

Luke 4:31-37 Jesus Proclaims Liberty with Authority

With His authoritative Word, Jesus exercises the rule of the Kingdom of God to liberate those oppressed in satan's kingdom.

- 1) Christ's Word possesses sovereign authority.
 - a) Astonishment at Jesus' authoritative Word brackets this account (4:32, 36).
 - b) His Word carries the authority of His person as the Christ.
 - c) His Word carries effectual power to accomplish His kingdom purposes.
- 2) Christ's authoritative Word opposes satan's kingdom.
 - a) The demon is an instance of satan's Kingdom (cf. 11:18)
 - i) "spirit"—not a defining societal attitude; but a conscious being
 - ii) "demon"—malevolent beings subject to the decrees of God (1 Kings 22:19-22; Job 1:8; 1 Chron. 21:1 with 2 Sam. 24:1)
 - iii) "unclean"—defiling human conscience, religious defilement, and social defilement; satan's kingdom:
 - (1) deceives, fostering ignorance of God and Gospel (8:12)
 - (2) vexes to anti-social and self-destructive behavior (8:26ff.; 9:37ff.)
 - (3) produces symptoms of sickness/physical disability (11:14; 13:11, 16)
 - (4) stirs anti-Christ attitudes and actions (22:3-6, 53; cf. John 8:40, 44); this precedent is especially evident in the OT stories of the establishment of David's Kingdom (1 Sam. 16:13-23—Spirit of God leaves Saul and anoints David for kingship; evil spirit vexes Saul; David employed to drive evil spirit from Saul; 1 Sam. 18:10-11; 19:9-10—evil spirit stirs Saul to kill David so that David will not usurp his dynasty)
 - b) Because Christ's Word is the good news (4:18) of the Kingdom of God (4:43), it opposes the kingdom of satan.
 - i) 4:34—the demon recognizes Jesus as a threat and seeks to gain the upper hand by displaying his knowledge of Jesus
 - ii) 4:35a—Jesus speaks with an irresistible word of command
 - (1) Contrast Jesus' unceremonious rebuke with "exorcism" practices of the Jews and their neighbors: long incantations; magical bowls; amulets; appeals to famous "exorcists" as power authorities; knowledge battles with the demons; prescribed prayers to prevent reentry
 - (2) "rebuke" is an opposing word
 - (3) "be silent"—Jesus's word silences the demon because even when demons say true things it is with an intent to deceive
 - (4) "come out of him"—Jesus' word overcomes the demon's hegemony/dominion (cf. 11:17-23)
- 3) Christ's authoritative Word liberates the oppressed.
 - a) 4:35b—throwing the man down was a visible relinquishment of the demon's possession of the man, acknowledging Jesus' ownership and right over this man
 - b) Jesus proclaimed liberty to this captive; He set at liberty this man who was oppressed (4:18).
 - c) It is not enough to be free from the demon. True freedom only comes by entering the Kingdom of God (Col. 1:13)
- 4) Christ's Word continues to liberate the oppressed by overcoming satan's rule.
 - a) Unbelievers are subject to demonic possession because they remain in the kingdom of darkness. The only answer to their captivity is the proclamation of the gospel, which calls them to repentance of sin (turning from their rebellion against God's rule) and faith in Jesus Christ (humbly submitting to Jesus as the true King and only Savior).
 - b) Believers are subject to demonic influence/affliction because we represent the Kingdom of Christ in a world that still lies under the influence of the evil one (1 John 5:19).
 - i) We are warned to recognize satan as a dangerous enemy (1 Peter 5:8).
 - ii) We are encouraged to recognize satan as a defeated enemy (1 John 3:8b; 4:4).
 - iii) We resist the devil with firm faith in the gospel (1 Peter 5:9; Ephesians 6:13-18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).
 - iv) Martin Luther warned that the devil uses fear and superstition to distract people from the gospel by looking to "exorcists," holy water, trinkets, and such, because he loves to be feared and can keep

- people in his power apart from the gospel. Luther counseled Christians to counter the devil with gospel proclamation, prayer, and disdain (as opposed to fear).
- v) The worst thing the devil can do to your unbelieving family and friends is to blind their minds from the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). So be fervent in prayer for them; and continue to present the gospel to them.
 - vi) The authoritative Word of Christ has been given to us as a sword for battle. Christ the King is greater than he who is in the world. Therefore, Jesus can proclaim liberty with authority.