

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

### WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

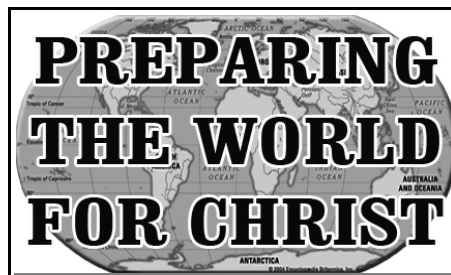
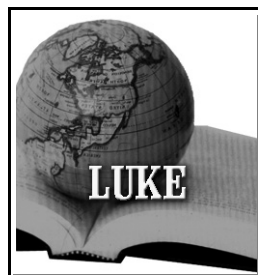
*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

Lesson #15

COMMENTARY ON: 4:31-37

#### THE SYNAGOGUE IN CAPERNAUM

Upon arriving in Capernaum, Jesus *"taught them on the Sabbath days."* He knew that resting on the Sabbath day, and refraining from all servile work did not mean the people were not to go where the Word of God and its exposition could be heard. The Sabbath day belonged to God, not to man. On this visit, when Jesus was in the synagogue, He confronted a man who had an *"unclean spirit."* That spirit immediately recognized who Jesus was, and petitioned Him, *"Let us alone."* Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding him, *"Hold thy peace and come out of him."* The evil spirit did as he was commanded, first throwing the man down, although he could do him no harm. The people in the synagogue saw and knew what happened. They noted that Jesus was a Man of authority and power. When He commanded unclean spirits to come out of a person, they did. Once again, the fame of Jesus *"went out into every place of the country round about."*



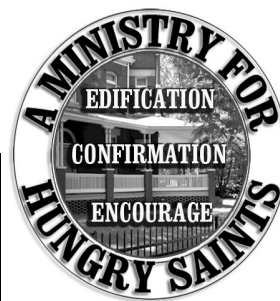
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke, 4/3/2015

### Lesson Number 15



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1959), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# THE SYNAGOGUE IN CAPERNAUM

Luke 4:31 "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.<sup>32</sup> And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power."<sup>33</sup> And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,<sup>34</sup> Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.<sup>35</sup> And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.<sup>36</sup> And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."<sup>37</sup> And the fame of Him went out into every place of the country round about."

..... Luke 4:31-37

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Upon arriving in Capernaum, Jesus "taught them on the Sabbath days." He knew that resting on the Sabbath day, and refraining from all servile work did not mean the people were not to go where the Word of God and its exposition could be heard. The Sabbath day belonged to God, not to man. On this visit, when Jesus was in the

synagogue, He confronted a man who had an "unclean spirit." That spirit immediately recognized who Jesus was, and petitioned Him, "Let us alone." Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding him, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." The evil spirit did as he was commanded, first throwing the man down, although he could do him no harm. The people in the synagogue saw

and knew what happened. They noted that Jesus was a Man of authority and power. When He commanded unclean spirits to come out of a person, they did. Once again, the fame of Jesus "went out into every place of the country round about."

### THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

Jesus is absolutely unique, and

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the Gospel confirms it. Heaven knows it. Satan knows it. The principalities and powers employed by Satan know it. The world of demons know it. Anyone that treats Jesus as though He was common, and could be rejected, ignored, disobeyed, and treated with contempt, has been blinded to what was made obvious in the tenure of Jesus in the world.

- ⇒ His conception was unique (Lk 1:31,35).
- ⇒ His birth was unique (Lk 2:7-18).
- ⇒ His youthful life was unique (Lk 2:42-50).
- ⇒ His adult life was unique (Matt 3:17; John 8:46).
- ⇒ His ministry was unique (Acts 10:38).
- ⇒ His words were unique (Jon 7:46).
- ⇒ His works were unique (John 5:36).
- ⇒ His death was unique (John 10:17-18; 1 Cor 15:3).
- ⇒ His burial was unique (Acts 2:26-27; 1 Pet 4:6).
- ⇒ His resurrection was unique (John 10:17-18; Rev 1:18).

- ⇒ His ascension was unique (Acts 1:9; Eph 4:8).
- ⇒ His reception in heaven was unique (Psa 24:7-10; Dan 7:13-14).
- ⇒ His presence in heaven is unique (Rev 5:6-12).
- ⇒ His heavenly ministry is unique (Heb 7:25; Heb 12:24).
- ⇒ His return will be unique (Lk 9:26; Rev 1:7).
- ⇒ His role at the judgment will be unique (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10).

**No one like Jesus had ever walked among men – someone with power that could not be questioned, who had authority over the powers of darkness.** There had been great men before Christ, whose greatness paled in the brightness of the glory of the Son of God.

- ⇒ **Noah.** As great as Noah was, he did no miracle, did not assault Satan's domain, and needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Abraham.** Although a pioneer of faith, he did no miracle, made no inroads into the kingdom of darkness, and needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Joseph.** Although no sin is recorded against Joseph, his only achievements were in the flesh, and he too needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Moses.** Although faithful in all of God's house, Moses never changed anyone, and he also needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Joshua.** Joshua led an assault upon the inhabitants of Canaan, but not against the devil. He also needed a Savior.

- ⇒ **Samuel.** The first of the prophets to speak of the coming Savior, but he could not change the Israelites. He also needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Samson.** Although delivering Israel from the Philistines, Samson was conquered by the flesh. He also needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **David.** The greatest of the kings, and a man after God's own heart, David still needed to be forgiven. He also was unable to change the people. He too needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **Solomon.** Although he received an unparalleled amount of wisdom, he was unable to translate that wisdom into godly living, and actually led the people into idolatry. He also needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **The Prophets.** Although the Prophets were faithful to their commission, they could not change the people, and were successfully rejected and opposed by the people. They also needed a Savior.
- ⇒ **John the Baptist.** By his own confession, although he was not noted for sin he knew he had to decrease in the blazing glory of the Son of God.

**Now, it is one thing to make these observations. It is quite another to live in strict accord with them, yielding to the Lord Jesus, and serving Him in everything we do.**

At His discretion, Jesus could dismiss captivating evil spirits with his finger – directing them with a simple physical gesture. He could also force them to leave with a word, as will be confirmed in our text. What God has revealed about His only begotten Son is

**Now, it is one thing to make these observations. It is quite another to live in strict accord with them, yielding to the Lord, and serving Him in everything we do.**

enough to thoroughly destroy any imagined reason for not serving Him. In every sense of the word, it is unreasonable to ignore Jesus. Yet, it is happening in unparalleled measures in the world, and even in the church.

## HE CAME TO CAPERNAUM

Luke 4:31 *"And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days."*

**HE CAME DOWN TO CAPERNAUM**  
*"And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee . . ."*

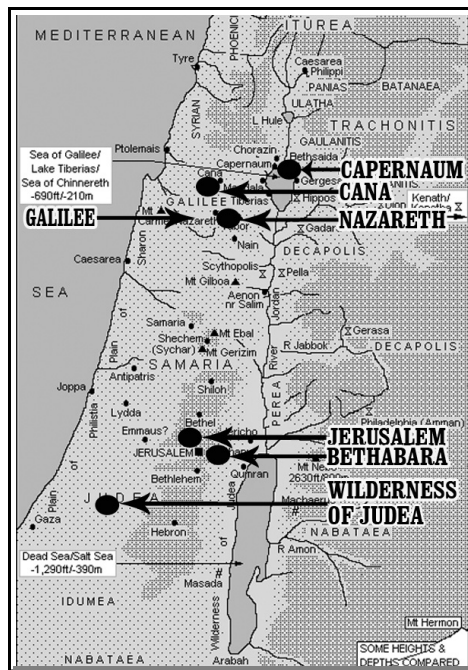
From the baptism of Jesus to this point, events related to Jesus have been associated with the following places.

