



*The unfolding of your words gives light.*

## To Seek and to Save

### *An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*

<sup>31</sup>And He came down to Capernaum<sup>a</sup>, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath<sup>b</sup>; <sup>32</sup>and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority<sup>c</sup>. <sup>33</sup>In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon<sup>d</sup>, and he cried out with a loud voice<sup>e</sup>, <sup>34</sup>“Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth<sup>f</sup>?”

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<sup>a</sup> 4:31 **He came down to Capernaum.** Nazareth sits about 1200 feet above sea level and Capernaum over 600 feet below sea level. This trip to Capernaum may have happened right after the murderous rage of the people in the Nazareth synagogue or it may chronicle previous works of Jesus in Capernaum about which the people in Nazareth had heard.

<sup>b</sup> 4:31 **He was teaching them on the Sabbath.** This again shows what the Lord normally did on Saturdays. The NASB properly shows that Jesus “was teaching” (imperfect tense “be” verb). This was not just a one time thing. In fact the King James Version and a few other translations accurately read “Sabbaths” here. Jesus was a regular speaker in the Hebrew assembly at Capernaum.

<sup>c</sup> 4:32 **they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.** This word for amazement was used to describe the reaction of the people when Jesus taught (Matthew 7:28; 13:54; 22:33; Mark 1:22; 6:2; 11:18) or performed a miracle (Mark 7:37; Luke 9:43). “Authority” gives the right to give orders. The same word is used in verse 36 of Jesus giving orders to a demon. Evidently the people were not used to teachers who spoke “with authority.” This kind of teaching gave listeners the impression that Jesus was a ruler. It is one thing to relay a message of someone else, it is quite another to issue your own orders.

<sup>d</sup> 4:33 **In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon.** Here was a demon possessed individual right in the synagogue service. We do not know if this man was part of that assembly, but somehow the presence of Jesus moved the demon to manifest himself.

The word “unclean” is normally used to describe a fallen angel or demon, but Luke quotes Peter in the book of Acts using the same word to describe what is ceremonially unclean (like food, Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8). It is possible that demons took on this label among the Jews because they moved their victims to do things that would render them ceremonially unclean (such as hanging out in graveyards).

<sup>e</sup> 4:33 **he cried out with a loud voice.** Luke uses this word that describes a deep cry (translated “cried out”) of the shrieks of demons (Luke 8:28 and here) and of the scream of the crowd for the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:18). Mark uses this word when describing the demoniac in the synagogue and the fearful cry of the disciples when Jesus came to them on the water (Mark 6:49). This was not the kind of shouting called for in the book of Psalms.

<sup>f</sup> 4:34 **Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth.** Notice that the demon is trying to command Jesus like Satan did. Fallen angels are masters of illusion and deception. Here the demon wanted to cast out the Son of God. Another irony is that the people of Nazareth attempted to do the same thing.

Notice also that he is speaking in first person plural. Jesus was addressed a legion of demons inhabiting a man (Luke 8:30), but that is likely not what is happening here. Here the demon is associating the presence of Jesus with the judgment of his entire class of being. The “business” Jesus had with them was their destruction, although the time had not arrived. John tells us that the Lord Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Later Jesus told His disciples that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

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Have You come to destroy us<sup>a</sup>? I know who You are—the Holy One of God<sup>b</sup>!”<sup>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him<sup>c</sup>!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of *the people*, he came out of him without doing him any harm<sup>d</sup>.<sup>36</sup> And amazement came upon them all<sup>e</sup>, and they *began* talking with one another saying, “What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out<sup>f</sup>.”<sup>37</sup> And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district<sup>g, h</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 4:34 **Have You come to destroy us.** This is a legitimate question to ask, since this “spokes-spirit” was an original creation of Jesus. The spirit classed himself with the other demonic forces, knowing that the ultimate judgment on demons will come with a word from Messiah Jesus. The demon expressed a fear of the very presence of Jesus. He had a respect for Jesus’ authority and for biblical prophecy that is a lesson for the sons of Adam.

<sup>b</sup> 4:34 **I know who You are—the Holy One of God.** These intelligent beings recognize their Creator. You see a similar statement from a demon in Acts 19:15 when some self-seeking Jewish lads saw a chance to look good by imitating an apostolic exorcism. They commanded a demon to come out “by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Before abusing and traumatizing these opportunists, the demon said, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

<sup>c</sup> 4:35 **Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!”** There are two commands here. Jesus ordered the silence of the demon like He ordered the sea to “be muzzled” in Mark 4:39. Demons have no business speaking in a place devoted to the teaching of God’s word. The second command to the demon was to come out of the man. This language gives us insight into what demon possession is. More than just impersonal influence (“demon liquor”) or external manipulation, demon possession happens when an “unclean spirit” becomes embodied in another creature.

<sup>d</sup> 4:35 **when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm.** The demon had enough influence to control the man’s movements and voice, but was no match for the authority of Jesus. Remember that Satan himself has to have our Father’s permission to touch us (Job 1:11-12; 2:4-6). The demon wanted to harm the man but was prevented. Here you see one more piece of the devil’s work undone.

<sup>e</sup> 4:36 **amazement came upon them all.** Each time this word for “amazement” is used in the New Testament, it records the response of people to a work of God. Luke alone uses this word three times. In Luke 5:9 the word expresses the astonishment of Peter and the other disciples at Jesus’ ability to tell them where to find fish. In Acts 3:10 Luke uses the word to describe the awe of the people at seeing a local paralytic jumping around praising God.

<sup>f</sup> 4:36 **What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.** The people actually said, “What a word is this!” Keep in mind that the Lord went toe-to-toe with Satan himself not long before this event. The demons Jesus expelled are merely a lower rank of the same class of beings to which Satan belongs.

<sup>g</sup> 4:37 **the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.** The word “report” can be translated “noise” or “sound.” It is actually the source of our word “echo.” The experience of Jesus here was similar to that of the apostle Paul. People, from good or bad motives, were repeating His words and His deeds.

<sup>h</sup> 4:31-37 If you know someone who loves controlling people and circumstances you know someone who is constantly frustrated and who is making others the same. This form of idolatry was the trouble everywhere Jesus went during His earthly ministry. Religious leaders wanted control. Community leaders wanted control. Demons wanted control. There is even one instance (Mark 3:20-21) when Jesus’ own family sought to take Him into custody.

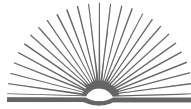
People repeatedly saw the authority of Jesus and were amazed, angry or both. You are bound to find trouble if you are threatened by the sovereignty of God. Just before He ascended after conquering death He announced, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” How should you respond to a person with this much power?

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1. Invest more time studying what this Authority says than studying what man says. Jesus repeatedly taught the Scriptures and pointed to their authority. We live in an age when beauty, eloquence and academic credentials mean more than truth. Consequently we are prone to discount the authority of God's word for short-term solutions that miss the heart of the matter.
  2. Invest more awe in the mighty works of this Authority rather than in the power of demons. Keep in mind that behind every one of our idols is a demon, so you may be surprised at where you find them. People in our day actually become enamored with scary things like demons and experiment with occultic games and literature. Maybe they hope to see a show. The people who were constantly amazed at what Jesus did were the people who did not leave Him when He refused to give them a show or when they were confused.
  3. Invest more words in praise of this Authority than in complaint about your life. Go ahead and talk money or sports or weather, but open your eyes and see that you were created for a bigger purpose. Like Peter said (1 Peter 2:9):

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

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