

The Depravity Of Disobedience To God

I wish to recall to our remembrance the disobedience of Israel, in the two and one-half tribes settling on the east side of Jordan. These were Reuben, Gad (who was the leader,) and the half tribe of Manasseh. They saw a good land, which was already captured and ready for occupation. They asked for, and were granted this land as their possession. Thereby, they rejected the promise of God, of a place in the land of promise. In other words: they chose to not cross over Jordan and dwell in the land of promise, which choice will be detrimental to their future lives.

This was also detrimental to those who did go into the land of promise. How? Had all of Israel entered the land of promise; they would have had to conquer all the land. They would not have been able to leave any of the inhabitants therein, which doing so was disobedience to God's commandment to kill all that breathed in the land. Failing to do this, the ones that remained unconquered became a thorn in their sides, and caused them to fall away to idolatry, and the sad state of depravity, just as God told them would happen. Now, let us fast forward to the time of Jesus Christ.

We find in the New Testament in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, about Jesus visiting the land of Gad, where he healed a man possessed of many devils. *Lu 8:26-40; 26 "And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. 33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. 38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. 40 ¶ And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him."*

Do you see the depraved state that the tribe of Gad has come to? They have departed so far from God that they have become hog farmers, which was about as low as you could get in Israeli society. Hogs were unclean animals to the Israelites.

Consider, their first refusal of God's way in choosing to remain on the east side of Jordan. This desire of theirs was rooted in covetousness. When Jesus appears on the scene, and the swine are drowned in the sea, the Gadarenes saw that their way of living was destroyed, and they do not want anything to do with Jesus. Why? They are filled with covetousness, ignorant of the power of Christ.

However, God in his infinite mercy has not completely cast these people away. First, Jesus heals this man, possessed of the legion of devils, by casting them out of him. Now, he is found "**sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.**" What was he clothed with? Naturally they had given him garments to put on, but spiritually, he is now clothed in the righteousness of Christ. How did he get a right mind? When Jesus sent the legion of devils out of him, he was born again, and now he has the mind of Christ. This is the same thing that happens when you are born-again. By the Holy Spirit power, the evil spirits are removed from your soul, which is made alive and is inhabited by the Holy Spirit. You are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and you have a right mind, which can discern Christ and his power.

The healed Gadarene desires to go with Jesus when he is leaving, but Jesus tells him to stay behind, and to tell what great things the Lord has done in his life. Jesus will return to this country again, and they will receive him with gladness, because of the testimony of this one man, who has been made whole by the power of Jesus Christ.

Now, what has all this got to do with us today? If you have been born-again by the Holy Spirit power of Jesus Christ, you have been given the promise of an inheritance in the land of promise, just as Israel had the promise of God. Will you choose to stay where you are because you covet the things of the world? Or will you pass over Jordan into the land of promise, to possess your promised inheritance here in time, the church established by Jesus Christ?

What happened to the tribe of Gad, who was granted the desires of their heart in the flesh? They sank, over time, to the lowest state of depravity that could come unto an Israelite. If you refuse to join the church when you are born-again, aren't you making the same choice that the tribe of Gad did? Surely, you are refusing to be obedient to Christ. You are failing to cross over Jordan and possess the inheritance, which we are promised here on earth.

Great is the mercy of our Saviour towards God's chosen people. As demonstrated in the life of this Gadarene, and those who will be saved because of his testimony, Jesus sought him out and saved him eternally. Jesus made him a preacher of righteousness and made his ministry effective. Great is the mercy of our Saviour to each born-again believer that Jesus seeks out and saves eternally. Each believer, who follows the command of Christ and enters the church, begins to testify of the great things God has done. We are not all called to be public speakers, preachers, but all are called to testify of Jesus by living the life of a Christian, and telling what great things the Lord has done in their life.

Some people will say: we have not stooped to the low level of these Gadarenes. We live a good moral life, even though we are not a member of the organized church. This reasoning is no better than the choice of Gad to remain outside the land of promise. We see the result of their choice, by which they turned wholly to idolatry. When you are born-again by the Holy Spirit power, in the eyes of God, you are just like the Gadarene Jesus healed. Jesus does not bring you to newness of life, to be part of a

fan club professing with lip and tongue, which will lead to you becoming an Israeli pig farmer. Jesus expects you to be an obedient disciple.

Was Jesus ever overcome by the temptation of sin? Did Jesus fall into depravity? The answer is no. Wherefore, Jesus set the standard for complete obedience to God, which produces a life acceptable to God the Father, which will not lead you to become an Israeli pig farmer, and to a state of depravity.

Thankfully, Jesus finds us, while we are here living among the tombs (those dead to Christ and God), and causes us to be born-again. Shouldn't we, therefore, be willing to leave our depravity behind? Shouldn't we be willingly to cross over Jordan and inhabit our possession in the land of promise? If you have been born-again but have not joined the organized church body, please, cross over Jordan and enter the land of promise. There, you will enjoy the abundance of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!