- ⇒ **BETHABARA** – Where Jesus was baptized (John 1:28-31).
- ⇒ **THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA** – Where Jesus was tempted (Luke 4:1-13).
- ⇒ **CANA** – Where Jesus did His first miracle, turning water into wine (John 2:1-11).
- ⇒ **JESUS TAUGHT IN ALL THE SYNAGOGUES IN GALILEE** (Luke 4:14-15).
- ⇒ **NAZARETH** – Where Jesus preached in His hometown synagogue (Luke 4:16-30).
- ⇒ **CAPERNAUM** – Jesus comes to Capernaum, teaching the people on the Sabbath days (Lk 4:31).

### NOTICE THE FOLLOWING

- ⇒ After being baptized, the Spirit led Jesus *"up . . . into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil"* (Lk 4:1). The wilderness was southwest of Jerusalem.
- ⇒ From Nazareth, Jesus *"went down to Capernaum,"* which was north of Nazareth (Lk 4:31).

From wherever a person was located, they *"went up to Jerusalem"* (John 2:13). When traveling from Jerusalem, one went *"down from*



*Jerusalem"* (Mk 3:22; Lk 10:30).

In our text, this *"up"* and *"down"* perspective was still maintained. Even though Capernaum was northwest of Nazareth, Jesus is said to have *"came down to Capernaum."*

### The Principle

The principle hidden in this literary account is that things must always be seen from the higher perspective. **In this case, direction was determined by the absolute centrality of Jerusalem, where God had placed His name** (1 Kg 11:36).

So it is with the children of God. **Life is to be viewed from the perspective of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.** All things must be viewed and valued in strict accord with how they relate to, or are viewed by, that redemption.

### AND TAUGHT THEM ON THE SABBATH DAYS

*" . . . and taught them on the*

*Sabbath days."*

Other versions read, *"teaching them on the Sabbaths,"* NKJV *"teaching them on the Sabbath,"* NASB *"On the Sabbath began to teach the people,"* NIV *"taught the people each Sabbath,"* CEB *"taught them on a day of worship"* GWN *"taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day"* NLT *"preached there in the synagogue every Saturday,"* LIVING *frequently taught the people on the Sabbath days,"* WEYMOUTH and *"He continued to teach them on the Sabbath."* WILLIAMS

We learn from this that there was a freedom to teach in the synagogues, and that Jesus regularly took advantage of it. The Gospels contain forty-one references to synagogues—ex: Matt 4:23; 13:54; Mk 6:2; Lk 4:44; John 6:59, etc). This was also the manner of Stephen (Acts 6:9), and Paul (Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:1-2; 18:4, etc).

**Jesus was, and remains, a Teacher.** I do not believe He is properly represented in this manner in our time. The Gospels contain at least twenty-five references to Jesus teaching. Nicodemus said to Him, *"Thou art a Teacher sent from God"* (John 3:2). The record of the book of Acts has nearly twenty references to teaching. *"Teachers"* are ranked third in the gifts given to the church (1 Cor 12:28), only being outranked only by *"apostles"* and *"prophets."*

Were Jesus to appear on the scene today, He would find it difficult to be scheduled to speak in the average church, and for certain would not be able to do so according to the tradition and manner of most churches.

**It is essential that we recognize that the Living God raised up and cultured a people who regularly were**

exposed to teaching, which was prominent in their gatherings. When describing how the early disciples spent their time, it is written, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The book of Acts contains nineteen

references to teaching. Paul's eighteen months in Corinth is said to have been spent "*teaching the Word of God among them*" (Acts 18:11). He told the Ephesian elders, "*I have taught you publicly and from house to house*" (Acts 20:20). The book of Acts concludes with these words concerning

Paul: "*Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*" (Acts 28:31). These men followed the example of Jesus. There is no record of Jesus becoming involved in problems as defined by men.

## THEY WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINE

<sup>32</sup> *And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.*"

### ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINE

*"And they were astonished at His doctrine . . ."*

Other versions read, "*astonished*

STRIKE WITH SUDDEN AND USUALLY GREAT WONDER OR SURPRISE." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

Although these people were accustomed to being taught regularly, the teaching of Jesus was different. It was obvious to the hearers that they were being exposed to a unique Teacher, and unparalleled teaching.

*not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak*" (John 12:49). **God Himself was at the heart of Jesus' preaching and teaching.** Fifty-one times Jesus is reported to have said, "*My Father.*" Eighty-three times He said "*the Father.*" He mentioned the word "*heaven*" one hundred and forty-two times. There was a unique thrust in everything He said.

### A DISSIMILAR OBJECTIVE

The Lord Jesus taught with the will of God in mind: "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matt 6:10). His purpose was not to bolster Judaism, confirm the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, or bring prominence to the nation. His objective was to communicate the purpose of God Almighty. Because this was not at all common, the hearers were "*astonished at His doctrine.*"

### What Doctrine Is Being Heard?

Anyone who heard Jesus heard "*doctrine.*" We are living in times when professing Christians rarely think in terms of "*doctrine,*" or "*teaching.*" You might be surprised at the answer of a preacher or teacher if you asked him, "What is your doctrine?" But this was not the case with Jesus. When you heard Him you began thinking about God, heaven, salvation, the end of the world, and the day of judgment and accountability. It was all in His doctrine, and people noticed it.

### HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER

*" . . . for His word was with power."*

**Sectarianism produces robotic preaching and teaching. Homiletics, or "the art of preaching," cannot clone real preachers and teachers—i.e. preachers and teachers that impact the hearts and minds of the hearers.**

at His teaching," <sup>KJV</sup> "amazed at His teaching," <sup>NASB</sup> "astounded at His teaching," <sup>NRSV</sup> "surprised at his teaching," <sup>BBE</sup> "his teaching made a deep impression on them," <sup>NJB</sup> "astonied at his doctrine," <sup>TNT</sup> "greatly impressed by His teaching," <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "utterly amazed at his teaching," <sup>ISV</sup> "completely astounded" <sup>WILLIAMS</sup> "overwhelmed at His teaching," <sup>ABP</sup> "amazed at the way He taught," <sup>GNB</sup> and "surprised and impressed--his teaching was so forthright, so confident, so authoritative, not the quibbling and quoting they were used to." MESSAGE

As used here, the lexical meaning of the word translated "*astonished*" [ek-place'-so], is "TO BE STRUCK WITH ASTONISHMENT, ASTONISHED, AMAZED; ABSOLUTELY," <sup>THAYER</sup> "TO DRIVE OUT OF ONE'S SENSES, TO AMAZE, ASTOUND," <sup>LIDDELL-SCOTT</sup> AND "BE AMAZED, OVERWHELMED." <sup>GINGRICH</sup> The English word "*astonished*" means, "to

### A MARKED CONTRAST

The teaching of Jesus was in sharp contrast to that of the scribes"—i.e. "*not as the scribes*" (Matt 7:29). Jesus did not learn to teach from men, and it was glaringly apparent that this was the case. **The schools of men cannot produce individuals who speak like Jesus.**

Sectarianism produces robotic preaching and teaching. Homiletics, or "*the art of preaching,*" cannot clone real preachers and teachers—i.e. preachers and teachers that impact the hearts and minds of the hearers.

