

JESUS' WORDS AND DEEDS

Who was the most authoritative person in your life? Parent? Principal? Coach? Boss? Authority leaves more than an impression, as it changes beliefs and behavior. Jesus displayed divine authority in Luke 4:31-37 and left the crowds wanting more. What a contrast to the people in His home synagogue in verses 20-30, responding with rejection, refusing to receive Him.

RC Sproul says, "Nothing so grieves God like pride in the hearts of His people, when Jesus gives liberty." He leaves Nazareth to teach in Capernaum, a thriving commercial city on the Sea of Galilee, a microcosm of the Roman Empire of the day, with Jews and Gentiles.

1- Jesus teaches with authority - Most rabbis of His day taught with "derived authority" citing other well-known leaders, much like good preachers do today with recognized theologians, after having done their homework. Jesus taught with "divine authority" as speaking the words of God Himself. "Jesus went to war against forces of evil, staking everything on the authority of God's Word," notes RK Hughes, "and the church must also teach the authority of His written Word."

Jesus taught with authority in the temple at 12 years old (Luke 2:48) and in His own synagogue at 30 (Luke 4:22). Matthew 5 records, "*you have heard it said, but I say unto you*" as Jesus declared God's truth with divine authority. He is the "logos" the "Word" of John 1 who spoke the world into existence, and became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Scholars say logos is the divine self-expression of the Bible. It is God's Word in creation, in revelation, in redemption, as God communicates His divine being through His written and living Word.

2- Jesus speaks God's words - Jesus is God with us. John 12:49, "*I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.*" Luke 4:18, "*the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news*" and "*today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*"

Jesus said He would proclaim liberty and set free captives and the oppressed. When He did not entertain with expected miracles, and instead said He would bring the good news to all people, including Gentiles, then His own townspeople of Nazareth tried to kill Him. In contrast, the people of Capernaum respond in amazement to the authority of Jesus Christ.

3- Jesus does divine works - Jesus refused to enthrall the townspeople, and they resisted His intention to bring the gospel to all all those needing liberty from oppression, including Gentiles. Nazareth tried to kill Him, rather than acknowledge Him as the promised Christ. But in Luke 4:34 a man oppressed by a demon said, "*What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God.*"

2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 note demons were cast out of heaven to await the final judgment. They rightly fear Christ. James 2:19, "*you believe that God is one, you do well. Even the demons believe, and shudder.*" But knowledge of God isn't saving faith, which follows regeneration for submission to Christ as Savior and Lord. Peter confessed, "*You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God*" (John 6:69).

4- People do demonic works - Leviticus 17:7 speaks of people sacrificing to goat demons (learned in Egypt), and Deuteronomy 32:17 says "*they sacrificed to demons that were no gods*" but evil spirits associated with idols. Psalm 106:37, "*they sacrificed their sons and daughters to the demons, they poured out innocent blood sacrificed to idols of Canann, and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they become unclean by their acts, and the anger of the Lord kindled.*"

In the USA today abortion spills innocent blood of ~3,000 babies per day (about half are black). Sex trafficking is a \$9.5 billion industry, with ~6,800 children per day rented for sex and worse, even by people in the highest levels of government, industry and society.

Zechariah 13 says "*on that day there will be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. On that that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, I will remove the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness.*" This is the age of Christ, which has come. Jesus has made the pronouncement, and the gospels record Him carrying out God's promises! ☐