC:  
Friends if you can't trust the Bible as 'absolute truth' = wasting time!

Before we can go further = I need to stop & address this confusion; this is  
not a subject that you can't afford to be deceived about:

'BASICS of SPIRITUAL MATTERS'

There is a war-waging today for very SOUL = fought in 'heavenly realms'  
(R) Ephesians 6: 10 – 12 or p. 898 in pew Bible

This is not a children's story – mythological tale to keep you in line or an attempt to frighten you  
This is a simple fact - - the existence of evil spirits = DEMONS is basic Bible 101.

[Question] so where did demons come from, WHO created them?

Colossian 1: 16 explains,  
"That through (Jesus) God created everything in the heavenly realms & on earth."

Big question = So if Jesus created everything, did He create evil ~ demons?  
Obvious answer is NO!

Genesis 2: 16 - 17 explains, "But the Lord God warned him (Adam) you may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good & evil, if you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

From the beginning = Garden of Eden, God gave us FREE WILL!

Apparently the angels in heaven possessed this same gift = free will, for God did not even program the angels to offer their adoration & praise; from the very beginning we were ALL given a choice:

Bible says there was a rebellion in heaven long before humans were created, led by God's chief angel, the anointed cherub, the star of the morning:

(R) Revelation 12: 3 – 4 + vv 7 – 9 = [last book]

How many demons exist in our world today?

re(R) 12: 4 = 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of God's angels fell to earth; leaving 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of His undefeatable angels to fight

on our behalf!

Spiritual warfare is very REAL = it's being fought over YOU, eternal soul!

[INSERT] There's always HOPE

Ephesians 3: 20,  
"Now all glory to God who is able through His MIGHTY POWER  
that is @ work within us to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think!"

Back to Jesus' encounter with the demon-possessed man:

(R) Luke 8: 28 – 29 = pay attention to the demons response to Jesus

Big scary demons shrieked & screamed like a group of 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls @ a slumber party  
HOLLYWOOD stereo-types have done us a disservice:  
demons have NO POWER over God & His magnificent Son Jesus!

(R) Luke 8: 30 – 37a

(2) Distressing Realities strike me as I read about these Gerasenes:

They hated having the routine of life disturbed; life went peacefully on till there arrived this disturbing Jesus; & they didn't like their lives being disrupted.

They loved their swine more than they valued the soul of a troubled man; one of life's supreme dangers is to value things more than persons

This is where the story gets real practical for me:

Practical Action-steps

(R) Luke 8: 37b – 39

No mystery why he begged Jesus to stay & travel with Him; it was the 1<sup>st</sup> time he had ever personally ENCOUNTERED genuine love & acceptance!

This is an ENCOUNTER God wants for all of us!

Jesus had different plans for him; Jesus wanted him to 1<sup>st</sup> GO HOME to YOUR FAMILY & testify to God's goodness!

Friends, our primary ministry is our families; we can't let them die without knowing how much God loves them.

According to George Barna ≈ National pollster - 8 out of 10 Americans believe in an afterlife of some sort

Only (39%) of adults believe that Hell is "a state of eternal separation from God's presence."  
3 in 10 adults believe Hell is "an actual place of torment & suffering where people's souls go after death." Research indicates that education & income are negatively correlated w/belief in Heaven & Hell; the more education & income; less likely to believe.

Our family & friends have to know the truth!

Bible gives @ least (2) definitive reasons to be urgent:

1<sup>st</sup> = There's a real place called Hell

(R) Matthew 13: 40 – 43 or p. 745 in pew Bible

Terrifying words from our Lord Jesus; Jesus spoke of Hell more than anyone else in the Bible & for good reason

People probably would not have listened to anybody else who tried to teach about Hell. Eternal damnation – separation from God was something that Jesus emphasized in his preaching.

2<sup>nd</sup> = Don't neglect that Hell was made for Satan & his angels; not you!

Jesus says, "Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil & his angels." [Lk 12: 5]

God loves us & wants us to be w/Him in Heaven;

He also loves your family & expects us to share His great love with them!

PRAYER ALTAR for family & friends:

Uncle Randy

(5) adopted girls from INDIA who are Muslims

PLEASE JOIN ME!