

# Legion

*Matthew 8:28-34; Mark  
5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39*

*Year C Proper 7  
(Episcopal); Year C Proper  
7 (Revised)*

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## Parts by scene

■ = large part   ▲ = medium sized part   ● = small part

		1	2	3	4	5
■	<b>James</b> - the most officious disciple, often the most frustrated with Jesus' unconventional decisions (such as his allowing women to join the group)	▲		■	▲	●
▲	<b>John</b> - the gentlest and most caring of the disciples	▲		▲	●	▲
▲	<b>Peter</b> - the most headstrong disciple, and the least afraid of a fight, but never the smartest person in the room	●		▲	●	
●	<b>Judas</b> - possibly the deepest thinker and best organizer, the one who usually sees the big picture most clearly, and also the disciple with the best sense of humor	●			●	●
▲	<b>Gatekeeper</b> - a responsible watchman over the safety of the town's residents and visitors	▲			▲	
▲	<b>Legion</b> - the possessed man when the demons are speaking through him. This part should be read by five readers if possible: the reader of the possessed man should speak all the words, a second reader should speak only the <i>italicized words</i> , a third should speak only the <b>bolded words</b> , a fourth should speak only the <u>underlined words</u> , and a fifth should speak only the words in ALL CAPS.		■			
▲	<b>Jesus</b>		▲		●	▲
●	<b>Mary Magdalene</b> - a 'fallen woman' who became the first female disciple, the humblest member of the group due to her shame about her past			▲		
▲	<b>Joanna</b> - a wealthy woman with a perceptive and agile intellect who abandons her life as the co-manager of King Herod's household to follow Jesus			■		
▲	<b>Thomas</b> - the skeptic, who really wants to believe because of his emotional bond with the others, but can't simply ignore his doubts			▲	●	
▲	<b>Shepherd</b> - a poor farmer who nearly has his livelihood destroyed by Jesus				▲	▲
▲	<b>Possessed man</b> - man possessed by demons					▲

## Scene 1

Gatekeeper , James , John , Judas , Peter

*{James is at the gates of a city along with the Gatekeeper, both in a very agitated state. The rest of the disciples come sauntering up the road.}*

- James** *[in frantic relief]* It's them! Thank God they're here! Is everybody all right?
- John** Of course we are. What's wrong?
- James** *[looking around]* The rabbi! Where's the rabbi?
- Peter** He's still out there. He told us to go on ahead.
- James** Dear God! On the burial grounds?
- Judas** Yeah. He said he wanted to pray and meditate. What's the matter with that?
- James** God. Oh, God. *[Accusingly to the others]* I told you we should go straight into the city, but no, you had to dawdle and delay!
- Peter** James, get a grip on yourself and tell us what's going on!
- Gatekeeper** *[Jumping in when he sees James is too overwrought to speak]* Your rabbi is in danger. There's a man who wanders around out there attacking passersby. He's not in right mind. Some think he's demon possessed.
- Judas** Are you serious? Demon possessed?
- Gatekeeper** We tried to chain him up once, right over there in the well house, and he broke the chains with his bare hands. We haven't been able to recapture him since.
- James** We have to find the rabbi before that madman does. We'll go out in pairs. Peter and Thomas, Judas and Matthew, Phillip and Andrew. John, you're with me.
- John** What about Mary and Joanna?
- James** The women? Are you crazy? They have no part in this!

**John**                    *[to the women]* Well, I suppose it'll be safer for you here. Don't worry, we'll be back soon, and I'm sure the rabbi's fine.

## Scene 2

Jesus , Legion

*{On the burial grounds just outside the city. The Possessed man, called Legion in this scene, staggers across the broken landscape of the city's burial grounds.}*

**Legion**    *Legs up, head down, arms akimbo, INTO THE VOID!*  
*Eyes shut, mouth wide, mind swirling, INTO THE VOID!*  
*Ears open, skin raw, tongue stopped, INTO -*  
*[Jesus appears before him.]*  
You!

**Jesus**            *[speaking mildly all through this scene]* Do you know who I am?

**Legion**        *You're Jesus, the son of God **most high**. You are Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. **You are the Light that shone IN THE DARKNESS. YOU ARE THE HOLDER OF THE KEYS.***

**Jesus**            And who are you?

**Legion**        I am called Legion, **for we are MANY!**

**Jesus**            Legion is no name for a man.

**Legion**        *The man is LOST! The man is DROWNED! The man is GONE! The man is OURS!*

**Jesus**            I don't think this is what the man could possibly have wished.

**Legion**        *The man wished for many things. **The man had many hopes.** *The man yearned for a happiness he could not have,* AND CAST AWAY THE JOY THAT WAS AT HAND. AND NOW HE HAS ONLY HIMSELF.*

**Jesus**            If the man had only himself, I could not be here. Do you know why I've come?

*{A pause as Legion realizes what's about to happen.}*

**Legion**        *TO TORTURE US! To destroy us! To doom us to the anguish of inconceivable non-existence!*

**Jesus** No. I have no power to end your being. I've come only to call the man back.

*{Legion looks wildly around and spots a herd of pigs rooting for food on a hillside.}*

**Legion** *Then send us into the swine instead.* SEND US INTO THE SWINE! We will root in the mud. We will tear each others' flesh. We will lift our eyes to the stars AND SQUEAL FROM THE COLDNESS OF THE NIGHT.

