**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #9**

**The Galilean Ministry, Part 2**

**Luke 4:31-37, 38-39**

**Luke 4:31-37 – Jesus Drives Out the Evil Spirit**

***4:31****And [Jesus] came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.* ***31*** *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.* ***33*** *And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,* ***34*** *saying, “Leave us alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are; the Holy One of God.”*

***35****And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Silence, and come out of him.” And when the demon had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.*

***36****And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, “What is there in this man’s word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”*

*37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.*

**Notes and studies**

1. The Gentile Christian was told that Capernaum was a “town in Galilee.” It was about 600 meters lower than Nazareth.
2. Jesus meets people on the Sabbaths, and the English reader must remember that the name could be for one day and for every Sabbath.

**Teaching with the power of the Spirit**

1. From verses 32-33, Jesus’ teaching has caused “amazement.” Luke does not tell us what was the teaching, but in general he was preaching “the good news.” This was uncommon to the Rabbis who had one aim: to explain the Law.
2. From Mark 1:22, we see that Jesus was not teaching “as the scribes” to interpret the Torah.
3. Luke uses the word “power” (***exousia***) and it is certainly the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14).
4. The Synagogue was mentioned also in Luke 7:5, and a Roman centurion built it. There are some ruins still standing. (J Finegan, *Archeology of the NT*, pages 55-55)

**Unclean spirits**

1. These were called “unclean spirits” (Mark 1:23) and “evil spirit” (Lk 7:21; 8:2). The word unclean is ***akathartos***, meaning “lack of holiness.” From this Greek name came the English name “unclean.”
2. In Luke, sometime specific illness was mentioned such as dumbness (8:29), lameness (13:11), and epilepsy (9:39). We were not given any indication of the differences between physical illness and demonic ones. But wherever there is abnormal behavior that is also violent, it was looked at as caused by demons.

**A Note from the Life of St. Antony of Egypt.**

St. Antony, an early ascetic monk, was an Egyptian, born c. 251, of noble Christian parents who provided well for their son's future by educating him the Christian way of life. His parents left this world when Antony was 18 or 20 years old, and he inherited a substantial wealth. But he aspired only to amass the riches of virtues.

Anthony was reflecting one day upon how the Apostles had forsaken all to follow after Christ. When he heard in church the words of the Gospel: "*If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything thou hast...and come and follow me*" (Matt. 19:21), Antony sold his estate and distributed the money to the poor, persuading his younger sister to be likeminded; he gave her into the care of some virgins.

Now the young man began to lead a life of great abstinence and self-denial on the outskirts of his village. He gave his mind no occasion to think back upon the affairs of this world but led it into a desert that it might be occupied with thoughts of pleasing God alone. He delighted in visiting the dwellings of righteous men and studying their virtuous habits that he proceeded to adopt for himself, exercising himself in their practice. Indeed, he was like a bee that gathers nectar from various blossoms and creates out of it a fragrantly sweet honey. The enemy, however, could not endure to behold the likeness of Christ shining forth from this creation of dust and ashes, and he determined to destroy him.