### A DIFFERENT EMPHASIS

The teaching and preaching of Jesus had a different emphasis. At the heart of His words there was God Himself and the purpose of God. That is why He said such things as, "*For I have*

Other versions read, “with authority,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “carried the ring of authority,” <sup>CJB</sup> “possessed authority,” <sup>ESV</sup> “with the language of authority,” <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “His word was authoritative,” <sup>MRD</sup> “with authority and ability and weight and power.” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This refers to the impact of Christ’s words on those who heard them. The people could not simply dismiss His words. They had such power and authority that the people felt an obligation to do what He said. Those who did not want to do what Jesus said would resist His words, refuse to obey them, and maintain their right to do what they wanted. However, all of this only confirmed that His words were

with power, for their reaction was the result of sensing Christ’s authority.

What caused the Word of Jesus to have such moral constraint upon the people? First, it was the fact that it came from the Incarnate Word, who was with God in the beginning, and was God (John 1:1). On the practical level, it was because of the work of the Holy Spirit, who Himself is “*the Spirit of truth*” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). **Taking the truth, the Spirit causes it to probe the heart, discerning its thoughts and intents** (Heb 4:12).

The audience to whom Jesus was speaking had not been experiencing that kind of impact from the teaching of

the scribes and pharisees. The reason was that their teaching was filtered through their tradition, which was totally lacking in such power, or authority.

Every person must evaluate how they receive the truth – whether it is abrasive or comforting, agitating or edifying. Does it cause rebellion or submission, blindness or illumination. This is the reason David cried out, “*Give me understanding*” (Psa 119:34,73,125,144,169). It is why Paul prayed for the understanding of those to whom he wrote (Eph 1:18; Col 1:9). The Word of the Lord is still powerful (Heb 4:12), but that must be comprehended for profit to be realized.

## THERE WAS A MAN IN THE SYNAGOGUE

“<sup>33</sup> ***And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</sup> Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.***”

This is one of the first times Jesus is said to have confronted demons. There are several reports of Jesus casting out demons – both personal instances, and periods when He did so – (Matt 4:24; Matt 8:16,28; 9:32-33; 12:22; ; 15:22; 17:18; Mk 1:34,39; 5:11-20; Mk 7:26-30; Mk 16:9; Lk 4:41; 8:2,27-39; 9:39-42; 11:14; 13:11). Most of these **were** after the time reported here.

Mark’s version of this is in Mark 1:21-28: “*And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou*

*come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, **Hold thy peace, and come out of him.** And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? **what new doctrine is this?** for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him.”*

### THERE WAS A MAN

“*And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil . . .*”

Other versions read, “*the spirit of an unclean demon,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*a demon, an evil spirit,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*an unclean spirit,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*an unclean demonic spirit,*” <sup>CJB</sup> “*a demon, an evil {Greek unclean},*” <sup>NIB</sup> “*possessed by a demon,*” <sup>LIVING</sup> “*an evil spirit inside him,*” <sup>IE</sup> “*the spirit of a foul demon,*” <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “*some evil spirit,*” <sup>PHILLIPS</sup> “*demonically disturbed*” <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and “*the foul spirit of a demon.*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is generally considered to be the first recorded occasion when Jesus confronted someone with an “*unclean devil,*” or demon. I gather that it is also an example of the general ministry He

conducted in the synagogues of the land.

### An Unclean Demon

Elsewhere, such a spirit is called an “*unclean spirit*” (Zech 13:2; Matt 10:1; 12:43; Mk 1:23-27; 3:11,30; 5:2,8,13; 6:7; 7:23; ; 4:36; Lk 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Acts 5:16; 8:7; Rev 16:13).

### DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF DEMONS

“In the Gospels generally, in James 3:19, and in Revelation 16:14, the daemons are spoken of as spiritual beings at enmity with God, and having power to afflict man not only with disease, but, as is marked by the frequent epithet “unclean,” with spiritual pollution also. In Acts 19:12,13, etc., they are exactly defined as “evil spirits.” They “believe” the power of God “and tremble” (James 2:19); they recognize our Lord as the Son of God (Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:41), and acknowledge the power of His name, used in exorcism, in the place of the name of Jehovah, by his appointed messengers (Acts 19:15); and look forward in terror to the judgment to come (Matthew 8:29). The description is precisely that of a nature akin to the angelic, in knowledge and powers, but with the emphatic addition of the **idea of positive and active wickedness.**” <sup>McKNIGHT & STRONG’S</sup>

On one occasion, a man with an “unclean spirit” was described as a man whom no one could bind, who broke chains with which he was bound, ran about naked, shrieking, crying, and cutting himself with stones (Mk 5:2-5; Lk 8:29). **Generally speaking, it appears an unclean spirit made a person unsuitable to dwell among men.** This involved doing personal harm to oneself, losing all sense of modesty, and being what men would call insanely violent in action, and unintelligible in expression. “Unclean spirits” are mentioned ten times in Scripture (Matt 10:1; Mk 1:27; 3:11; 5:13; 6:7; Lk 4:36; 6:18; Acts 5:16; 8:7; Rev 16:13).

UNCLEAN SPIRITS. In the narratives pertaining to the ministry of Jesus, temptation to sin is not the primary role played by demons, but rather the causing of disease, disability, mental illness, and antisocial behavior; they defile and compel their human hosts to suffer both physically and spiritually. WIKIPEDIA

"An unclean spirit is a disruptive spirit, a negative force or power that resists the will and way of God and oppresses people. Unclean spirits hold people captive, hold them down, preventing them from being healthy and whole as God intends." MUSTARD SEED JOURNAL

Jesus assaulted this society of intelligent, but wicked, personalities – and they knew what was happening. Such spirits can cause men to act unintelligently, but this is not their own trait. Paul reminds us that they are the authors of some “Christian” doctrines, called “doctrines of devils,” or “doctrines of demons” (1 Tim 4:1). **One of the dangerous things about overly simplistic religion is that it leaves men vulnerable to this vast host of intelligent enemies.** This, in fact, is what is the ultimate cause of a mass falling away from the faith. As it is written, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be

received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Tim 4:1-3).

**JUSTIN MARTYR** (100-165 A.D.), taught that these were the departed spirits of evil men who returned to earth to find a habitation in which to dwell (‘Apology,’ 1.).

**PLATO, GRECIAN PHILOSOPHER,** said of demons: “EVERY DAEMON IS A MIDDLE BEING BETWEEN GOD AND MORTAL.” HE THUS EXPLAINS WHAT HE MEANS BY A MIDDLE BEING: “GOD IS NOT APPROACHED IMMEDIATELY BY MAN, BUT ALL THE COMMERCE AND INTERCOURSE BETWEEN GODS AND MEN ARE PERFORMED BY THE MEDIATION OF DAEMONS.” HE ENTERS INTO FURTHER PARTICULARS: “DAEMONS ARE REPORTERS AND CARRIERS FROM MEN TO THE GODS, AND AGAIN FROM THE GODS TO MEN, OF THE SUPPLICATIONS AND PRAYERS OF THE ONE, AND OF THE INJUNCTIONS AND REWARDS OF DEVOTION FROM THE OTHER.”

