

37. Jesus Showed His Power Over Demons

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the fact that God is eager to answer our prayers because of His love for us. We can know that He will answer our prayers in His time and according to His will because we are His children. God is able to answer our prayers because He is much greater than Satan and has all power. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus showed that He has much greater power than Satan by defeating the demon that possessed a person and made it impossible for the person to speak.

One day, Jesus cast a demon out of a person. Luke 11:14-16 says, “And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. But some of them said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.’ Others, testing *Him*, sought from Him a sign from heaven.” Here, we see that one day Jesus met a person that was unable to speak. This person was prevented from speaking by a demon that had taken possession of the person. Jesus immediately cast the demon out of the person. Then, the person started to talk and the crowds around Jesus were amazed as they saw the person speak.

However, there were some who were there that said that Jesus had cast out the demon by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Here, we see that one of the names of Satan is Beelzebub. In the Old Testament, Baal was the main god of the Philistines. We see that many times the people of Israel joined in the false worship of Baal. One day, the king of Israel was injured and wanted to know if he would recover. 2 Kings 1:2 says, “Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, ‘Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.’” By the time of the New Testament, Baal-Zebub was spelled Beelzebub and had become a name for Satan.

In addition to accusing Jesus of casting out demons by the prince of demons, the people who rejected the fact that Jesus is God also tried to test Jesus by asking Him for a sign from heaven. The fact that Jesus had just cast out the demon was evidence of the fact that Jesus is God because He had all power over Satan and his demons. Jesus also knew the thoughts of those who were accusing Him. Luke 11:17-23 says, “But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them out*? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.’” The fact that Jesus knew their thoughts was another sign He is God.

Jesus knew their thoughts so He gave an answer to those who were rejecting Him. Jesus said that

a kingdom that was divided and fighting against itself would soon be destroyed. In the same way, a house that is divided against itself will fall. The word translated “house” can also speak of the household or the family living within the house. That is the way the word is used in Acts 16:15 where we read, “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.” Here, we see that Lydia and her whole household were baptized.

Jesus showed that it made no sense for Satan to cast out demons because Satan would actually be fighting against himself. Jesus had suddenly revealed the thoughts of those who rejected Him. He said that if they were saying He was casting out demons by Satan, then they needed to tell Him by whom their sons were casting out Satan. At the time of Jesus and after Him, there were Jews who were going around who claimed to have the power to cast out demons. Acts 19:13-15 says, “Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’” Here, we see that it was the sons of a Jewish chief priest that claimed to have that power. They did not actually have that power because Acts 19:16 says, “Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” Satan did not give them power to back up their false claims.

In answer to their thoughts, Jesus explained the choice that these people had to make. They had to make the choice whether to recognize the finger of God and the fact that the kingdom of God had come or whether to continue to reject the evidence that Jesus is God. Then, Jesus gave an illustration to make those who rejected Him think. A strong man who is fully armed and is guarding his palace will have peace and know that his goods are protected. However, if a stronger person comes to him and defeats him, the stronger man will take all of the armor of the strong man and also take his possessions. The fact that Jesus had cast out the demon was evidence that He was stronger than Satan because He was able to defeat Satan and his demon.

Then, Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” Jesus here pointed out that each person has to examine his own life and attitudes to see whether he is for Jesus or against Jesus. This is in contrast to the statement that Jesus had made in Luke 9:50 which says, “But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not forbid *him*, for he who is not against us is on our side.’” In this verse, Jesus told the disciples not to judge the other person; the actions of the other person showed he was also serving Jesus. In this verse, Jesus told those who were thinking evil thoughts about Jesus that they needed to examine their own hearts because their evil thoughts showed that they were against Jesus. Such a person cannot gather the harvest that Christ has. When a person has an evil heart, that person is scattering or destroying what is good, instead of doing what is good.

Then, Jesus went on to explain that a person who has an unclean spirit cannot be permanently changed by an evil person who casts out demons. Luke 11:24-26 says, “‘When an unclean spirit

goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, “I will return to my house from which I came.” And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.”” Jesus had just asked those who had evil thoughts in their hearts by whom their sons cast out demons.

Here, Jesus explains that sometimes people with evil hearts can temporarily cast out demons through their own efforts and the person will seem to be free of the demons for a short period of time. This also happens when a medicine man or spiritual healer does a ceremony or ritual to get rid of a demon. The demon may go out of the person temporarily, but that demon will be seeking a new person he can possess. If that demon does not find a new person that he can possess, that demon will go back to the person he had previously possessed. The demon wants to check and see if that person has a greater power than the power which Satan has given to him.

He finds the person that he previously possessed has cleaned up his life so that everything seems to be different. However, Matthew 12:43-44 says, ““When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, “I will return to my house from which I came.” And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.”” There is only one problem. Without the power of the Holy Spirit in that life, because that person has repented and placed his faith in Christ, the spirit of that person is empty. The person has outwardly changed his life, but there has been no change on the inside.

Jesus said that when the unclean spirit sees that the spirit of the person is still empty, the unclean spirit goes and finds seven other evil spirits that are more wicked than he is. The evil spirit then invites those other unclean spirits to join him and together they all move into the spirit of the person that has tried to clean up his life by his own efforts. When all eight evil spirits enter into the person, the condition of that person is even worse than it originally was. Here, we see that Jesus explained to these men that had evil thoughts in their hearts why their sons were able to cast out evil spirits and temporarily cause a person to think that his or her life was greatly improved. The demon would leave temporarily; but if that person did not find true spiritual life through Jesus, that demon would soon return and the last condition of that person would be even worse.

We see that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why people can find temporary help for their lives through medicine men or various programs. However, that help will not be permanent unless that person receives spiritual life through Christ. Only Christ has promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who come to Him for spiritual life. That is why we want to help our children understand why Jesus is the only One that can bring permanent change to the life of such a person. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how Jesus changes lives.