



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Gen. 1; Mark 1:21-28; 13:31; Matt. 4:12-17; 7:28-29; 8:16, 26, 29; 9:26; 10:1; 24:35; 28:18; Luke 4:1-14, 23, 39, 41; 8:24-25; 9:43; 21:33; John 1:1-18; 10:18; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9-15; James 2:19; Heb. 11:3

Study Summary

In this passage we are presented with the power and authority of Jesus in His teaching and miracles. Through both His words and works Jesus shows that He carries an authority unmatched by His predecessors or contemporaries, an authority that echos the Creator God. At the outright, Luke emphasizes the spiritual battle waged in Jesus' ministry by highlighting His first miracle as an exorcism of a man possessed by a demon. The conflict begun in the desert temptations continues as Jesus liberates His oppressed people from the bondage of the evil one by leveraging the authority and power of His word.

Historical & Theological Background

Theological: The NT spends little time on "spiritual powers apart from their soteriological implications." Evil spiritual forces appear often through the Gospel accounts as Jesus liberates the people of Israel from their oppressive influence and His disciples are given the power to do the same (Matt. 10:1). Paul makes clear that these "spiritual powers are not to be feared, even though they retain some power (Rom. 8:37-39) until they are destroyed at the end (1 Cor. 15:24-25)" for the first stage of their defeat has taken place at the cross (Col, 2:13-15), which the exorcisms of Jesus' ministry foreshadow. "The message of both Testaments is that God is sovereign over His creation, including those spiritual powers which are now His enemies. Although their power is to be respected, they are not to be feared." Their defeat comes "in two stages," the final defeat when Jesus returns to set all things right and the first in the ministry of Jesus, culminating in His death and resurrection. This initial victory is "played out in the ministry of His followers (Luke 10:17-18), and in the very existence of the church (Eph. 3:10)." The term "spiritual warfare" is only found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where we are reminded that behind the evil institutions and forces of this world there is a spiritual darkness that must be dealt with. As believers we are called to stand on the victory of Christ (Eph. 6:13). Our weapons of war are meditating on and applying the gospel and prayer (Eph. 6:18).

DISCUSSION PRIMER

This passage brings to light the real spiritual darkness that lays behind the evil and brokenness of this world. In preparation for your discussion read through Ephesians 6:10-20 and consider how you might appropriate the means given to us to defend and fight against the attacks of the evil one.

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 4:31-37

Big Idea: Jesus Leverages the Authority of His Word to Liberate His People.
Fallen Condition Focus: Spiritual Bondage and Oppression

- Why were the people astonished at Jesus' teaching (v. 32)? (See Matt. 7:28-29)
- Where is the man found who is possessed by the demonic spirit (v. 33)?
- What does the demon say to Jesus (v. 34)? Why does he say these things?
- How does Jesus respond to the demon (v. 35)? Where else does Jesus rebuke brokenness and evil and what do these events say about His power and authority? (See Luke 4:39 and 8:24-25)
- What happens in response to Jesus' rebuke (v.35)? What is the response of the people?
- This passage begins and ends with the people's amazement (v. 32 & 36). How are Jesus' authoritative words and works connected?
- Luke uses *λόγος* meaning "word" in verses 32 and 36 (translated as "message" in the CSB). How does the authority of Jesus' word reflect the power of God's word in creation?

Gospel Connection: Read John 1:14. As the incarnate Word of God how does Jesus use His authority and power to bring about our freedom from the powers of evil? (See Col. 2:13-15)

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How is the power of God's words different from our words? As those made in God's image what kind of power do our words carry? (See Pro. 18:20; 20:15, 25:18)
- Do you ever think about the possibility of evil spiritual forces at work in the world? Why or why not? What dangers could one face by overemphasizing the work of demons or ignoring them altogether?
- Have you ever witnessed spiritual bondage or oppression? What bondage or oppression have you experienced in your own life?
- As believers why do we have no need to fear evil spiritual forces? (See Rom. 8:37-39)
- What does the freedom of God look like in your life? In the life of the church?
- How have you witnessed the power of God in your life? In the ministry of the church?
- As followers of Jesus what is our role in spiritual warfare? (See Eph.

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read **Luke 4:31-37** and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

- a command to obey? • a beauty to behold? • a mission to fulfill?
- a promise to claim? • a truth to believe? • an example to follow?
- a sin to repent of? • a service to render? • a person to tell?