PLATO, SYMPOS. 3, 202, 203, ED. SERRAN.. PLATO, SYMPOS. 3, 202, 203, ED. SERRAN

I do not attach any authority to these definitions, but provide them to confirm that there has been a general acknowledgment among thinking men that there is a world of unseen and intelligent personalities that have involvement with men. The highest order would be the holy angels, and the lowest order would be the devil, wicked principalities and powers controlled by him, his angels, and demons.

I want to stress that these are intelligent spirits, as this text will confirm. That intelligence transcends that of all men outside of Christ. Such spirits can outwit and manipulate men who are unregenerated. Further, if permitted by God, they can impose insanity and infirmity upon men, as Scripture attests. We will also find in this text that they yield to the Christ, knowing who He is.

#### “LET US ALONE”

“...and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? . . .”

Other versions read, “Ha,” ASV/NASB/NIV/RSV “Let us be!” BBE “Hey!” CEB “Yaah!” CJB “Eh!” DARBY “Ah!” ERV “Oh” GENEVA “Oh, no!” GWN “Go away!” NLT “Away,” YLT “Bah!,” IE “Alas,” ABP “Hey,”

CEV “aha,” LITV and “Ho!” MESSAGE

The lexical meaning of the word translated “let us alone” [ea] is, “AN INTERJECTION EXPRESSIVE OF INDIGNATION, OR OF WONDER MIXED WITH FEAR,” THAYER USED AS AN “EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE OR DISPLEASURE AH! HA!” FRIBERG

I do not believe some of the translators did a good job in choosing to represent this occasion. It does not appear to me that this was an expression of anger and resentment, but one of fear and trepidation. In view of their further words, I see no alternative to this view. James said of this vast body of wicked intelligent spirits, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: **the devils also believe, and TREMBLE**” (James 2:19).

Those who say that the only way to truly know what the Scriptures say is to know the original languages of Hebrew and Greek, could not possibly be more wrong. Those who meet this qualification are as divided in their expression of Scriptural meaning as the others are in the doctrines they embrace. Whatever help may be obtained from etymology and linguistics, it is necessary to remember that they are polluted like all other wells of the wisdom of men.

#### ART THOU COME TO DESTROY US?

“ . . . art thou come to destroy us? . . .”

The “legion” of demons who inhabited the Gadarene demoniac cried out, “art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt 8:29). Other versions read, “to torture us,” NIV “to torture us before God’s appointed time?” NLT “give us punishment,” BBE “to afflict us.” YLT

We see from this that these wicked spirits have some intelligent idea concerning when they will be tormented by the God of heaven. It is a time to which they do not look forward. However, their fear and trembling has not changed their nature, which is locked and unchangeable.

These spirits can so harden men



that they ignore Divine threats and commitments, living just as though God had not spoken concerning the ultimate destiny of those who live in ignorance of Himself.

# “I KNOW THEE”

“ . . . I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.”

These words are coming out of the mouth of the man, but they are the words of an unclean spirit. The man

himself did not know who Jesus was. He was being ruled by another spirit. The demon knew who Jesus was, even though the multitudes who heard Him did not. What delight they must have had in so blinding men like the scribes and Pharisees who did not know what was perfectly clear to the demons.

The world of demons and unclean spirits are doubtless among those against whom those living by faith wrestle: *“For we wrestle not against*

*flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Eph 6:12). When the professing church is fundamentally ignorant and unholy, it is like loosing this vast army of demonic spirits – spirits that promote doctrines that lead men to share in the ultimate judgment of demons. This puts a wholly different face on a religion of ignorance, and even more, one of raw emotion.

## JESUS REBUKED THE DEMON

“ 35a *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.*”

### JESUS REBUKED HIM

“*And Jesus rebuked him . . .*” Other versions said, “*Jesus said sternly,*” NIV “*said to him,*” BBE “*speaking harshly,*” CEB “*ordered the spirit,*” GWN “*cut him short*” NLT “*stopped the evil spirit,*” IE “*reproved him,*” WILLIAMS “*reproached him,*” ABP “*cut him short and spoke sharply,*” PHILLIPS and “*shut him up.*” MESSAGE

As used here, the word translated “*rebuked*” [epitimao] means, “TO REBUKE – IN ORDER TO CURB ONE’S FEROCITY OR VIOLENCE (HENCE, MANY FORMERLY GAVE THE WORD THE MEANING TO RESTRAIN; AGAINST,” THAYER “REBUKE, REPROVE; WARN, STRONGLY ADMONISH, THREATEN, FRIBERG “TO EXPRESS STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF SOMEONE - ‘TO REBUKE, TO DENOUNCE,” LOUW-NIDA “TO CENSURE,” LIDDELL-SCOTT AND “REBUKE, CENSURE, WARN.” GINGRICH

This was an expression of authority – recognized authority, which is the only true authority. As the next verse will affirm, the people also recognized the authority of Christ – an authority they had not seen before.

Now, consider what this demon said, “*I know Thee, who Thou art; the Holy One of God.*” Was that not the truth? Yet, Jesus rebuked this spirit for saying who He really was. He continued:

### HOLD THY PEACE

“ . . . saying, Hold thy peace . . .”

Other versions read, “*Be quiet,*” NKJV “*Be silent,*” RSV “*Silence!*” CEB “*Keep quiet,*” GWN “*Shut thy mouth,*” MRD “*Be silenced,*” YLT “*Stop talking,*” IE “*Be halted,*” ABP “*Quiet!*” MESSAGE and “*Be silent (muzzled, gagged).*” AMPLIFIED

Thus, Jesus will not permit this unclean spirit to say something about Him that is true! Here is undeniable evidence, and a clear example of the fact that Jesus does not allow someone who does not obey Him, to say who He is.

absurdity.

### COME OUT OF HIM

“ . . .and come out of him.”

Other versions read, “*go out of him,*” DOUAY “*Come out of the man,*” NLT “*come forth out of him,*” YLT “*Come out!*” LIVING “*Get out of him at once!*” WILLIAMS “*come out,*” CEV and “*Get out of him!*” GOODSPEED

Now we will see whether or not Jesus really has authority. He has ordered the unclean spirit to come out of the man, and to do so immediately.

**Now we will see whether or not Jesus really has authority. He has ordered the unclean spirit to come out of the man, and to do so immediately. The test of Jesus’ authority will be found in the power of His Word.**

This has some far-reaching implications. A form of “Christianity” has developed that allows people who do not obey Jesus, or live for Him, to verbally acknowledge who He is. Does anyone think the Son of God will not sanction Satan or the spirits under him to say who He really is, **yet will allow men who are professed “Christians,” yet vassals of the devil to do so?** Let no one be so simple as to espouse such an

The test of Jesus’ authority will be found in the power of His Word.

### What of Men Who Do Not Obey Jesus?

Some may point to those who do not obey Jesus, and doubtfully ask if that does not negate what I have just said. But this is not at all the case. They have not obeyed the **reported** word of Jesus – like Saul of Tarsus did

not do so. **However**, when Jesus spoke directly to Saul, apprehending him, he did not respond with a second more of resistance (Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15). There is, to be sure, a sense in

which men can “*turn away Him*” who is speaking from heaven (Heb 12:25). In such a case, they are refusing to hear. **But in the day of the Lord, when Jesus is revealed, and they know whom they**

**are facing, they will yield to Him, and do what He says – even if it is “Depart from Me!”** The word of Jesus is truly with great power. It is best to see that now, and willingly submit to His Word!

