

“And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils (rather, demons) long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 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 (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.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; because many devils (rather, demons) had entered into him. And they besought him that He would not command them to go out into the deep. (Probably the final Hell of punishment, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.)

And there was there an 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. 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. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

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. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show 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.” (Lk. 8:26-39.)

Here the prowess of Christmas Evans (1766-1838) as a Gospel preacher shines forth in his famous sermon, “The Demoniac of Gadara” to wit:

“They would rather go into hogs’ skins than to their own country. And He suffered them to go into the herd of swine. Methinks that one of the men who fed the hogs, kept a better look out than the rest of them, and said, What ails the hogs? Look sharp there, boys – keep them in – make good use of your whips. Why don’t you run? Why, I declare, one of them is gone over the cliff! There goes another! Drive them back. Never was there such running, and whipping, and hallooing; but down go the hogs, before they were aware of it. One of them said, They are all gone! No, sure, not all gone into the sea! Yes, – every last one of them – the black hog and all! They are all drowned! – the devil is in them! What shall we do now? What can we say to the owners? What can we say? said another. We must tell the truth – that is all there is about it. We did our best – all that was in our power. What could any man do more? So they went their way to the city, to tell their masters what had happened. John, where are you going? exclaimed one of the masters. Sir, did you know the Demoniac, that was among the tombs there? Demoniac among the tombs b– Where did you leave the hogs? That madman, sir---- Madman! – Why do you come home without the hogs? That wild and furious man, Sir, that

mistress was so much afraid of— Why, John, I ask you a plain and simple question—why don't you answer me?— Where are the hogs? That man was possessed with the devil, sir— Why, sure enough, you are crazy!— you look wild!— tell me your story, if you can, let it be what it may. Jesus Christ, sir, has cast out the unclean spirits of the Demoniack; they are gone into the swine, and they are all drowned in the sea; for I saw the tail of the last one! The Gadarenes went out to see what was done; and finding that it was even so, they were afraid, and besought Jesus to depart from them. How awful must be the state and condition of those men, who love the things of the world more than Jesus Christ. The man out of whom the unclean spirits were cast besought Jesus that he might be with him. But he told him to return to his own house, and show how great things God had done unto him. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city of Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done unto him. THE ACT OF JESUS, IN CASTING SO MANY DEVILS OUT OF HIM, WAS SUFFICIENT TO PERSUADE HIM THAT JESUS WAS GOD AS WELL AS MAN. I imagine I see Him going through the city, crying, O yes! O yes! O yes! Please to take notice of me, the Demoniack among the tombs. I am the man who was a terror to the citizens of this place— that wild man, who would wear no clothes, and that no man could bind. Here am I, now, in my right mind. Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners, had compassion on me. He remembered me, when I was in my low estate; when there was no eye to pity, and no hand to save. He cast out the devils, and redeemed my soul from destruction. Most wonderful must have been the surprise of the people, to hear such proclamation. The ladies running to the windows; the shoemakers throwing their lasts one way and their awls another, running out to meet and to converse with him, that they might be positive there was no imposition; and finding it to be a fact that could not be contradicted. O, the wonder of all wonders ! Never was there such a thing ! — must, I think, have been the general conversation. And while they were talking, every body having something to say, homeward goes the man. As soon as he came in sight of the house, I imagine I see one of the children running in, and crying, O, MOTHER ! FATHER IS COMING; HE WILL KILL US ALL ! Children, come all into the house, said the mother. Let us fasten the doors. I think there is no sorrow like my sorrow ! said the broken-hearted woman ! Are all the windows fastened, children? Yes, Mother. Mary, my dear, come from the window; don't be standing there. Why, Mother, I can hardly believe it is Father! That man is well-dressed. O yes, my dear children, it is your own father. I knew him, by his walk, the moment I saw him. Another child, stepping to the window, said, Why, Mother, I never saw Father coming home as he does today. He walks on the foot-path, and turns round the corner of the fence. He used to come towards the house, as straight as a line, over fences, ditches, and hedges; and I never saw him walking as slow as he does now. In a few moments, however, he arrives at the door of the house, to the great terror and consternation of all those within. He gently tries the door, and finds no admittance. He pauses a moment, steps towards the window, and says, in a low, firm, and melodious voice: My dear wife, if you will let me in, there is no danger. I will not hurt you. I bring you glad tidings of great joy. The door was reluctantly opened, as it were between joy and fear. Having deliberately seated himself, he said: I am come to show you what great things God has done for me. He loved me with an eternal love. He redeemed me from the curse of the law, and the threatenings of vindictive justice. He saved me from the power and the dominion of sin. He cast the devils out of my heart, and made that heart, which was a den of thieves, the temple of the Holy Spirit. I cannot tell you how much I love the