**Jesus** So be it.

### Scene 3

James , Joanna , John , Mary , Peter , Thomas

*{Mary and Joanna, Peter and Thomas, and John and James are all out, in pairs, looking for Jesus.}*

**Mary** *[calmly, as if it were a game of hide-and-peek]* Rabbi!

**Joanna** *[more urgently, as if this were a life-or-death situation]* Rabbi! Where are you?

**Mary** *[calmly]* Rabbi!

**Joanna** Are you sure we should be doing this?

**Mary** The men will be angry that we came.

**Joanna** I was thinking more about the danger. Aren't you afraid? What happens if we run into the madman out here, all alone?

**Mary** I hope the others don't find him first.

**Joanna** Why?

**Mary** They might hurt him.

*{Peter and Thomas}*

**Peter** Will you shut up about that?

**Thomas** I'm sorry, but I'm worried, and we have to consider it.

**Peter** It's impossible, so we don't!

**Thomas** Why is it impossible? Where is it written that the rabbi can come to no harm?

**Peter** I don't know, but it must be written somewhere! He's a servant of God!

**Thomas** But they aren't always protected from harm, are they? Weren't some of the prophets killed?

**Peter** What are you saying now, he's dead?

**Thomas** No, no! I'm just saying we need to account for all the possibilities. We're calling out for him as if he could answer if he heard us, but what if he's hurt and can't answer? For example, we walked right past that ditch back there; we should have looked in.

**Peter** The rabbi in a ditch? You're crazy!

*{James and John}*

**James** *[calling out]* Rabbi!

**John** *[calling out]* Rabbi!

**James** *[speaking sternly to John between shouts]* This is absurd. Rabbi! We really have to make some rules. Rabbi! From now on, he should never be left alone. Rabbi! One of us should stay by him at all times!

**John** James, he's not a child.

**James** But sometimes he acts like one! Remember the time we had that wealthy donor all lined up, and he just wanted a private talk with the rabbi first, but he was nowhere to be found? He knew we were bringing the man by that day, and he goes off for a walk by the lake! We probably lost 40 pieces of silver that day.

*{Joanna and Mary}*

**Joanna** I don't want to run into that madman, and you don't want the others to, so that just leaves the rabbi. And I certainly hope he doesn't.

**Mary** I hope he does.

**Joanna** What are you saying?

**Mary**      *[stopping and peering into the distance]* I hope he finds him. I hope they find each other.

**Joanna**    *[after a pause to think it through]* For the madman's sake!

**Mary**      Yes.

**Joanna**    You believe the rabbi can heal the man. Just as he healed you.

**Mary**      Why else are we here?

**Joanna**    I have to turn all my thinking inside out! I thought I'd follow the great teacher I'd found, but the following is itself an endless search. I thought we were going to his rescue, but we're really going to witness a rescue. I'm glad you're here with me, Mary. You're so far ahead of me that I would be lost if I couldn't tag along with you.

**Mary**      My lady! You shouldn't make fun of me like that!

*{Thomas and Peter}*

**Thomas**    Look, maybe he's not hurt. Maybe he's sleeping.

**Peter**      Sleeping?

**Thomas**    Sure. Maybe he decided to take a nap in that ditch, or under some tree. Or in the shade behind one of these tombs.

**Peter**      *[lightening up]* Ha! That would be so like him.

**Thomas**    So we should check everywhere, right?

**Peter**      Okay, we'll go look into your ditch!

*{John and James}*

**John**      Maybe the rabbi knew that man wouldn't be a good supporter. We're still doing all right, aren't we?

**James**     I suppose we are, money-wise, but just look at who we're having to get it from: women! And what's more: women who insist on joining us in return for their support! It's not to be borne.

**John** I don't see what's wrong with that. And the rabbi accepted their service.

**James** That's exactly what I'm talking about! He let's anybody join, no matter who or what they are. He doesn't think about how it might make us look. He's exactly like a child sometimes!

