

030: A Man Like No Other

(based on Sermon #25 in the Life of Christ Series)

Biography Online has published a list of one hundred people who changed the world.

- Number one on the list is Jesus Christ.
- How did Jesus become so famous?
- Certainly, His death, burial and resurrection made Him famous, especially to those who have believed on Him for eternal life.
- But in His day, He became famous because of the astounding miracles that He performed.
- Matt. 4:23-25
- 23 Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.
- 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.
- 25 Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.
- Matt. 8:16-17 They brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.”

The fame of Jesus becomes widespread throughout the region because of His miracle-working power.

- The nation is abuzz, wondering if Messiah has truly come.
- Jesus is kind and loving to heal people of all kinds of maladies and diseases, including demon possession, and He heals all who are brought to Him, no doubt multitudes of people who are sick and infirm.
- Not only does this speak volumes to His power and authority over the natural world, it also testifies to His qualification to be the Messiah.
- Furthermore, Christ’s miracles demonstrate that in His Messianic kingdom the curse will largely be lifted from Earth.
- The millennial world will be a time of healing, as peace and righteousness will prevail globally with Christ as the benevolent King.

Notice Matthew’s description of Jesus amidst all his miracle-working:

- “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses” (Matt. 8:17).
- That is a quote from Isaiah 53:4: “Surely He has borne our griefs (literally, sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (literally, pains).”
- What a man! While on Earth He cared about people and their problems.
- Now, in the heavens, at the right hand of the Father, He continues to care.
- A well-known hymn says:
- There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No, not one!
No, not one!
- None else could heal all our soul’s diseases, No, not one!
No, not one!

- Refrain: Jesus knows all about our struggles, He will guide till the day is done;
- There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No, not one! No, not one!

With Capernaum as His base, Christ's ministry now moves into high gear.

- According to Matt. 4:23, the three prominent features of His ministry are 1) teaching, 2) preaching, and 3) healing.
- He heals people, not only out of a heart of love, but also as signs to the Jews to confirm His authority as Messiah and Son of God and to signal that the kingdom is coming.
- Miracles were performed, not for the benefit of the Gentiles, but for the Jews.
- The apostle Paul said, "Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:22).
- Matt. 4:24 They brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.
- One would think that after seeing all these signs, the Jews would surely have believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Although v. 25 indicates that great multitudes follow Him, they are not all committed disciples.

- In fact, many of these followers fade away when the going gets tough.
- But for now, they are attracted by the incredible miracles.
- Christ's ministry extends throughout all of Galilee (v. 23).
- Josephus reports that Galilee covered an area of about 2,800 sq. mi. — roughly 70 by 40 miles — and had a

population of 3,000,000 people who lived in 204 cities and villages.

- The fact that Jesus is known throughout Galilee (v. 25) and that many follow Him from that region is quite a statement.
- Many also follow from Decapolis — the ten-cities-region east of the Jordan River that is mostly in the modern-day country of Jordan.
- Many also follow from the city of Jerusalem and the southern region of Judea.
- Of course, John the Baptist had started in that region, broadcasting the name of Jesus as the Lamb of God.
- Multitudes had submitted to John's baptism of repentance.

Then Jesus comes along and preaches more in that region and performs miracles, particularly while at the Passover in Jerusalem.

- Many also follow Jesus from beyond the Jordan (probably Perea, otherwise known as Transjordan or Gilead), as well as the Golan region to the northeast.
- His fame also goes throughout Syria, the region north and west of Galilee.
- In the tenth century BC Solomon had given twenty cities within the borders of the northern part of the Promised Land to King Hiram of Syria, who had helped to build the temple (1 Kings 9:12-13), providing cedar and cypress lumber and much gold, along with skilled laborers.
- That is this region of Syria referred to in v. 24.
- Though the message of Jesus is primarily directed at the Jews and the nation of Israel, undoubtedly many Gentiles hear of His fame and also follow.

- This is especially likely, considering half the population of Galilee in the first century was Gentile, and in areas such as Syria and Transjordan may have been more so.