## THE DEMON THREW HIM DOWN, BUT DID NOT HURT HIM

“<sup>35b</sup> *And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.*”

### THE DEMON THREW HIM DOWN

*“And when the devil had thrown him in the midst . . .”*

Other versions read, “*And when the demon had thrown him down in their*

there is a lot of violence and iniquity now, we have only to think for a moment what the environment would be if it was not being strictly governed by the Lord of glory. For now, the Lord uses Satan – as in the case of Paul’s thorn (2 Cor 12:7-9). **However, Satan never takes advantage of God.**

Now, as the demon is leaving the

He is. **All disobedience, rebellion, hardheartedness, and resistance can be graced back to an ignorance of God.** Similarly, all true submission and obedience can be traced back to the knowledge of God (2 Pet 1:2,3; 2:20).

### HE DID NOT HURT THE MAN

*“ . . . and hurt him not.”*

Other versions read, “*without doing him any harm,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*without injuring him,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*having done him no harm,*” <sup>RSV</sup> “*having done him no damage,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*hurt him nothing at all,*” <sup>GENEVA</sup> and “*without injuring him in any possible way.*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**You may rest assured, that demon meant to do the man harm, even taking his life.** When he threw him down in the middle of them all, he fully intended to harm that man, and to strike fear into all who witnessed the termination of his dominion over that man. **However, because of the presence of the Lord, who was also Lord of that demon, he could not in any way harm the man.**

We have here a picture of many human experiences that are like thorns. While Satan may attempt to use such things to harm the saints, he is not able to do as he desires. **If you will examine your own life, you will find that you have survived many things without being hurt in a significant way.** When Satan is forced to leave a person, he cannot leave him in bad shape, wounded and bleeding, so to speak.

**Now, as the demon is leaving the man, he throws him down to the ground before all of the people – doubtless aiming at causing fear to rise in them.**

*midst,”* <sup>NASB</sup> “*Then the demon threw the man down before them all,”* <sup>NIV</sup> “*when the evil spirit had put him down on the earth in the middle of them,”* <sup>BBE</sup> “*The demonic spirit threw the man down in the middle of the crowd,”* <sup>CJB</sup> “*The demon threw the man down in the middle of the synagogue,”* <sup>GWN</sup> “*the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched,”* <sup>NLT</sup> “*the demon hurled the man into the midst of them.*” <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup>

The wickedness of the devil and those in his vast army cannot be overstated. Just as Christ is unparalleled in holiness, so Satan and his hosts are unequaled in wickedness. **If the powers of darkness were not under Divine restraint, they would have expunged the righteous from the earth.** If we think

man, he throws him down to the ground before all of the people – doubtless aiming at causing fear to rise in them. **Such fear as is caused by Satan will provoke men to withdraw from the Lord.**

### HE CAME OUT OF HIM

*“ . . . he came out of him . . .”*

Having been commanded to come out of the man, the demon could stay no longer. **There is not a single example in Scripture of Satan or any of the spirits that operate under his power, refusing to do what God or Christ demanded.**

The only personalities who resist Christ are those who do not know who

## THEY WERE ALL AMAZED

“<sup>36</sup> *And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What*

*a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean*

*spirits, and they come out.”*

### THEY WERE ALL AMAZED

*"And they were all amazed . . ."*

Other versions read, *"And amazement came upon them all,"* NASB *"All the people were amazed,"* NIV *"wonder came on them all,"* BBE *"They were all shaken"* CEB *"They were all astounded,"* CJB *"there came fear upon all"* DOUAY *"Everyone was stunned,"* GWN *"wonder seized every one,"* MRD *"Astonishment seized them,"* NJB *"The people were shocked,"* IE *"All were astonished and awe-struck."* WEYMOUTH *"there became a stupefaction upon all,"* ABP *"Overwhelmed with amazement,"* ISV and *"That set everyone back on their heels."* MESSAGE

The word translated *"amazed"* [tham'-bos] means, "QUITE ASTONISHED, AMAZED; TERRIFYING, DREADFUL," THAYER "AS AN EMOTION IN WHICH AWE AND FEAR ARE MINGLED ASTONISHMENT, AMAZEMENT," FRIBERG "A STATE OF ASTONISHMENT DUE TO BOTH THE SUDDENNESS AND THE UNUSUALNESS OF THE PHENOMENON AND WITH EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE REACTION," LOUW-NIDA

The idea is that what the people saw was deeper than their minds could probe. No natural man can comprehend something that is transcendent to this world – and that is what the people witnessed. A man among them was dominated by an unseen unclean spirit, and there was nothing they themselves could do about it. Yet, here was a Man who spoke authoritatively to that unclean spirit, which immediately obeyed what he was told to do. It was all more than the mind of man could process, which induced amazement.

### WHAT A WORD IS THIS!

*" . . . and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."*

These were people who had heard authoritative words spoken by the scribes and Pharisees, **but they were not powerful words, even though they were said as though they were.** So far as the record was concerned, no one had solicited the aid of one of the Pharisees, scribes, or Temple authorities to command this *"unclean spirit"* to come out of the man. They knew that was not ordinarily possible. **Jesus later insinuated that some evil spirits had been cast out by some Jews:** *"And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges"* (Luke 11:19).

However, as a whole, the people had grown accustomed to powerless religion –as those of our day. For the most part, nothing really happened

the power given to him. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he knew that some of them were actually not capable of being edified. They had been structuring their lives on a foundation that did not allow for true edification. Therefore he diligently sought to get them back on the foundation that had been laid – Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11). **Once that had been accomplished, he had been given power to edify:** *"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed"* (2 Cor 10:8).

**If, when we come together, edification DOES take place as God has intended, that edification is evidence of Divine power.**

when they came to the synagogue. Now, they were surprised that something requiring Divine power actually took place.

### In Our Day

In our day, there are certain things we expect to take place when we meet together. When required, there is conviction and repentance, rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness. For those who are capable of being built up, there is edification, exhortation, and comfort, as well as an increased capability to be so effected.

There is such a thing as *"power"* that produces *"edification."* It was the preference of Paul to edify according to

I have said all of this in order to make this point. **If, when we come together, edification DOES take place as God has intended, that edification is evidence of Divine power.** Such power has been present just as surely as Christ's power was present when that *"unclean spirit"* was dismissed before the people in the synagogue of Capernaum. May our assemblies be gatherings in which the power of God is made known by the expulsion of inimical influences, and the building up of the body of Christ. If you can see it, such things regularly occur in our assemblies. Praise the Lord!

**This is a most blessed experience, and is to be greatly treasured and cultured.**

## HIS FAME WENT OUT INTO EVERY PLACE

*<sup>37</sup> And the fame of Him went out into every place of the country round about."*

When the Lord Jesus begins to work, that work will be made known. That is the nature of the Kingdom of

God. It is like spreading leaven. As Jesus said, *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took,*

and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt 13:33).

