

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The theme of this series of lessons is found in John 20:30-31:
³⁰Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.
- B. In this lesson, we will consider the miracles in which Jesus cast demons from the persons they possessed.

II. CASTING OUT DEMONS

- A. Early in His ministry, Jesus cast out an unclean spirit in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:33-37).
 - 1. While teaching in the synagogue on a Sabbath, Jesus encountered a man with an unclean spirit.
 - 2. Through this man, the spirit said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!”
 - a. The evil spirit recognized Jesus in a way that men did not.
 - b. It also feared His power, for Jesus could easily destroy this spirit and all others like it.
 - 3. Jesus rebuked the spirit and commanded it to come out of the man, which it did immediately.
 - 4. The people were amazed, and they began to recognize what the spirit already knew, which is that Jesus has great authority.
- B. Jesus crossed a stormy sea to cast demons from two men into a herd of swine (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-37).
 - 1. As Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gadarenes, He rebuked and calmed the stormy sea (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 5:35-41; Luke 8:22-25), which showed His great power over nature.
 - 2. The condition of these two men was severe. (Matthew describes two men, but Mark and Luke only mention one.)
 - a. They were possessed of demons or unclean spirits.
 - b. They lived in tombs rather than houses.
 - c. They were unclothed.
 - d. They were so violent that they could not be restrained with shackles and chains. No one could pass by them.
 - e. They abused themselves, crying out and gashing themselves with stones.
 - 3. Speaking through the men, the demons recognized Jesus, saying, “What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29).
 - a. Notice that the demons instantly knew Jesus, His power, and their appointed destiny. Consider James 2:19 – “The demons also believe, and shudder.”
 - b. The time of the demons’ torment is not revealed to us. It appears that their ability to possess men ended after biblical times, for such possessions are unknown today.
 - 4. The demons, who collectively were named “Legion,” asked for permission to enter a herd of swine, which Jesus granted.
 - a. When He cast them into the swine, they rushed down a bank and drowned in the lake.
 - b. When the people of the city heard of this, they were afraid and begged Jesus to depart from them.
 - 5. The demon-possessed men were made well. Mark and Luke say that one of them wanted to go with Jesus (Mark 5:18; Luke 8:38), but Jesus sent him to tell his story to the people of the city.
- C. Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb (Matt. 12:22-30).
 - 1. The man was completely healed and freed from the demon so that he saw and spoke.
 - 2. The Pharisees should have praised God for this great miracle, but instead they were accused Jesus of being an agent of Satan. They said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons” (v. 24).
 - 3. Jesus refuted the Pharisees.
 - a. He disproved the Pharisees by logic. Satan cannot cast out himself, for then he would be divided against himself.
 - b. He disproved them by their own practices. They condemned themselves by their own assertions, for some of their own sons claimed to cast out demons. If such events were only possible by the power of Beelzebul, then they were equally guilty.
 - 4. Most importantly, Jesus disproved them by the truth.

- a. He cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the only explanation for these miracles, for only the Spirit had strength to “bind the strong man,” that is, to subdue the demons and overpower them.
 - b. This proof also led to a conclusion, which was that the kingdom of God had come upon them. Sadly for the Pharisees, they did not recognize the kingdom. In fact, they forfeited the kingdom by blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31-37).
- D. Jesus healed a Gentile woman’s daughter in Tyre (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30).
1. This woman was a Canaanite (Matt. 15:22) or more specifically a Syrophenician (Mark 7:26).
 2. She begged Jesus to cast a demon from her little daughter, but Jesus resisted.
 - a. The Lord’s disciples insisted that she should be sent away.
 - b. Jesus said to her, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel...It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (Matt. 15:24, 26).
 3. The woman replied, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table” (Matt. 15:27).
 4. Because of the woman’s faithful response, Jesus granted her request, and the girl was healed. When the woman returned to her home, she found her daughter well.
 5. Notice two points concerning the Lord’s mission while on earth in His ministry.
 - a. He was sent to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This had always been the plan of God, for salvation was to begin with the Jews.
 - b. However, people of faith who believed in Jesus received an even higher priority. Regardless of genealogy, the Lord rewarded faith even while on earth.
- E. Jesus cast out an unclean spirit from a boy when His disciples could not do so because of the littleness of their faith (Matt. 17:14-21; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:37-42).
1. This spirit had exceedingly violent effects on the boy from his childhood (Mark 9:17-18, 20-22).
 2. The boy’s father brought him to Jesus for healing, for the Lord’s disciples had failed.
 3. The issue of faith comes to the forefront quickly in this story (Mark 9:22-24).
 - a. The father said to Jesus, “But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”
 - b. The Lord replied, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.”
 - c. Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”
 4. Jesus simply rebuked the unclean spirit, and it came out of the boy.
 5. When the disciples asked Jesus why they could not cast out the spirit, Jesus said, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you” (Matt. 17:20).
 - a. To make a point, the Lord employed hyperbole (an intentional exaggeration) in the contrast between faith the size of a mustard seed and the action of moving mountains.
 - b. By this contrast, the Lord showed His disciples that their failure was a matter of their faith and not the difficulty of the task. They should have succeeded (Matt. 10:1; 17:21).
- F. Jesus healed a woman who was bent over due to a spirit (Luke 13:10-17).
1. As Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath, He encountered this sick woman. For eighteen years, she had been bent double because of a spirit.
 2. Jesus spoke to her and laid His hands on her, and immediately she stood upright and began glorifying God.
 3. Rather than praising God, the synagogue official was angry because Jesus had healed on a Sabbath day. This response was common among the opponents of the Lord (Matt. 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-11; 14:1-6).
 4. Jesus exposed His opponents’ hypocrisy, for any of them would lead their oxen or donkeys to water on a Sabbath day, but they would deny healing to this woman. His answer humiliated them.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. These demonstrations of the Lord’s power over demons and unclean spirits were signs of His divine power over the spiritual realm.
 1. The people observed, “He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him” (Mark 1:27).
 2. The demons themselves knew that He would torment and destroy them (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24).
- B. These miracles represent only a fraction of the evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. His authority over heaven and earth is complete, and those who believe in will have eternal life in His name.