#### Scene 4

Gatekeeper , James , Jesus , John , Judas , Peter , Shepherd , Thomas

*{Jesus is sitting on the ground chatting with the Possessed Man when all the searchers find him at once. James should interrupt Jesus, and then the next three speakers should rattle off their lines in quick succession, one after the other.}*

**Jesus** Consider the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap, yet -

**James** There you are!

**John** Rabbi!

**Thomas** It's the madman!

**Peter** *[to Possessed Man]* You! Get away from him!

*{Jesus and the Possessed Man look up calmly. Everyone realizes that they've just been sitting and chatting peacefully.}*

**Judas** *[to the Gatekeeper, laughing]* So that's your dangerous madman?

**Gatekeeper** *[insistent]* It is! *[uncertainly, half to himself]* Something's happened to him.

**James** He's cured! The rabbi has cast out the demons!

**Gatekeeper** *[looking fearfully at Jesus and speaking to James]* It's uncanny. Who - or what - is he?

**Shepherd** *[entering, angry]* Thief! Destroyer! Sorcerer!

**Peter** Hey! Look out! James, grab him!

*{They tussle briefly and the man is restrained.}*

**John**                    *[calmly to the shepherd.]* Please, we just got here, and we don't know what you're upset about. Tell us.

**Shepherd**                *[angrily]* Oh I'll tell you! That man just destroyed my livelihood! I keep a herd of pigs - they're my sole livelihood - and he destroyed them. Sent them right over a cliff!

**Thomas**                  That's absurd. Why would the rabbi do that? And how could he do it even if he wanted to?

**Peter**                    You probably fell asleep and let your pigs wander away. Don't come running to us to bail you out.

**Shepherd**                I don't know why he did it, and I don't know how he did it, but he did it. He was standing with that loony there, and suddenly, he points to my pigs - I saw it clear as day: he pointed right at my pigs - and they went crazy! They dove into the lake, and now they're all drowned! It was like magic! Black magic!

**Gatekeeper**            Dear God!

**James**                    Look! Our rabbi healed this man. This man who's been a danger to you for so many years, or so you say. And you're upset because it cost you some stupid pigs?

**Gatekeeper**            This is too much! *[to James]* Sir, on behalf of the people of this city, I'm asking you to leave now and never come back.

**James**                    Listen, we were invited here by a very important resident of the town. We're expected. We have speaking engagements, meetings -

**Jesus**                    *[interrupting, to the Gatekeeper]* Of course. We'll leave at once. We're sorry for any trouble we've caused.

## Scene 5

James , Jesus , John , Judas , Man , Shepherd

*{The Gatekeeper exits, but the Shepherd remains.}*

**Shepherd**                Wait! What about my pigs? They were my sole livelihood!

**Jesus**                    I'm sorry. I came not to destroy, but to heal.



**John** Rabbi? We have a fair amount in the treasury right now. We could make good.

*{They look for Judas for confirmation.}*

**Judas** Seriously? For a herd of pigs?

**Jesus** I came to do good, not harm.

**Judas** All right, all right. *[handing the shepherd about half the coins in the money bag]* How's that?

**Shepherd** They were my sole livelihood! I've got an elderly mother to support, not to mention my family. Everything we had was in those pigs!

**Judas** *[grudgingly]* Fine, fine!

*{Judas tosses the shepherd the whole bag.}*

**Shepherd** *[gratefully to Jesus]* Thank you, sir! Thank you! This will make all the difference to us!

*{Shepherd exits.}*

**Judas** *[dryly]* You're welcome.

**James** *[pointedly to John]* And now we have nothing!

**John** I don't know about that. I think we might have a new comrade. *[to the Possessed Man]* What do you think? Would you like to join us?

**Man** I would follow him to the ends of the earth. I owe him my life!

**James** *[despairingly, to himself]* Prostitutes, tax collectors, and now lunatics!

**John** Rabbi, this man wants to join us.

**Man** I know I don't have much to offer, but -

**Jesus** No. My wish is that you serve me here. Stay and tell your story to everyone you know.

**Man** But - but they'll all hear the story on their own. It's a small town, and news spreads fast.

**Jesus** I'd like the news to come from your mouth.

**Man** *[pleading]* I can go tell my friends and family right now. If you could wait just an hour, I can testify for you before everyone who knows me and then be packed and ready to go.

**Jesus** The time is now. We must go, and you must stay.

**Man** *[with growing desperation]* Please. Please! I want to follow you. Don't - don't leave me behind.

**Jesus** This is where you need to be. Where I want you. Are you willing?

**Man** *[nervously]* Yes. Of course. Anything you say. I'll do my best.

**John** Welcome to the group! Even though you'll be here and we'll be...somewhere, you're one of us now.

**Man** Thank you. I just hope...I just hope I'll be able to serve you well.

**John** I'm sure you will. Farewell!

*{The disciples exit, but Jesus remains behind.}*

**Jesus** *[to the Possessed Man]* Fear not. You're cured. You don't need to stay close to me to stay that way. You are yourself now.

**Man** *[enormously relieved]* Thank you! I'll try to remember.

**Jesus** *[to the disciples]* And now, to those who will continue following me: onward!

*{The group gathers up its things and starts walking back to the main road.}*

**John** *[to James]* Well, that was a surprise. I thought sure the rabbi was going to let the man come with us.

**James** It sure was. There might be some hope for him yet!

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