### THE FAME OF HIM

*"And the fame of Him . . ."*

Other versions read, *"the report of Him,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"news about Him,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"a rumor concerning Him,"* <sup>ASV</sup> *"there was much talk about Him,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"The story of what He had done,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> *"the sound concerning Him,"* and *"His reputation."*  
<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

And what was this *"fame,"* *"report,"* and *"talk?"* It was actually a report of what Jesus said and did. In fact, from one perspective, this is what the Gospel is. As Luke wrote to Theophilus, *"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up"* (Acts 1:1-2). Peter said it this way to those gathered at the house of Cornelius: *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him"* (Acts 10:38).

The fame of Jesus is the report of

*"getting out into every locality in the surrounding district,"* <sup>NASB</sup> and *"began to reach every place in the region."* <sup>NRSV</sup>

As confirmed in this text, **God will see to it that when His Son is speaking and working, the news of it will get out.** It may not be appreciated where it is being done, as in Nazareth (Lk 4:28-29;), and Capernaum (Matt 11:23). But, some distant soul will hear about it, just as surely as all Asia heard what was being done through Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).

This kind of holy spreading is seen in the reports of the church in Rome: *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that **your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world**"* (Rom 1:8). And again, *"For **your obedience is come abroad unto all men**"* (Rom 16:19). The same thing took place regarding the Thessalonian church: *"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place **your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing**"* (1 Thess 1:8). There were even good reports that once went out concerning the church in Corinth: *"For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I*

*they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt 5:16). Some measure of this is happening with this fellowship.

Solemnly Jesus warned us of superficial *"light,"* which is nothing more than the works of men dressed in religious garb: *"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"* (Matt 6:22-23). A light that appears to be mingled with darkness is really no light at all. Therefore Jesus said, *"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness"* (Luke 11:35).

### THIS IS LIGHT SHINING

After He commenced His ministry, that ministry is described as light rising up: *"The people which sat in darkness **saw great light;** and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death **light is sprung up**"* (Matt 4:16). And again it is written of Him, *"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, **to give light** to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace"* (Luke 1:78-79). And again, Jesus is affirmed to be *"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel"* (Luke 2:32).

Men **let** their light shine by not quenching (1 Thess 5:19) or grieving (Eph 4:30) the Holy Spirit, who will then work extensively in them.

Their light will shine when their affection is set on things above rather than on the things of the earth (Col 3:1-2). Jesus did not say **MAKE** your light shine, but **LET** it shine! It is designed to shine. It shines by virtue of its absolute contrast with this present evil world. **Where there is no contrast, it will not shine.**

The Spirit will work in a way unlike the ways of the world. That why His works become evident. **When this work is reported, a light, or spiritual illumination emits from the report of the godly.**

**The fame of Jesus is the report of what He has said and done! Jesus is glorified when what He has said and done is reported and believed.**

**what He has said and done!** Jesus is glorified when what He has said and done is reported and believed. The report was not of the synagogue in Capernaum, but of the One there who spoke and worked with power.

### WENT OUT INTO EVERY PLACE

*" . . . went out into every place of the country round about."*

Other versions read, *"into every place in the surrounding region,"* <sup>NKJV</sup>

*boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and **your zeal hath provoked very many.**"* (2 Cor 9:2).

These were reports of what the Lord was doing among the brethren in Rome, Thessalonica, and Corinth. It was the Lord magnifying His Name.

These are examples of those who let their light shine. As Jesus said, *"**Let your light so shine before men, that***

## THE WORLD AND INFLUENCE OF DEMONS

Evil spirits, or demons, cannot be understood in the flesh, or in the arena of the wisdom of man. **The reason is that they exist and work in the unseen realm – a realm with which men can only contend in the Spirit.** For example, you will search in vain for a satisfactory academic definition of an evil spirit, or a demon. What is more, these spirits will **not** yield to the wisdom of men, medication, or some religious procedures concocted by men. Their delegated head is the Devil, and their ultimate Head is Jesus Christ. **Successfully contending with these hosts depends solely on the person's identity with Christ, the Seat of all superior authority.**

### EVIL SPIRITS BEFORE CHRIST

There are Scriptural references to evil spirits prior to Christ.

⇒ **SACRIFICED TO:** *"And they shall no more offer their **sacrifices unto devils** [demons, <sup>NKJV</sup>], after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations." (Lev 17:7).*

*"They **sacrificed unto devils** [demons, <sup>NKJV</sup>], not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." (Deut 32:17)*

This same circumstances was still in existence during the ministry of Paul. He wrote to the Corinthians: *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils"* (1 Cor 10:20). The NIV reads, *"No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons"* (1 Cor 10:20). The way this is stated suggests that more may be involved than material idols. It is my persuasion that this also applies to, what Paul referred to as, *"another Jesus"* (1 Cor 11:4). Jesus referred to *"false Christ's"* that would arise (Matt 24:24), which, viewed

from the perspective of our text, would be demons masked as Christ.

⇒ **AN EVIL SPIRIT SENT:** *"Then God sent an evil spirit [a spirit of ill will, <sup>NKJV</sup>] between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech" (Judg 9:23).* This text confirms that God employs Satan for certain purposes that are within the circumference of His will. It is also seen in the thorn Paul had in his flesh. It was given to him by God, but delivered by Satan (2 Cor 12:7).

⇒ **AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD.** *"But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [distressing spirit, <sup>NKJV</sup>] from the LORD troubled him." (1 Sam 16:14-16)*

*"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit [distressing spirit, <sup>NKJV</sup>] departed from him." (1 Sam 16:23)*

*"And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit [distressing spirit, <sup>NKJV</sup>] from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand." (1 Sam 18:10)*

*"And the evil spirit [distressing spirit, <sup>NKJV</sup>] from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his*

also another example of the Lord using Satan and his hosts to fulfill His own purpose. Such use is not intended to be a blessing, or a sign of Divine approval.

⇒ **A LYING SPIRIT.** *"Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit [a deceiving spirit, <sup>NASB</sup>] in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee." (1 Kgs 22:23)* Here the Lord employed evil spirits to see to it that His will was carried out against the king of Israel.

⇒ **PRIESTS FOR DEMONS.** *"For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils [demons, <sup>NKJV</sup>], and for the calves which he had made." (2 Chron 11:14-15)*

⇒ **SONS AND DAUGHTERS SACRIFICED TO DEMONS.** *"And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils [demons, <sup>NKJV</sup>]." (Psa 106:36-37)* This reprehensible practice is mentioned in the following texts. It accents the diabolical nature of Satan: Deut 12:30-31; 18:10; 2 Kgs 16:3;

⇒ **UNCLEAN SPIRIT CAUSED TO PASS FROM THE LAND.** *"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts,*

**Here was an evil spirit that apparently dominated the land, rather than a single individual. God promised He would cause that spirit to leave the land.**

*javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand." (1 Sam 19:9)* This is

*that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall*

*no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit* [spirit of impurity, <sup>NIV</sup>] *to pass out of the land.*" (Zech 13:2). Here was an evil spirit that apparently dominated the land, rather than a single individual. God promised He would cause that spirit to leave the land.

#### JESUS' ASSAULT ON SATAN'S EMPIRE

When Christ commenced His ministry, He assaulted Satan's empire. In that assault demons surfaced everywhere, and in the most unlikely places. They had been operating without much opposition. Some of the revelations of their influence is identified below.

