

The Second Goat

*An open letter to Bible Academia on the pigs, the abyss, and the Scapegoat of
Gadara*

Jørn André Halseth



Dear Bible Academia

This letter answers the video [Why Did the Demons BEG Jesus for the Pigs?](#) by Bible Academia. Every quotation of the speaker below is word-for-word.

Dear friends at Bible Academia,

You read Mark 5 the way it deserves to be read — slowly, with the map open and the Torah in the other hand. The deliberate crossing («He was crossing a line»), the man who did not visit the tombs but *lived* there, Legion as occupation — a spiritual empire answering with the vocabulary of the political one that held the region. You caught *chōra* in Mark 5:10, the territorial plea, and you caught what Luke preserves in 8:31 — that the demons' real terror was *abyssos* ἄβυσσος^{G12}, the deep — and you traced it back to *tehôm* תְּהוֹם^{H8415} in Genesis 1:2, the chaos God ordered at creation. And then the irony you rightly refused to rush past: the spirits who begged to escape the abyss were carried by their own plea-bargain straight down into the sea. You are right that there is a fifth layer most sermons never reach — Yom Kippur happening on a pagan hillside, mercy crossing a border no priest would cross. And you are right about the town:

They chose their livelihood over liberation. They chose their economy over the presence of the one person who had authority over storms, over demons, and over the abyss itself.

— Bible Academia, [Why Did the Demons BEG Jesus for the Pigs?](#)

«There are no loopholes when Jesus is standing on your shore» — that line preaches by itself. I am not writing to correct the reading. I am writing because your scapegoat layer stops one goat short, and because the sea in this story has a second direction you did not name. Both complete the very pattern you found.

The oracle that wrote the scene

But before either completion, here is the find that answers your title question outright — *why the pigs* — and it answers it from seven centuries before the boat landed. Isaiah 65 is God's indictment of pagan grave-religion, and read what it lists:

Isaiah 65:3-4, WEB · a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense on bricks; who sit among the graves, and lodge in the secret places; who eat pig's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

Graves. Secret places. Swine. That is the Gadarene shore item by item — a man dwelling among the tombs in a region whose economy ran on the pig. And the same oracle opens with the verse Paul will later quote for the calling of the Gentiles (Romans 10:20):

Isaiah 65:1, WEB · I am inquired of by those who didn't ask; I am found by those who didn't seek me: I said, See me, see me, to a nation that was not called by my name.

Mark 5 is Isaiah 65 performed live — judgment on the grave-and-swine cult, and God found by a Gentile who never sought Him, in the same afternoon. And the oracle even dictates the *form* the judgment took:

Isaiah 65:6-7, WEB · Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, yes, I will recompense into their bosom, your own iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, says Yahweh, who have burned incense on the mountains, and blasphemed me on the hills; therefore will I first measure their work into their bosom.

I will first measure their work into their bosom. The recompense is measured — it lands precisely on the instrument of the provocation and on nothing else. Not the town burned, not a soul harmed: the herd. The pigs were not collateral damage; they were Isaiah 65's measured recompense, paid out of the very livestock of the offense, while the mercy of verse 1 walked out of the tombs clothed.

And notice what Jesus actually did — and did not do. Mark 5:13 says He *permitted* (epetrepsen ἐπέτρεψεν^{G2010}) — no command, no word of destruction. He granted the demons their own request and let their nature execute the verdict, exactly as He had said two chapters earlier: «If Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he can't stand, but has an end» (Mark 3:26). The unclean spirits destroyed the unclean herd that funded the unclean region they begged to keep as their territory — the kingdom of uncleanness liquidating its own stronghold, with nothing from Jesus but one word of permission. What the herd's two minutes revealed, you said perfectly: that is what had been happening inside the man for years.

Which leaves the town's ledger, and Mark has already priced it. Three chapters later he writes: «For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what will a man give in exchange for his life?» (Mark 8:36-37). Gadara answered that exchange-rate question in live action — one written-off man against the largest fortune in the district — and heaven and the town valued the two sides in opposite directions. The pigs are the price tag God was willing to pin on one Gentile nobody else would cross the water for.