Gentile inclusion in the kingdom is prophetic:

- Zech. 2:10-12
- 10 “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD.
- 11 “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.
- 12 And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

Isa. 2:2-4

- 2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.
- 3 Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 4 He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Notice the types of miracles Jesus performs (v. 24) —

- He heals those afflicted with various diseases and torments, as well as those who are demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics.
- Why are these miracles so important? The Old Testament prophets provide the answer:
- Isa. 35:4-6
- Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Several prophecies of the Old Testament predict that Messiah’s kingdom will be characterized by miraculous healings.

- The Jewish people of Christ’s day know this, as they long for the Messianic kingdom, eager to be freed from Roman rule.
- When Jesus comes on the scene, performing all these miracles, they surely must wonder: Is He the one?
- Is Jesus the Messiah promised in the Scriptures?
- Because the people of His home town Nazareth had rejected Him as Messiah and Son of God, Jesus performs miracles in Capernaum and elsewhere in Galilee.
- Luke 4:31-32 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

Notice that Jesus goes *down* to Capernaum (from Nazareth).

- As mentioned in a previous study, Capernaum is on the Sea of Galilee, which is 700 ft. *below* sea level.
- Nazareth is located 1200 ft. *above* sea level.
- So going from Nazareth to Capernaum, Jesus travels downhill nearly 2000 ft.
- Incidentally, whenever going to Jerusalem, one travels *up*, whereas when going to the Sea of Galilee, one travels *down* — a good geographical fact to remember.
- Jesus begins ministering by teaching in the synagogue, and once again, as in Nazareth, they are astonished at His teaching.
- He is empowered by the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, captivating, for His message is authoritative.
- Luke records three specific deeds Jesus does in Capernaum representing His entire ministry.
- First, exorcising a demon

Luke 4:33-37

- 33-34 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”
- 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.
- 36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”
- 37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Demons are supernatural beings of the Satanic realm, but seem to be different in nature than fallen angels.

- Angels have bodies, but demons do not.
- In fact, demons typically seek bodies to possess and control, whether human or animal. That is unlike angels.
- How, then, did demons originate?
- Were they created by God, like the angels?
- No, it is more likely that demons are the dispossessed spirits of the *nephilim*.
- For those who may be unaware, *nephilim* are the gigantic, monstrous offspring resulting from the cohabitation of fallen angels and human women before the flood (and also after the flood, regionally, in Canaan land).
- World mythologies refer to them as demigods.

They were extremely wicked and murderous, so much so, that the entire world was filled with violence, prompting God to destroy the world with a flood during Noah’s day.

- According to Gen. 7:21-23 every living creature on Earth died, except for Noah and his family, who were safe in the ark.
- Presumably, the *nephilim* also died in the flood, for they were physical creatures.
- But because they were part supernatural (sired by angels), it seems their spirits survived and thereafter roamed the earth, looking for bodies to possess.
- This position is upheld in the second-temple-period literature respected by the Jews.
- Many modern scholars also take this position, including Dr. Michael Heiser, who says:
- “In ancient Jewish texts like the Dead Sea Scrolls, demons are the disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim giants who perished at the time of the great flood.”

Thus, the flesh-and-blood bodies of the *nephilim* perished, but their spirits lived on as demons.

- The same violence and havoc they wreaked before the flood in physical bodies, they have attempted to repeat throughout history as spirits — even to the present time — by possessing people (and sometimes animals) and driving them to do incredibly evil things.
- From my study of the Scriptures, I do not believe demons can possess people merely of their own will.
- Rather, a person must demonstrate interest in (as a very minimum), and perhaps invite, demonic possession. In homes where there is great evil and an atmosphere of demonism, it seems that children can be possessed even if they haven't invited it, mainly because their parents have so dabbled in the occult that their home is overrun with demonic activity.