**Satan v. Antony: The First Attacks**

1. The first campaign was waged on the battlefield of the mind. Antony experienced a barrage of unsettling thoughts--flattery, the allurement of the world and all the pleasures his former wealth could buy, concern for his sister's welfare, the difficulties of the path he had chosen. This vicious net was craftily woven, but the Antony recognized it as the handiwork of his adversary and tore it apart by means of intense prayer and vigilance, deflecting any and all disturbing thoughts before they took hold in his mind.
2. The battle grew more intense when the Enemy, taking advantage of Antony’s youth, assailed him with lustful thoughts, inflaming the natural desires of the flesh until the Antony was burning with his own lust. He manfully fought back by mortifying his body with increased fasting to quench the passions of the flesh, and by meditating on death and the eternal torments that await those who give themselves over to the spirit of fornication. And so he escaped unharmed, even strengthened by this experience.
3. When the Evil One found himself so disgraced, he took on a human voice and complained bitterly to Antony: "I have deceived and conquered many in my time; but now in your case, as in that of many others, I am defied by your ascetic labors."
4. Knowing that his antagonist would continue to stalk him as a roaring lion after his prey, Anthony did not allow himself to relax his vigilance on account of his victory. He passed many nights without sleep, engrossed in prayer, and limited his bodily nourishment to bread and water, of which he partook once a day at evening. For, he said, by weakening the pleasures of the body the mind is strengthened. Such disregard did he have for the body as to imitate the nature of the fleshless ones, i.e., the angels. The severity of his labors and his accumulated virtues astonished the older ascetics, but Antony never thought about his spiritual progress and regarded each day as the beginning of his spiritual journey, thereby shielding himself from pride and vainglory.
5. For the sake of greater solitude, Antony moved further from the village to a burial place at the edge of the desert, where he locked himself up in a sepulcher; only allowing a servant to come at rare intervals with a supply of bread. The enemy, embittered by his previous defeat, attacked with vengeance. This time the assault was physical. A whole troop of demons came one night and beat Antony until the very breath of life was ready to leave him. But even as he lay on the ground, covered with bruises and unable to stand, he said in a loud voice: “Here, devils, here am I, Antony, ready for more of your wounds. Try your worst, for you shall never separate me from Christ." He fortified himself by singing the words of the Psalmist: "*Though a host should encamp against me, yet my heart shall not fear.*" (Psalm 27:3)
6. Incensed by the audacity of Anthony's challenge, the Devil gathered his minions: "Don't you see now? This fellow could not be restrained either by the spirit of fornication or by bangs and bruises. We must assail him by other means."
7. That night, as Anthony was still lying on the ground recovering, a hoard of demons shook the walls of the sepulcher and rushed in to terrorize Antony. For this purpose they had taken on the forms of hideous wild beasts – hissing snakes, roaring lions, ferocious wolves, a bull which threatened to gore the victim. But Anthony was not frightened by what he perceived to be mere spectral creatures, and he made bold to mock his enemy's impotence: "What is the use of all this vain uproar? If ye have power to hurt, why don't you? But you can't, for the Lord is my shield and my wall of safety." The demons could only gnash their teeth in reply. When Antony had thus manfully proven himself as a champion athlete in the spiritual arena, he was granted to experience the comforting presence of the Lord. Lifting his eyes heavenward he saw a roof-curtain drawn aside and a ray of light descending upon him. Straightway the demons vanished, and Antony felt his bodily pains melt away. Consoled by this outpouring of Divine Grace, he rested briefly from the fatigue of battle before addressing his Master aloud: "Lord, where were you when these sufferings and tribulations came upon me? Why did you not help me?" He heard a voice in reply: “I was here, Antony, but I wanted to witness your combat. Having seen that you withstood your adversary without retreating, I shall from now on be your Helper and shall make your name celebrated far and wide as my faithful servant."

Antony knelt in prayer to give thanks to God for this promise and for the peace and newfound strength that filled his soul, the grace-given rewards of his victory. He was then about 35 years old.

**Antony: With Demons in the Desert**

The next day Antony left the place of the sepulchers to live as a hermit in the desert. Even as he journeyed, the enemy continued to lay all kinds of traps for him, but Antony was not to be outsmarted. Seeing a large silver disk in his path, he immediately surmised that it was a ruse of the devil, for had some traveler passed that way and lost it, surely he would have retraced his steps to recover such a valuable object. "O Devil," he cried out, "you will not so easily draw me away from my purpose. May you take your silver and go down to perdition together." No sooner had he said this than the silver disk disappeared in a cloud of smoke, proof that it was indeed the devil's creation.

