

MIRACLES OF JESUS - HIS AUTHORITY

THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN - MARK 1:21-28

A. Jesus taught with authority (21-22)

1. He taught in the synagogue in Capernaum, (21), *And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching.*
 - a. Capernaum was the capital of Galilee, north of Samaria, on the Sea of Galilee's northwest shore, and became Jesus' base of ministry.
 - b. He taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
 - 1) They came into existence during the Babylonian exile.
 - 2) Leaders of a local synagogue would invite visiting teachers to speak to the congregation.
 - 3) The content of Jesus' teaching can be imagined.
 - a) Instruction, Mark 1:14-15, *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.*
 - b) Authority, Matthew 4:23, *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.*
2. His teaching was different (22), *And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.*
 - a. People were *astonished*.
 - 1) The Greek word means *amazed, astounded*.
 - 2) The people were *overwhelmed, struck out of their senses*.
 - b. *Scribes*
 - 1) These were experts in Scripture.
 - 2) They were mentioned together with the high priest and elders as part of the Sanhedrin.
 - 3) They studied the law of God from the outside, the do's and don'ts.
 - 4) They simply quoted the sayings of those who had studied before them.
 - c. Jesus taught with *authority*
 - 1) He taught with the power to do and enable what Scripture commands.
 - 2) He uniquely knew Scripture because He is the living Word.
 - a) John 1:1-2, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*
 - b) Hebrews 1:1-2, *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *Jesus proclaimed revelation directly from God rather than just interpreting the former revelations that God had given to others.*
- 3) His teaching was not only academic but practical.
 - a) Jesus tied truth to conviction in order to lead people to truth and to the One Who is true.
 - b) William Taylor, *He (Jesus) exalted character above reputation...substance above form, and reality above appearance.*

B. Jesus demonstrated the power of light over darkness (23-26)

1. A demon challenged Jesus (23-24)
 - a. A man with an unclean spirit confronted Jesus (23), *And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,*
 - 1) At the teaching of Jesus, there was an outburst from a man possessed by a demon.
 - a) Mark used the terms *unclean spirit* and *demon* interchangeably.
 - 1] Demons are beings created by God who chose to follow Satan in his rebellion against God.
 - 2] Demon-possessed people exhibit various symptoms, madness, great strength, physical infirmities.
 - 3] The demon takes control of the person possessed.
 - 4] There is no note that this man exhibited demon-possession until the demon could take no more of Jesus' teaching.
 - 5] Larry Richards, *What a commentary on the spiritual state of Israel—the demon felt comfortable in the synagogue! The people had gathered to worship God. Yet there was no sense of the reality of God to make the demon uncomfortable—until Jesus joined that company.*

- b) The demon *cried out*.
 - 1] Literally, the demon *shrieked, screamed* through the man possessed.
 - 2] The demon used the man's vocal chords to communicate with Christ.
 - 3] Larry Richards, *This first cry shows how painful it was for the demon to be in Jesus' presence. To demons, who conceal themselves in darkness, it is agonizing to be in the presence of light. And Jesus was and is the Light of the World.*
 - 2) The present reality of demons, C. E. B. Cranfield, *...the greatest achievement of the powers of evil would be to persuade us that they do not exist.*
- b. The demon knew his purposes and those of Jesus were incompatible (24), ***“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”***
- 1) *What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?*
 - a) Was there more than one demon present in the man or was this demon speaking on behalf of all demons?
 - b) The demon was saying, *What do we have in common, darkness and light?* Nothing.
 - c) Charles Ryrie, *His holiness or light is what struck terror into the heart of that missionary of darkness.*
 - 2) *Have you come to destroy us?*
 - a) The demon feared Jesus was going to cast him out of the man.
 - b) The demon knew Jesus has authority to destroy demonic power, Matthew 25:41, *Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’*
 - c) Donald English, *The powers of evil recognize both who Jesus is and that the battle is one for survival.*
 - 3) *I know who you are - the Holy One of God.*
 - a) The demon was overwhelmed by the light of God the Son.
 - b) James 2:19, *You believe God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe - and shudder!*
 - c) The demon knew Jesus' source of authority was based on Who He is.
 - 1] He is God the Son.
 - 2] He is Creator of all things.
 - 3] He is the Savior of the world.
2. Jesus exhibited His control over demonic power (25-26), ***“But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.***
- a. Jesus did not dialogue with the demon.
 - 1) *rebuked*
 - a) The word carries with it a *command with authority*, the demon had to stop speaking.
 - b) Jesus did not reject what the demon said but He rejected the demon.
 - 1] What the demon said was merely a statement of fact.
 - 2] It was not tied to faith, Hebrews 11:6, *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
 - c) Jesus was in control of how He would reveal His identity.
 - 1] The general conviction of the time was that any testimony from certain sources was suspect.
 - 2] Jesus wanted no association with demons, whatsoever.
 - 3] Larry Richards, *Jesus needed no such testimony to establish his deity. His words and his miracles spoke for themselves.*
 - 2) *be silent*
 - a) It had the force of *be muzzled*.
 - b) The authority of Jesus had to be accepted by the demon who did not say another word.
 - b. Jesus imposed His authority over the demon, *come out of him...came out of him*,
 - 1) Jesus did not have to struggle with the demon but gave a command which the demon had to obey. Remember when Jesus told Lazarus to come out of the grave. Death had to let him go because Jesus has all authority.
 - 2) The demon could no longer have control of the man but tried to hurt him as he withdrew from him.
 - a) The demon shrieked, threw the man into a convulsion and left the man.
 - b) Richard Trench, *...Satan tempts, plagues, and buffets none so fiercely as those who are in the act of being delivered from his tyranny forever.*
 - 3) This was Jesus' first confrontation with a demon and it will continue until all have been defeated.

- 4) Note on demonism
 - a) I believe Christians can not be possessed by demons because we are indwelt by the Spirit of God.
 - b) I do believe we can be oppressed by demons and that's why Peter warns us in 1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
 - c) Personal illustration.

C. The congregation responded with amazement if not belief (27-28)

1. Onlookers linked His power over the demon to His authoritative teaching (27), *And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."*
 - a. *they were all amazed*
 - 1) The word means *astonished, frightened*
 - 2) They people had trouble grasping what they just saw.
 - 3) The people were amazed but not necessarily convinced, Donald English, *Jesus constantly filled people with a mixture of wonder, awe and fear at what He said and did...Such attitudes and responses did not, however, automatically produce repentance and faith.*
 - b. The people tried to find an explanation.
 - 1) In verse 22, they were astonished at Jesus' teaching.
 - 2) In verse 27, they were amazed by Jesus' actions.
 - 3) They had just experienced Jesus' authoritative teaching in action.
 - c. Jesus' teaching was a revelation of Who He is and what He would do.
 - 1) The demons obey Him.
 - 2) The grave obeys Him.
 - 3) All creation obeys Him.
 - 4) The greatest question for you and for me is, do I choose to obey Him?
2. News of Jesus spread throughout the region (28), *And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.*
 - a. The people did not fully understand what had happened but it was worth telling others about what they had heard and seen.
 - b. Larry Richards, *Today, looking back from the perspective of the Cross and the Resurrection, we have no doubts about Jesus' identity or his authority. Yet even in his own day this miracle, and others recorded in the Gospels, began to forge a chain of evidence that left those who ultimately rejected him without excuse.*

CONCLUSION

- A. Miracles can be exciting, even frightening but they are designed to demonstrate the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. The culmination of Jesus' authority is His victory over sin.
- C. Have you granted Jesus authority over you life? It is a choice.