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Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

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Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

Abstract

"The miracles are one of the ways that Jesus' knowledge, authority, and power start to be revealed as he begins his ministry. And by the end of his ministry Jesus is offering these same ministry tools to his various followers."

Posting about Jesus' power from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/jesus-drives-out-an-impure-spirit/>

Keywords

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Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

 [inallthings.org/jesus-drives-out-an-impure-spirit/](https://allthings.org/jesus-drives-out-an-impure-spirit/)

Steve Holtrop

*Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had **authority**.*

*In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, “Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? **I know** who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

“Be quiet!” Jesus said sternly. “Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

*All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What words these are! With **authority** and **power**, he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!” Luke 4:31-36 (NIV)*

The miracles are one of the ways that Jesus’ knowledge, authority, and power start to be revealed as he begins his ministry. And by the end of his ministry Jesus is offering these same ministry tools to his various followers. I’d like to briefly explore these three tools mentioned in this miracle.

Knowledge. The demon that gets cast out in this miracle knows who Jesus is and is afraid of him. But the people don’t yet have this knowledge, and in fact, Jesus tells the demon to keep this knowledge quiet. Jesus grew rapidly in his own knowledge as we see in the 12-year-old Jesus debating with the teachers in Luke 2: “Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.” Much later, at his trial, the guards mock Jesus’ knowledge, blindfolding him and demanding, “Prophecy! Who hit you?” (Luke 20). But at the crucifixion, Jesus uses his superior knowledge to save: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23).

Authority. We read that people spoke well of Jesus and were amazed at his teachings as he traveled around and spoke in the synagogues. But Jesus cautioned his disciples that “No prophet is accepted in his hometown,” and sure enough, the people there tried to throw him off a cliff for his display of prophetic authority (4: 24-29). Later, the chief priests query, “Who gave you this authority?” They knew but didn’t want to admit it was from God, so instead they focused on attempted got-cha questions about paying taxes and polygamy in heaven (Luke 20: 1-8). Jesus helps us understand God-given authority vs. earthly authority with warnings about the teachers of the law prancing around, demanding respect, and making showy prayers, all while abusing the powerless (Luke 20: 46-47).

Power. In this miracle, the demon could have thrown down the possessed man and hurt him, but he didn’t. He was dealing with one more powerful than he. John the Baptist also acknowledged Jesus’ superior power (Luke 3:15): “His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn.” Interestingly, much of what we read about the chief priests, Pilate, and Herod focuses on a giant power struggle. In Luke 23, their power struggle turns into each one claiming *powerlessness* before the people, so each leader defers and the mob wins. In that same chapter, the soldiers again mock Jesus: “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

Tools Today. The man in this miracle is cleansed of the evil spirit through Jesus’ knowledge, authority, and power, which of course are from God. Although the people at this point don’t get this and are amazed at these qualities in Jesus, these key ministry tools are being steadily revealed throughout the Gospels. And by the end of Jesus’ ministry, his followers are invited to be participants in God’s knowledge, authority, and power: “Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them... ‘You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high’” (Luke 24: 45-49). How these tools are used may look different from era to era, but as prophets, priests, and kings, we assuredly have these same ministry tools at our disposal today.