Savior. Jesus Christ is the foundation of my hope, the object of my faith, and the centre of my affections. I can venture my immortal soul upon Him. He is my best friend. He is altogether lovely—the chief among ten thousand. He is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. There is enough in Him to make a poor sinner rich, and a miserable sinner, happy. My food is His flesh and blood; His righteousness is my wedding garment; and His blood is efficacious to cleanse me from all my sins. Through Him I can obtain eternal life; for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He deserves my highest esteem, and my warmest gratitude. Unto Him who loved me with an eternal love, and washed me with His own blood—unto him be the glory, dominion, and power, for ever and ever ! For He has rescued my soul from Hell; He has plucked me as a brand from the burning; He has taken me out of the miry clay; and out of a horrible pit; He has set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings, and put in my mouth a new song of praise and glory to Him ! Glory to Him for ever ! Glory to God in the highest ! Glory to God, for ever and ever ! Let the whole earth praise Him ! yea, let the people praise Him. ”

Beloved, it is beyond the power of imagination to conceive the joy and gladness of this little family. The joy of seafaring men, delivered from being shipwrecked; the joy of a man delivered from a burning house; the joy of not being found guilty, to a criminal at the bar on trial for his life; the joy of a condemned malefactor receiving a pardon; the joy of freedom to a prisoner of war; is nothing in comparison to the joy of him who is delivered from going down to the pit of eternal destruction; for that is indeed a joy unspeakable and full of glory; to wit:

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."
(1 Pet. 1:7,8)

On the day of his death in 1838 Christmas Evans insisted on preaching one of his colorful sermons about the twelve apostles, in which he likened their mission to a great naval battle, in which Evans said: *"The Captain of our salvation sent out twelve little boats to engage the whole fleet of Hell. For a time, all was enveloped in fire and smoke, and the issue of the day seemed in doubt — gravely in doubt; but when the conflict had ceased...it was ascertained, that the twelve little boats had captured three thousand of Satan's ships of war."* After preaching, Evans sat down, and said *"This is my last sermon."* And it was.

"Yet Evans still preaches from the past. His life of solid dedication to God and to God's church is a monument to what it means to serve God with one's whole heart. The One-eyed Preacher from Wales may not have had a face that was much to look at, but he had a heart that was a work of art. May his legacy live in our hearts:" which is the language of Arminian compromise, which may explain how Evans could at the same time be pastor of Presbyterian, Calvinistic Methodist, and Baptist churches. If Christmas Evans believed that God only hates the sin, and at the same time loves the sinner – and preached it so – then Christmas Evans was a flaming Arminian heretic. Or, it may be that the author of his memoir has slipped his own heresy into his work, without authority from Evans. The following from pages 54 and 55 from Evan's Memoir contains some proof that Christmas Evans was an Arminian; to wit:

"He maintained a constant communion and fellowship with God in secret prayer, which he considered the soul of religion. (Beloved, herein this passage smacks of self-serving Arminian hypocritical hyperbole, if not outright lies.) The head, the arms, the limbs, and the whole body of religious duties may be visible, – not one of the ordinances of God's house neglected, – but if secret prayer is not regarded, the vital spark is gone, and there remains a breathless corpse; but when the soul of religion is alive, all the visible members are lively and active. When he had been spending some time in private meditations and prayer, he would appear in the pulpit like a giant, with clear understanding, warm feelings, and ardent zeal. Being revived and strengthened in the inner man while on the mount of God, he appeared before the people, not with his face shining like Moses, but with a meek and heavenly countenance, lighting up, charming and winning the spectators; and with his voice, like a silver trumpet, electrifying the whole assembly; his tongue, like the pen of a ready writer, instructing his hearers; in his hand, the sword of the Spirit, WITH WHICH HE CUT ASUNDER AND DIVIDED BETWEEN THE SINNER AND HIS SINS. Sometimes, when he was not particularly engaged in meditating on any subject, he was a free and affable companion, and the light that was in him shone before men and warmed the hearts of those about him."

Beloved, I hope you picked up the deadly danger contained in the passage just above, and the principle involved. The principle is found in such passages of Scripture as Rev. 2:1,2; Gal. 1:8,9; 2nd Jn. 1:10,11; and, Deut. 13:1-18; To wit:

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord thy God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you."
(Deut. 13:1-11)

I love you.

Amen.