

# The Inscrutable Question: Essence of Angels: Total Population Unrevealed in Scripture Except As Myriad

**Mark 5:8 -** “Come out of this man, you unclean spirit!”

**v 9 -** And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

- 11) There is more than one demon possessing this man. The one speaking was apparently their tribune, the rank in the Roman army that commanded a legion of approximately 6,000 men.
- 12) Whether or not the term is literal or rather figurative for a large group of demons is not known but the number was sufficient to require a herd of swine to contain them.
- 13) While at this passage, let's note a few things of interest to our study. This will require us to go to parallel passages in Matthew and Luke. First the demons ask an interesting question of our Lord in:

**Mark 5:6-** And seeing Jesus from a distance, the (demon-possessed man) ran up and bowed down before him

**v 7 -** and crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”

The last sentence of Mark 5:7 reads this way in:

**Matthew 8:29b -** “Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

1. Note that the demons knew who Jesus Christ was. They bowed down before Him, called Him by name, and addressed Him by His title, Son of the Most High God.
2. They understood His authority over them and His power to order them out of the man's body.
3. This does *not* refer to the false doctrine of exorcism but rather to the Lord's power under senior ranking authority as Lord of the Armies to evict demons from the body of a person so possessed.

NOTE: The expulsion of demons by our Lord is always indicated by the word **ἐκβάλλω / ekballo /** which means, “to cast out.” The word for “exorcism” is **ἐξορκίζω / exorkizo /**. This word never occurs in the New Testament except to describe a pagan ritual in which demon expulsion occurs as part of demon influence associated with religion. On the other hand, our Lord and certain of his disciples use *ekballo* whenever they choose to “cast out” demons.

4. The demons also understood that their destiny in the lake of fire was certain but yet future therefore they pled that they not be “tormented” ahead of time.
5. How could they be tormented ahead of time? The answer is found in:

**Luke 8:31 -** And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss [**ἄβυσσος / abussos /**].

6. As we have learned the Abyss is that compartment of Hades where certain categories of demons are incarcerated during human history.
7. The demons did not want to be imprisoned ahead of their permanent sentence to the lake of fire.

8. The demon tribune and his legion offered an alternate plan to the Lord they hoped would serve as a compromise:

**Matthew 8:31** - The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out [ ἐκβάλλω / *ekballo* /, send us into the herd of swine."

- 14) The Lord's intent was to clear the body of the demoniac, for once done the man would believe in Him. Therefore, the Lord granted permission for the demons to exit the man's body and possess the herd of swine.

**Mark 5:13** - And He gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them. And they were drowned in the sea.

- 15) We don't know if the equivalent of a full legion of demons possessed this man but there were enough to possess a herd of two thousand swine.
- 16) The number of the elect angels is twice as large as that of the demons and their enormous population is implied in:

**Revelation 5:11** - And I (John) looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.

- 17) Here we see the doubling of two nouns:

μυριάς μυριάς / *urias* / plus χιλιάς χιλιάς / *chilias* /:

"Myriads times myriads, thousands times thousands." This refers to an innumerable number of angels who are gathered around the throne worshipping Christ.

- 18) We recently studied the First Demon Assault Army that is to be released from the Abyss at the mid-point of the Tribulation in Revelation 9:1-11. The Second Demon Assault Army is actually a four-army group described in:

**Revelation 9:16** - And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million. I heard the number of them.

- 19) Here we see the concept of myriads mentioned again. The figure 200-million is arrived at this way. The Greek words are:

δισμυριάς / *dismurias* / - Twice 10,000: 20,000, followed by the plural noun:

μυριάς / *urias* / - 10,000s

- 20) The word **μυριάς / *urias* /** can be translated figuratively as "innumerable" or literally as "ten thousand." Here we have a multiplication problem that equals literally 200 million. We are to take this figure literally since John indicates he was quoted the exact number.
- 21) Throughout the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to as the Lord of the Armies. This is a title that indicates His control of the entire angelic creation, both elect and fallen.
- 22) The word "host" is *sebaoth* in the Hebrew and **στρατιά / *stratia* /** in the Greek. Both mean "armies" and Jesus Christ is Lord over all of them whether they are commanded by archangels such as Michael or fallen angels such as Lucifer or Abaddon.
- 23) We know that at the birth of our Lord there was an angelic army assigned to Bethlehem for a pass and review.

**Luke 2:13** - Suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of an angelic army [στρατιά / *stratia* / ] praising God and saying,

**v 14** - "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men with whom He is well pleased."

- 24) We don't know if there was just one army assigned to Bethlehem or whether the singular of στρατιά / *stratia* / refers to the entire number of elect angels. This is the sense of:

**Hebrews 1:6** - When He brings the first-born into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

- 25) So we can only wonder in amazement at the number of angels whom God created in eternity past. We should generally assume the figurative meaning which is assigned to the biblical words that are translated "myriads" which mean "innumerable."

**Hebrews 12:22** - [KJV] You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

- 26) The word "innumerable" is the translation of the Greek noun μυριάς / *urias* /. So if you are ever asked how many angels there are, just respond with a strait face, Myriads, my friend. Myriads!"
- 27) From these various passages we have learned the following about the creation and essence of angels:
1. They were created *ex nihilo* in eternity past.
  2. All angels were created simultaneously.
  3. All angels were created with eternal life. (Psalm 148:5-6; Colossians 1:16)
  4. They are superior to mankind. (2 Peter 2:11)
  5. Their number is innumerable and myriad.
- 28) Finally, the essence of angels must address their physical make up, if any. The Scripture is vague regarding this point but we are able to piece together some idea of the make up of angelic bodies.
- 29) First of all, angels are spirits according to the writer of the 104<sup>th</sup> Psalm and quoted by the writer of Hebrews:

**Psalm 104:4** - God makes the spirits [ **angels** ] His messengers and His ministers flames of fire.

**Hebrews 1:7** - And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels spirits [ πνεῦμα / *pneuma* / and His ministers flames of fire."

**Hebrews 1:14** -Are they [ **the angels** ] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?