Incidentally, it is my understanding that post-Pentecost children of God cannot be possessed by demons, because they are already possessed (indwelt) by the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit of Jesus Christ will not inhabit that which demons also inhabit.
- The presence of Jesus always drives away the evil one.
- However, Christians can be oppressed and even controlled by demons, when they are not walking in the Spirit and choose to dabble in wickedness and, particularly, the occult.
- Demon possession is never good; it is always evil, because demons are supernatural beings that are super-inclined toward evil and violence.
- Once they inhabit a human body, the subject becomes super-human. The demon then uses that body as it sees

fit, often carrying out certain actions and behaviors that are extremely dangerous and harmful to the body.

- No doubt a great deal of drug abuse is demonically-driven, and probably also alcohol consumption.
- These are means by which the demon further controls the person and destroys its host.
- Murder is often a consequence of demonic possession, sometimes self-murder (i.e., suicide), including genocides throughout world history.
- Much violence is also demonically-driven, for that characterized the world before the flood (Gen. 6:11).

Imagine going to church one Sunday and hearing someone yell out vile remarks, perhaps with an altered voice, emitting deep, guttural sounds.

- Those are typical signs of demonic possession.
- That very thing happens in Luke 4, when Jesus is in the synagogue. A man cries out with a loud voice:
- Luke 4:34 Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!
- This is completely obnoxious and is certainly not of God.
- However, the demon rightly addresses Jesus as “the Holy One of God.”
- The demon world has respect for the power and authority of Jesus, the Son of God.
- Prior to Pentecost, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, Old Testament believers presumably could have been possessed by a demon, particularly if they became receptive to demonic activity.

The demon possessing this man interrupts the synagogue service and teaching.

- “What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?”

- It wants to know why Jesus is interfering with its activity in the synagogue.
- This suggests the demon may have made the synagogue its stronghold and had been working to keep people blinded to truth
- I have often wondered if Satan sometimes plants either demonically-possessed or demonically-influenced people in churches — particularly in carnal churches — in an attempt to disrupt and derail the work of God in the church of Jesus Christ.
- I believe that influence is overcome and driven out of the church when pastors and church members are walking in the Spirit, living the Christ-life, and asking God to meet with them in worship.
- If we resist the devil, he will flee from us, and so will his demons!

Jesus commands this demon to be quiet and come out of the man.

- The demon can offer no resistance to Jesus.
- It must do as commanded, for Jesus has the authority and power to exorcise demons.
- While the demon convulses the man violently and cries out loudly as it departs (see Mark 1:26), it does not hurt him permanently.
- What effect does this exorcism have on the others in the synagogue?
- Luke 4:36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”
- 37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

The people are astonished at the power and authority of Jesus to be able to do such a thing.

- Consequently, His fame spreads throughout the region. Incidentally, this exorcism is not an isolated instance.
- Luke 4:41 Demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.
- The demon world clearly understands that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- James points out that the demons believe and tremble at the thought that there is one God (literally, that God is one — see James 2:19). This implies that they understand the Trinity, and Christ’s inclusion in the Godhead.

Commentator Thomas Constable explains why Jesus forbids the demons from speaking:

- “He wanted people, not just demons, to believe that He was the Son of God.
- Yet the testimony of demons could appear suspect to the people present, since evil spirits are known to serve the ‘father of lies.’”
- Think of what exorcism signifies to the Jews of Christ’s day.
- Jesus possesses power and authority to defeat all enemies, including supernatural foes.
- He has authority over both natural and supernatural realms.
- He can truly reign as King of Kings over the entire earth.
- His kingdom will be characterized by righteousness and peace.
- That is what the Jews of the first century are likely thinking.

- Luke records a second specific deed that Jesus does in Capernaum, representing His entire ministry.

Second, healing the sick

- Luke 4:38-39 Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.
- After leaving the synagogue Jesus enters the house of Simon Peter, whose mother-in-law is sick with a high fever.
- Jesus stands over her, rebukes the fever, and it instantly leaves her body.
- The picture of Jesus standing over her is like a doctor standing over his patient.
- Perhaps Dr. Luke is trying to get across the idea that Jesus is the great physician

Why would Jesus rebuke the fever?