The pattern names a different bearer

Here is the scapegoat text you built the fourth layer on:

Leviticus 16:21-22, WEB · Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat, and shall send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall carry all their iniquities on himself to a solitary land, and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness.

Read what is laid on the goat: *the iniquities of the children of Israel*. Sins. Not spirits. The scapegoat does not carry demons away from a man; it carries guilt away from a people. So when you map the pattern onto Gadara — corruption transferred onto animals, the animals carried to destruction, the man made clean — the shape is genuinely there, and I believe you saw something real. But if the pigs are the scapegoat, the pattern is still a preview, because the burden is wrong and the bearer is wrong. The New Testament tells us who the scapegoat of Leviticus 16 actually is, and it is not a herd of swine:

Second Corinthians 5:21, WEB · For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

First Peter 2:24, WEB · who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed.

Hands laid on the head. The confession pronounced. The bearer sent outside the camp carrying what was never his. Jesus is the second goat — and the first: the one slain, whose blood entered within the veil once for all, and the one sent away bearing sin to a place from which it cannot return (Hebrews 9:24-26). That is why Gadara cost Him nothing visible that day and everything later. The demons paid with pigs; the town counted the price in livestock; but the uncleanness of that man — and of every man — was finally carried not by two thousand swine into the lake but by one Man onto one tree outside one city wall. The stampede was the preview you called it: a visual sermon. Calvary was the ritual performed in earnest. Your fifth layer — atonement in Gentile territory — is truer than the video had time to say: the Scapegoat Himself crossed the water to show a pagan hillside, years in advance, what He was about to become for them.

The sea runs in two directions

Your third act ends with the legion in the water. Scripture has seen a legion drown before — Pharaoh's chariots, the ancient world's other unstoppable military machine, and the Hebrew of that song uses the exact word you traced:

Exodus 15:4-5, WEB · Pharaoh's chariots and his host has he cast into the sea; His chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. The deeps cover them. They went down into the depths like a stone.

The deeps — *tehomot*, the plural of your *tehom*. The Red Sea is the abyss swallowing an occupying army whole, fourteen centuries before Kursi. But that is only half of what that water did — because the same sea that buried the legion is the sea Israel walked through on dry ground. One deep, two directions: the enemy goes down and stays down; the covenant people pass through and come out free on the far shore. And the New Testament seizes precisely that double motion and names it:

Romans 6:3-4, WEB · Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

Baptism is the *tehom* in miniature. The believer goes down into the water where the old man drowns — drowns like the legion, like Pharaoh's host, down like a stone — and

risers on the far side into newness of life. Which means Mark has already painted the baptized man for us, sitting on the shore of the very sea that swallowed his tormentors:

Mark 5:15, WEB · They came to Jesus, and saw him who had been possessed by demons sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, even him who had the legion; and they were afraid.

Sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. His past is at the bottom of the lake. His new garment is on his shoulders. The occupation is drowned and the man is free — the whole grammar of Romans 6 acted out on a Gentile beach. That is the direction your viewers most need: the abyss is not only where Legion went; the passage through the deep is where the freed man's old life goes, every time a believer goes down into the water and comes up on the resurrection side.

Come further in

Two trails from your video are already walked, verse by verse, in books of mine. The two goats of Leviticus 16 — Christ as both the slain goat within the veil and the living goat bearing sin away, with the vocabulary of the ritual found again beneath the letters of Leviticus 16:21 itself — is a chapter of [The Watermark](#). And the water that drowns the enemy and delivers the captive — tehom, the Red Sea, the Jordan, the mikvah, down to the baptism your healed man's posture preaches — is the whole argument of [Through the Waters](#).

You ended with the man sent home to tell his story — «the messenger nobody wanted delivered a message nobody could deny». That commission still stands, and it still needs no seminary: a before, an after, and the One who crossed the storm to reach a man everyone else had chained and left. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you (Mark 5:19).

With respect and in the same hope,

Jørn André Halseth

How this was made

This is the author's own work. It was composed with [junifye](#) and an AI assistant, drawing its Scripture and original-language work (Greek, Hebrew, cross-references) from [Darash](#) (Hebrew *darash*, “to seek, inquire, study”), a tool and reference work for the Bible in its original languages.

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