



# A Sabbath in Capernaum: Jesus Casts out Devils and Cures Diseases

## Story Elements

- **Text:** Mark 1:21-34 (also Luke 4:31-41)
- **Setting:** circa AD 27 on the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee)
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, a man possessed of an unclean spirit, and Peter's mother-in-law
- **Plot:** Jesus demonstrates his power over all things by casting out an unclean spirit and healing Peter's mother-in-law.
- **Key word(s):** " \_\_\_\_\_ " – Christ's authority is demonstrated in his power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal the sick.
- **Climax:** *Luke 4:34* 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.* In this climactic moment, we hear an unclean spirit confess truth that Jesus' flesh-and-blood enemies either rejected or were ignorant of.

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## Authority in Preaching

- (vv 21-22) Though Jesus was rejected by the synagogue in Nazareth, he took the opportunity to preach in the synagogue in Capernaum.
  - As Jesus preached the people were *astonished*, because his teaching came like water to the thirsty. The people had been spiritually starved for centuries because their \_\_\_\_\_ were ignorant of the true meaning of Scripture (cf. John 5:39)
  - Christ's preaching was also astonishing because *he taught them as one having authority and not as the \_\_\_\_\_*.

QUESTION → What is meant by mentioning that **Jesus did not teach like the scribes**? Spurgeon explains the difference between the teaching of the scribes and the preaching of the Savior: "...the Scribes spoke hesitatingly, they quoted authority, they begged leave to venture an opinion...they spent their time in tying and untying knots before the people, quibbling about matters which had no practical importance whatever...they enlarged most copiously upon the washing of cups and basins, they were profound upon phylacteries and borders of garments. They were at home upon such rubbish, which would neither save a soul, nor slay a sin, nor suggest a virtue."<sup>1</sup>

## Authority over Spirits

- (vv 23-24) As Jesus preached, a demonized man interrupted the sermon. These demons are called unclean spirits in the Bible because "because he has lost all the purity of his nature, because he acts in direct opposition to the *Holy Spirit of God*, and because with his suggestions he \_\_\_\_\_ the spirits of men"<sup>2</sup>
- This unclean spirit spoke through a man and said three things:
  - Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?* These unclean spirits, or demons, want nothing to do with Jesus. The phrase "what have we to do with thee" can be understood as "we have nothing in \_\_\_\_\_."
  - art thou come to destroy us?* Unclean spirits are terrified of Jesus. They recognized his power and his purpose to destroy the works of the devil. **1 John 3:8** *...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the \_\_\_\_\_*.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *An Astounding Miracle*, <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1765.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary, VOL V, Matthew to John* (Iowa Falls: Riverside Book and Bible House, N.D.) 454.

- (c) *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* The devils know that Jesus is the Messiah and verbally acknowledged it.

QUESTION → When this devil acknowledged Christ's deity, *Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace. Why did Jesus do this?* Edersheim answers, "It was not by such voices that He would have His Messiahship ever proclaimed. Such testimony was wholly unfitting and incongruous; it would have been a strange discord on the witness of the Baptist and the Voice Which had proclaimed Him from heaven."<sup>3</sup> (cf. v 34)

APPLICATION → This unclean spirit knew that Jesus was the Messiah. Scripture says that the devils believe and tremble (James 2:19). Ryle warns us of a devil-like belief that does not save: "Let us take heed that our faith be a faith of the heart as well as the head. Let us see that our knowledge has a sanctifying influence on our affections and our lives. Let us not only know Christ but love Him...It is one thing to say 'Christ is a Saviour.' It is quite another to say 'He is **my** Saviour and my Lord.' The devil can say the first. The true Christian alone can say the second."<sup>4</sup>

4. (vv 25-26) Notice Jesus' complete power over the unclean spirit:
- (a) He commanded it to be silent (literally: *he \_\_\_\_\_ it*).
  - (b) He commanded it to depart out of the man.
  - (c) The demonized man was *torn*, or violently \_\_\_\_\_, as the screaming devil departed.
5. (vv 27-28) The people, already astonished at his powerful preaching, were even more amazed at his authority over unclean spirits. Christ's fame began to spread even faster.

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## Authority over Sickness

6. (vv 29-31) After leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his disciples went to Peter's house where his mother-in-law lay sick with a \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus simply speaks the word and the affliction is removed. Her recovery is so immediate that she begins to serve her house guests right away.

APPLICATION → Peter, who was called to be a disciple and an apostle, was a married man. Paul the apostle wrote that a bishop must be *the husband of one wife* (1 Tim. 3:2). By example and by statute, Scripture allows for a married clergy. To require a minister to be \_\_\_\_\_ is contrary to the Word of God.

7. (vv 32-34) The fame of Christ's power swept through the streets of Capernaum and brought the entire city to the door of Peter's mother-in-law's house, *they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.* And Jesus healed them.
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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "authority" • 1. a) rabbis; b) scribes • 2. pollutes • 3. a) common; b) devil • 4. a) muzzled; c) convulsed • 6. fever → celibate

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, <https://ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/lifetimes/lifetimes.viii.xiv.html>

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel*, Volume One, Mark (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 12-13. Emphasis mine