Jesus struck a blow where Satan appeared invincible. Here are three notable examples:

- ⇒ A child taken with epilepsy, caused to jump in fire and water, as the demon intended to take his young life (Matt 17:14-21; Lk 9:38-43).
- ⇒ A woman bowed together for eighteen years (Lk 13:10-13).
- ⇒ A demoniac who was given super strength, and roamed about like a wild man, crying, and cutting himself with stones (Matt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-15; Lk 8:26-36).

#### THE INFLUENCE OF DEMONS

These are revelations of the

demons are involved and when they are not. I will make no such attempt.

I will say, however, that, like Satan their leader, demons cannot touch the person who is born of God. As it is written, *"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not"* (1 John 5:18). The extent to which Satan and his hosts can trouble a person is directly proportionate to their faith, which is *"the victory that overcometh the world"* (1 John 5:4-5), which is the locus of Satan's present activity.

So far as the believer is concerned, Satan's approach is by means of temptation. Any inroads are created when these temptations, which are attempts to awaken illicit desires and lusts, are successful. They will not be successful if the following takes place.

- ⇒ Satan is resisted (James 4:7; 1 Pet 5:7-8).
- ⇒ The shield of faith is faithfully employed (Eph 6:6:16).
- ⇒ The teaching of the grace of God is heeded (Tit 2:11-13).
- ⇒ The affection is set on things above, and not on things that are on the earth (Col 3:1-2).

*the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph 6:12).

The following examples are taken from the ministry of Jesus, Paul, James, and John. They will serve to instruct us in the staggering scope of Satanic influence.

⇒ **UNCLEANNESS** ["UNCLEAN SPIRIT"]: (Matt 12:43; Mk 1:23,26; Mk 5:2; 7:25; Lk 8:29; 9:42). This is a demon that, in some way, defiles the person so that they become unclean. One man who had an *"unclean spirit"* was the Gadarene demoniac. He dwelt among the tombs, could not be bound, broke the chains that bound him, and always cried and cut himself with stones (Mk 5:3-5). Luke says he *"wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs"* (Lk 8:27). He also stated that this spirit often *"caught"* the man, and drove him into the wilderness. Luke also confirms this spirit was leading a host of other demons, perhaps thousands, for his name was, as he confessed to Jesus, *"Legion"* (Lk 8:27-30). Mark states this was a *"foul spirit,"* referred to as a *"dumb and deaf spirit"* (Mk 9:25).

⇒ **DUMB SPIRIT** (Mk 9:17) Unable to speak. This was Mark's description of the son that was brought to Jesus, also reported in Matthew 17:14-18). The father said to Jesus *"Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit"* (Mark 9:17).

⇒ **BLIND AND DUMB** (Mk 12:22). Unable to see or speak. *"Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw."* (Matt 12:22). Isaiah said the prophets among the people at that time were both *"deaf"* and *"dumb"* (Isa 56:10).

⇒ **SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY** (Lk 13:11). The spirit caused a certain woman to be bowed over, and could not lift herself up. *"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself."* (Luke 13:11). Demons can impose infirmities upon people. In this case, the woman herself was *"a*

**I do not think it can be established that wherever these, and previously mentioned things are found, demons have caused them. Nor, indeed, can I offer an infallible means of distinguishing when demons are involved and when they are not. I will make no such attempt.**

activities of demons. I do not think it can be established that wherever these, and previously mentioned things are found, demons have always caused them. Nor, indeed, can I offer an infallible means of distinguishing when

Also, we cannot be indifferent to the world of fallen spirits. Part of the necessity of *"the whole armor of God"* is the fact that *"we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against*

*daughter of Abraham"* (Lk 13:16).

⇒ **SPIRIT OF DIVINATION** (Acts 16:16-17). Divination is associated with witchcraft, and has to do with obtaining information in an unlawful manner. The king of Babylon employed three methods of divination: by arrows, by images, and by looking at the liver of a sacrificial animal (Ezek 21:21). *"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation"* (Acts 16:16-17).

⇒ **DOCTRINES OF DEMONS** (1 Tim 4:1). There are demons who concoct and perpetrate false doctrines, or teachings. Paul warned that a time was coming when these demons and their doctrines would be prominent within the professed church: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth"* (1 Tim 4:1-3). Faddish doctrines can no doubt be traced to this demonic activity. The truth of the matter is that men are not intelligent enough to create such subversive teachings. Because they live closer to the devil than to Christ, they become pawns in the hands of these demons, who

teach them what to say, and when to say it.

⇒ **TABLE OF DEMONS** (1 Cor 10:21). *"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils"* (1 Cor 10:21). The Lord has a table, and demons have one also. The demon's table contains various teachings and manners that are designed to lead people away from Christ and into hell. These demons succeeded in turning some in Corinth aside from Christ, using men over which they had gained influence.

⇒ **BELIEVE AND TREMBLE BEFORE GOD** (James 2:19). *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* These demons do not believe in the sense of faith, which is *"the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen"* (Heb 11:1). Also, they are not compared with those who have believed on Christ, but with those who say they believe *"that there is one God"* (James 2:19a). Demons

⇒ **WORSHIP OF** (Rev 9:20). Even after great plagues were poured out upon the ungodly, the Revelation spoke of those who refused to repent, saying they worshiped demons. *"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not **worship devils**, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."* (Rev 9:20-21). This answers Satan's desire to be as God.

⇒ **WORK MIRACLES** (Rev 16:14). *"For they are the spirits of devils, **working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty"* (Rev 16:14). These *"miracles"* were things that could not be done naturally. They will be of sufficient influence to induce the kings of the earth to agree to

**Even after great plagues were poured out upon the ungodly, the Revelation spoke of those who refused to repent, saying they worshiped demons.**

believe because they have confronted God, and knew they were doing so. Their believing was not wrought by a report, but by their experience. Because of this, they *"tremble,"* whereas the pretentious believers to whom James wrote were by no means trembling before the Lord.

gather together to fight God – which effort will be totally vain. These are among the forces against which the saints "wrestle" (Eph 6:12). We have not been called to child's play and various forms of fun and games. We are engaged in warfare – and a serious one it is, indeed!

## OBSERVATION: AN UNEXPECTED PLACE WHERE SATAN IS FOUND

The area in which the Lord confronted these active and triumphant demons was not Egypt, or some other heathen country. It was *"the and of Israel"* (1 Sam 13:19), the land God had

promised Abraham and given to His progeny. In our text, the occasion took place in a synagogue, where the Scriptures were read, and the Son of God Himself taught. What circumstance

had led to this condition? How is it that demons were free to work and to harm the people in this holy land and sanctified place? Do we have in this example an indication of his manners?

It was because of the teachers who had usurped the position, and corrupt high priests. The teachers were among the Pharisees, the scribes, and Sadducees. The high priesthood had been defiled by puppet high priests, and the chief priests who were in the Temple had allowed the entrance of corruption. The same condition Jeremiah declared was again found among the people: *"Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto Me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction"* (Jer 32:32-33). The priests, for the most part, were subject to Divine indictment, like the priests of old (Jer 2:8; 5:31; 26:11-12; 32:32).

#### influence of demons.

Men cannot address these conditions in the power of the flesh, or by human intellect. There is no ordered system of reform that can expel the powers of darkness – which needs to be done if effective change is to be realized. Someone needs to rise through whom Jesus, the Superior One, can work. Even then, the situation may not be remedied – just as it was not remedied in Capernaum. Jesus lamented over Capernaum, *"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."* (Matt 11:23-24).