- This is peculiar language.
- One doesn't typically *rebuke* inanimate objects.
- This could imply there is something more to this fever.
- Perhaps some illnesses are sentient, which is a rather bizarre idea, meaning that the illness itself feels and perceives things subjectively.
- Another thought is that some illnesses may be demonic in origin — but certainly not all illnesses — so that Jesus rebuking the fever is like rebuking the demon.
- Luke 4:40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

After the Sabbath ends at sundown, many sick and infirm, having all kinds of diseases, are brought to Him for healing.

- Jesus lays hands on every one of them and heals them.
- What a loving Messiah!
- What do healings like this signify?
- Jesus is able to heal all kinds of sicknesses, and can heal the nation if the people will repent (2 Chron. 7:14).
- The Messianic kingdom will be an age of longevity and complete healing, both spiritually and physically.
- Leaves from the tree of life will be used for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2).
- The entire earth will be healed (see Rom. 8:20-22).
- Luke records a third specific deed that Jesus does in Capernaum, representing His entire ministry.

Third, preaching the gospel of the kingdom

- Luke 4:43 He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."
- Matt. 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.
- The term *gospel of the kingdom* is unique.
- It is used only four times in the New Testament — three times in Matthew's Gospel (4:23; 9:35; 24:14) and once in Mark's (1:14).
- It is not referring to salvation, in the sense of regeneration, or receiving the gift of eternal life by believing.
- Yet it is a message of good news.

Keep in mind that the Jews of Christ's day were predominantly believers, in an Old Testament sense.

- Yes, they needed to believe Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the One they had been looking for.
- But the gospel of the kingdom was Christ's call for the people to repent and come back to fellowship with Jehovah God.
- If they would heed His message, then they would inherit a place of rulership in the heavenly realm of the kingdom, which He called *the kingdom of the heavens*, otherwise known as New Jerusalem.
- As mentioned previously, the Old Testament prophets had already promised Israel possession of the full Promised Land and rulership over the nations on Earth in the Messianic kingdom.
- But Jesus came to offer something even greater.

Rev. 21 speaks of the New Jerusalem descending from Heaven to Earth when the Messianic kingdom is launched.

- It will be the headquarters for ruling over Earth, where Jesus will dwell with His faithful bride and co-rulers.
- That privilege is not for all believers, but only those who qualify, hearing "well done" at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- If the Jews will turn around their lives by changing their behavior and come back into fellowship with Jehovah they will inherit a place of dwelling with the King in the kingdom of the heavens.
- Otherwise, they will remain on Earth.
- That is the gospel (good news) of the kingdom.
- While the millennial Earth will be much grander and more glorious than our present world, the New Jerusalem will be a spectacular place, far grander than the millennial earth, having the tree of life and the very presence of Jesus Himself.

A detailed description of this magnificent place is given in Rev. 21-22.

- Not to inherit the New Jerusalem city of reward will be a tragic loss and will result in weeping and conscious regret (see Matt. 8:11-12).
- Jesus says in Luke 4:43 that the purpose for which He has been sent from Heaven is to preach the gospel of the kingdom.
- Sadly, Israel rejected the gospel of the kingdom, so it is now being offered to the church (Matt. 21:43), which is predominantly Gentile.
- At the close of the Tribulation, Jesus will return to Earth a second time to conquer Satan, antichrist, and the false prophet.
- He will reclaim rulership over Earth and become crowned as king with glory and honor.

Jesus will share His throne with His bride — those faithful believers who are chosen to co-rule with Him.

- The primary purpose for this present church age is for the Holy Spirit to call out from Christ's body — the church — His future bride.
- Heb. 2:10 refers to this as *bringing many sons to glory*.
- That is, He is working to develop believers to the point of maturity so they can be glorified together with Him for the purpose of ruling.
- This is the message Jesus preached all throughout Israel in the first century, and it is the message He wants us to preach in the twenty-first century.
- Sadly, the message is being preached by so few.
- I challenge you to THINK ON THESE THINGS