At length Antony settled in a cleft of some rocks beside a river, blocking the entrance so as not to be disturbed. For twenty years he remained there in solitude, admitting no visitors but only a supply of bread three times a year. It must not be imagined, however, that he enjoyed a blissful life of uninterrupted peace. Those who came in hopes of seeing or hearing a word from the far-famed ascetic were often perplexed by the raucous din coming from the cleft. They supposed a band of angry men had somehow gained entrance, for they could make out shouts of: "Depart from us! Why have you come to our country to cause our death?" Through gap, however, they saw that Antony was quite alone, and they understood that the tumult was made by demons.

Indeed, the demons quite exhausted their bag of tricks in their frantic efforts to deter Antony from his course, for fear that his example would inspire others to invade their desert domain with fasting and psalm-singing which they found intolerable. And this is just what happened. Whole multitudes began coming to the desert to lose their lives, like Antony, for the sake of the Kingdom. Persuaded by their entreaties, Antony relinquished his solitude to share the light of his accumulated experience with these eager new recruits in Christ's army.

*Antony is sometimes erroneously described as “the first monk,” but several “ascetic” (disciplined, denial of worldly comforts) monks are documented prior to Antony. Antony’s fame grew however because he was the first to retreat to the wilderness. – ed.*

**The demons speaking to Jesus**

1. In verse 34, “*what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?*” These words are hostile, almost like those of the demonic cry of the widow at Zarephath in (1 Kings 17:18).
2. “*To destroy us*” does not refer to the man but to the demons. The destruction of the word of evil and the demons is portrayed by their demand to go to the abyss (Luke 8:31). Iin the Revelation of John the end of the demons is also the end of the whole problem of evil.

**Did the demons confess Jesus?**

1. In verse 34, they say to Jesus; “*I know who you are; the Holy One of God.”* In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is “holy” because:
2. He is the son of God (3:22)
3. Was anointed by the Holy Spirit.
4. This is a recognition rather than a confession, where in confession there are three elements, absent here:
5. Faith
6. Acceptance
7. Fellowship.
8. Jesus commanded, “Silence.” The King James Version of the Bible mistranslated this Greek as “*Keep your peace*.” This is hardly true, for the word ***phimoun*** means literally, “be muzzled.” Demons have no “peace” to keep.

**Jesus casts out demons**

1. In verse 35, Jesus said, “*come out of him*.” The power of Jesus is not Jesus’ alone but is also the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus came to reveal to us the Triune God. By the anointing that Jesus received from the Holy Spirit, Jesus cast out demons.
3. “*And when the demon had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not*.” Healing and liberation is without hurt.

**Jesus Heals Simon’s Mother in Law**

**Luke 4:38-39**

***38*** *And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a high fever; and they asked him for her.* ***39****And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.*

**Notes and Studies**

1. This is the beginning of a multiple accounts of healings in the next chapters: 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 22.
2. Simon is mentioned here for the time. Simon Petros occurs only in Luke 5:8. Peter is more used in Acts (such as 6: 14; 10:5,18,32:22:34 and more). The Aramaic name, “Cephas”
3. Simon was married (1 Cor 9:5).
4. Suffering from “high fever.” This seems to be according to the Greek terms of this time kind of great fever (W. K. Hober, *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, pages 3-5)
5. In verse 39, Jesus “*stood over her*” means Jesus bent to lift her up.
6. Jesus “commanded the fever” is a way of speaking of his personal authority.

**Jesus the Compassionate Healer**

**A Note from Philēmōn**

The Gospel presents us with the Compassionate Jesus who takes pity on the sick and the demon possessed. His power is in his word and his word is uttered by the same power of the Spirit who anointed him.

In our life today Jesus still utters the same word in our inner heart. Those who love Jesus can discern his voice. Sometime it is a voice that seems to come to us from us but it has a lyre of peace that goes with it. Another time it is a voice that rebukes us kindly and it is not from our conscience because there is no condemnation or accusation in it but a kind of persuasion that has joy and the heart takes it seriously.

Jesus does not want to violate our freedom of choice because this is against love. If you read carefully (1 Cor 13:1-8) you can see how the power of the word of Jesus works with care and compassion.

April 12, 1964

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Audio at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com