

Miracle # 4  
**"Jesus Heals A Demon Possessed Man"**  
Mark 1:21-28 (Luke 4:31-37)

According to the Gospels, Jesus had the power to cure not only physical disease but spiritual affliction as well.

The first person with a spiritual affliction that had an encounter with Jesus and is recorded by scripture was in the town of Capernaum in the district of Galilee. Jesus had just come from the Sea of Galilee where he had recruited the first four of his twelve disciples – **Simon Peter, Andrew, James** and **John**. They arrived in Capernaum on the Sabbath, and Jesus decided to go to the local synagogue (as was his usual custom), where he immediately began to teach.

**The Background of the Miracle** (vv. 21-22)

*"Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. (22) And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

These verses tell us that the people were astonished or amazed at his teaching. The Greek word (**ekplesso**) literally means "to strike with panic or shock." The teaching of Jesus packed a powerful punch. The unprepared listeners were so amazed by his teaching that they were unable to grasp the meaning of what was happening.

Jesus taught with Authority

The Old Testament prophets spoke **for** God. They said, **"Thus says the Lord."** The Old Testament prophets were messengers of God speaking only what they had been given.

The Scribes of Jesus day preached **about** God. They stood on the authority of what previous great men had spoken about the meaning of scripture, it was second hand theology. But when Jesus spoke it was just the opposite.

Jesus spoke **as** God. Jesus spoke with authority because he spoke as the author of scripture. That why the people were amazed.

Jesus' preaching was **clear**. Jesus took the deep truth of God's word and made it easy to understand. Have you ever heard some intellectual speak and when he was through you did not know what he had said. Some times we think if it don't understand what someone has said they must be brilliant. But that is not necessarily so. There is a saying here in the South, **"Just because you can't see the bottom of the river doesn't mean its deep – it may just be muddy."**

*"Once Harry Ironside was greeting by a visitor who said he had enjoyed the service, although he did not think Ironside was a great preacher. Ironside replied, 'I know I am not a great preacher. But what is it about my preaching that brought you to that conclusion?' The man answered, 'I understood everything you said.' This was an unwitting confession of one of the reasons for Ironside's greatness."* [R. Kent Hughes Luke: That You May Know the Truth. Vol 1 (Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway Books, 1998) p. 149]

Jesus preaching was not only clear it was **convicting**. An alarming thought is that the demon had been in the synagogue before and had never been disturbed by what he had heard or witnessed.

It was in the context of Jesus' authoritative exposition of the Word of God that a striking miracle occurred.

## **The Elements of the Miracle** (vv. 23-26)

*"Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, (24) saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"*

As Jesus taught suddenly a man yelled out interrupting his teaching. The voice belonged to a man that we are told had an *"unclean spirit"* – in other words a man **possessed** by a demon.

## Demons

There are many in our "modern" age that try to explain away the presence of demon-possessed individuals in the ministry of Jesus as nothing more than misunderstood mental illness. These individuals say that Jesus just used the terms prevalent in his day, to explain these peoples condition.

Demons are created beings (fallen angels) that no longer inhabit the kingdom of light because they followed Satan (originally called **Lucifer**) in a great rebellion (Isa. 14:12-17, Ezek. 28:11-19, Rev. 12:3-4) which occurred in heaven before the creation of Adam and Eve.

Since this is the first mention of demon-possession I want to briefly look at what the Bible says about the origin of Satan and his demons.

## **Isaiah 14:12-17**

*"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! (13) For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." (15) Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. (16) "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, (17) Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?" Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty."*

## **Ezek. 28:11-19**

*"You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. (14) "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. (15) You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. (16) "By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. (17) "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty: You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. (18) "You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. (19) All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever"*

## Revelation 12:3-4

*"And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. (4)His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*

These demons now exist as a part of the kingdom of darkness with Satan as their king.

### Demon Possession

People who are described as demon-possessed in the Gospel display various symptoms, ranging from apparent **madness** to unusual **strength** to a variety of **physical** infirmities.

Is there demon possession in our world today? I believe there is. In America, we don't see too many visible examples because I think Satan is so happy with the direction of our morally depraved culture that he doesn't want to risk being exposed. But there are evidences of modern demon possession on the mission fields around the world where Satan isn't so disguised.

I do not believe a **Christian** can be demon possessed, because a true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a carnal Christian can be demon oppressed, depressed or suppressed!

However, Satan is a defeated foe, and we don't have to fear him. *I heard about an attendant at a zoo who entered the cage of a lion while people stood and watched. When he entered the cage he had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage. One of the onlookers noticed the Zoo employee had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the lion was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The lion growled at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. The observer remarked to the attendant, "You certainly are a brave man, either that or the lion is tame." "No, I ain't brave" he said, "but I know something about that lion that you don't." He chuckled and said, "I know that this lion is old and slow and he ain't got no teeth."*

The Bible does say Satan *"roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."* (I Peter 5:8) About all he's got left is a roar, because when Jesus died on the cross He rendered Satan toothless and clawless. Not only is the devil truth-less; He is toothless. And while the devil is clawless, he isn't clueless; he's shrewd and tricky. But rejoice today that Jesus is *far* superior in power. Rejoice today that *"Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world."* (I John 4:4)

[Dr. David Dykes. The Great Physician Is In. Luke 4:31-44. (□ HYPERLINK "http://www.gabc.org" □[www.gabc.org](http://www.gabc.org)□.)]

As we have noted all demons were once angels who dwelt in the presence of the glory of Christ in the past and therefore it not surprising that demons know who Jesus is as soon as they enter into His presence.

The statement of the demon demonstrated that they are aware that God had decreed punishment for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). What troubled the demon was **when** this punishment was to occur. In essence the question that concerned the demon was, **"Are you here to judge us now!"** The use of the plural "us" could refer to the possessed man and his evil possessor but seems more likely to refer to the plight of **all** demons.

Jesus Issues Two Commands. (25-26)

*"But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" (26) And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him."*

The Greek word translated "*rebuked*" has a technical meaning and refers to a **commanding** word spoken by God or his spokesman.

The first command of Jesus to the demon is "*Be Quiet*" or literally "**be muzzled**" or "be gagged."

The next command "*Come out of him.*"

There is no real contradiction between Luke who says that the evil spirit "did not hurt him" (4:35) and Mark who describes the evil spirit as convulsing him or "*torn him.*" (v.26. KJV) The man obviously suffered no permanent injury although cast to the ground in the demon's departure.

**The Effect of the Miracle** (vv. 27-28)

*"Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." (28) And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee."*

The word "*amazed*" (**thambeo**) emphasizes the fright caused an amazing event. Not only did the teaching of Jesus astound the crowd but so did his actions. These verses describe the congregations' reaction to the miracle and the evidence of Jesus' authority even over unclean spirits.

The scripture is explicit as to the authority of Jesus:

He has the authority to **teach** (Mt. 7:29; Mk 1:22, 27; Lk. 4:32).

He has the authority to **exorcise** (Mt 8:28-34; 9:1-8, Mk 1:23-27; Lk 4:35-36)

He has the authority to **heal** (Mt 8:1-17; 12:15-16; Mk 1:29-34; Lk 4:38-41)

He has the authority to **forgive** (Mt 9:2-8, Mk 2:3-12; Lk 5:18-26)

He has the authority to **judge** (Jn 5:27; 17:2)

He has the authority to **give life** (Jn 10:28; 17:2)

He has the authority to **empower** (Mt 28:18-20).

[R. Kent Hughes. p. 152]