Not only have purported leaders within the churches failed to see what

#### DEMONS ARE AT HOME IN BABYLON THE GREAT

*"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."* (Rev 18:2)

"BECAUSE BABYLON IS THE WORK OF THE DEVIL, HIS COHORTS FEEL AT HOME THERE. ITS DOCTRINES WERE 'THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS' (1 TIM 4:1). IT DRANK FROM 'THE CUP OF DEMONS,' AND ATE FROM THEIR 'TABLE' (1 COR 10:21). NOW WE FIND BABYLON FALLING, AND ONLY THE REALM OF DARKNESS IS ANY LONGER ASSOCIATED WITH HER. THE LANGUAGE IS AGAIN BORROWED FROM THE PROPHETS, AND DENOTES THE CURSE OF THE ALMIGHTY. ISAIAH SPOKE OF THE FALL OF ANCIENT BABYLON, EMPLOYING THIS VERY LANGUAGE. 'BUT WILD BEASTS OF THE DESERT SHALL LIE THERE; AND THEIR HOUSES SHALL BE FULL OF DOLEFUL CREATURES; AND OWLS SHALL DWELL THERE, AND SATYRS SHALL DANCE THERE. AND THE WILD BEASTS OF THE ISLANDS SHALL CRY IN THEIR DESOLATE HOUSES, AND DRAGONS IN THEIR PLEASANT PALACES: AND HER TIME IS NEAR TO COME, AND HER DAYS SHALL NOT BE PROLONGED' (ISA 13:21-22). AGAIN, ISAIAH SPOKE IN THE SAME MANNER OF THE LORD'S CONTROVERSY WITH, AND JUDGMENT AGAINST, THE NATIONS (ISA 34:11-15). JEREMIAH ALSO USED THIS LANGUAGE IN DECLARING THE COMING DEMISE OF ANCIENT BABYLON. 'THEREFORE THE WILD BEASTS OF THE DESERT WITH THE WILD BEASTS OF THE ISLANDS SHALL DWELL THERE, AND THE OWLS SHALL DWELL THEREIN: AND IT SHALL BE NO MORE INHABITED FOR EVER; NEITHER SHALL IT BE DWELT IN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION . . . AND BABYLON SHALL BECOME HEAPS, A DWELLINGPLACE FOR DRAGONS, AN ASTONISHMENT, AND AN HISSING, WITHOUT AN INHABITANT' (JER 50:39 ; 51:37). ZEPHANIAH USED PRECISELY THE SAME LANGUAGE IN FORETELLING THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH. 'AND HE WILL STRETCH OUT HIS HAND AGAINST THE NORTH, DESTROY ASSYRIA, AND MAKE NINEVEH A DESOLATION, AS DRY AS THE WILDERNESS. THE HERDS SHALL LIE DOWN IN HER MIDST, EVERY BEAST OF THE NATION. BOTH THE PELICAN AND THE BITTERN SHALL LODGE ON THE CAPITALS OF HER PILLARS; THEIR VOICE SHALL SING IN THE WINDOWS; DESOLATION SHALL BE AT THE THRESHOLD; FOR HE WILL LAY BARE THE CEDAR WORK. THIS IS THE REJOICING CITY THAT DWELT SECURELY, THAT SAID IN HER HEART, 'I AM IT, AND THERE IS NONE BESIDES ME.' HOW HAS SHE BECOME A DESOLATION, A PLACE FOR BEASTS TO LIE DOWN! EVERYONE WHO PASSES BY HER SHALL HISS AND SHAKE HIS FIST' (ZEPH

**Where there is spiritual retrogression, Satan is present, principalities and powers of darkness are at work, and demons are propagating their doctrines. As a result, a whole structure of religion is formed that is lifeless and powerless.**

#### DECLINE LEADS TO SATAN'S DOMINANCE

Where there is spiritual decline, a place of entrance is made for the devil and his hordes. More is involved than the rise of such sins as being, *"lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."* There is more than a state described as, *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"* (2 Tim 3:1-5). These are not conditions that can be cured by discipline, an aggressive program, a change in the style and content of preaching, etc. These are sins of Satan's dominance and the aggressive

was happening in those churches, they accommodated their ministry to a declining and cooling people – a people whose primary interest was not in *"things above"* (Col 3:1-2). The amount of compromise that has surfaced during the last three or four decades is astounding. Satan has gained increasing ground, as is confirmed by a certain barrenness and disinterest in the professing church that cannot by any means be excused.

**Where there is spiritual retrogression, Satan is present, principalities and powers of darkness are at work, and demons are propagating their doctrines.** As a result, a whole structure of religion is formed that is lifeless and powerless. God forbid that we should grow accustomed to such sterility!



2:13-15). THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF DESOLATION.

BABYLON IS THE REALM OF LESSER SPIRITS – DEMONS, FOUL SPIRITS, AND UNCLEAN AND HATEFUL BIRDS. SATAN IS AT HOME THERE, AND THE POWERS OF DARKNESS AND WORLD OF DEMONIC SPIRITS ARE NOT INTIMIDATED BY "THE GREAT CITY."

HOW DIFFERENT FROM THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH – THE PLACE TO WHICH THOSE IN CHRIST ARE COME. THE HOLY SOCIETY TO WHICH THE LORD BRINGS US IS DESCRIBED WITH GREAT DETAIL. "YOU ARE COME TO THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, TO AN INNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO ARE REGISTERED IN HEAVEN, TO GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL, TO THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT, TO JESUS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, AND TO THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING THAT SPEAKS BETTER THINGS THAN THAT OF ABEL" (HEB 12:22-24). HOW MARVELOUS IS THE PLACE TO

WHICH FAITH BRINGS US!

HOW SIGNIFICANTLY THIS DIFFERS FROM 'A DWELLING PLACE OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT, AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD!' THE DEVIL IS AT HOME IN BABYLON – GOD IS NOT. DEMONS DWELL IN BABYLON, THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT. BABYLON IS A SNARE FOR THE SOUL. IN THE END, THOSE WHO ARE TRAPPED THERE WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN COMPANY WITH EVERY FOUL THING AND SPIRIT. BABYLON IS WHERE CHRIST'S NAME IS ESPOUSED, BUT HIS PERSON IS ABSENT. HOW DANGEROUS IS SUCH A PLACE!" COMMENTARY ON REVELATION, GIVEN O. BLAKELY

It ought to be clear that a place or a body of people among whom Satan and his hordes are at home, and among whom they work, cannot be reformed. That is why God's people are admonished to "Come out of her My people!" (Rev 18:4). The reason is that God does not intend to reform Babylon, or even convert it. He has revealed He is

going to destroy it, causing it to fall (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5-14; 18:2, 10,21).

Paul spoke of the same thing, referring to the spiritual impotence of false religion. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away**" (2 Tim 3:5). The reason for this "form of godliness" that was wholly lacking in spiritual power, was the presence and dominance of the devil and his army. A place was made for them as flawed doctrine was being declared.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/1/15. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The sixteenth lesson will cover verses 38 thru 44 of chapter 4: "PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, THE MULTITUDES, AND DEMONS." Jesus has commenced an aggressive ministry. It was an assault on the kingdom of darkness. You might think that Satan's empire would be made known primarily in some heathen nation, but we will see that it was actually located within the framework of religion – in this case, the religion of the Jews. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

