

Lesson 34 Matthew 17 14-18 (16) Jesus teaches the devil's ploy and a man's value

Back in the valley following the transfiguration

The first thing we notice in Galilee and in every land is that there are literally multitudes in the valley. The way of Christ has to find ways to deal with great numbers. Jesus intended Christianity to be popular and pervasive. He wanted the whole world to know. Never was he as happy as when He was reaching people. He was a magnet for the crowds because of this compassionate and sympathising attitude. He had always time for people and He had wholeness to offer-which is the recipe that fits everyman.

The problem

A man came to Jesus not in the attitude of worship like the Syro-Phoenician but bowing on his knee (Greek γονυπετων) which is the position of a man making a petition from one he considers at least a king or God-sent prophet. This obeisance is not complete. "Lord, he said, "have mercy on my son, for he is moon-struck and suffering terribly. For he often falls into the fire and often into the water" Twelve times a year this boy was in a most distressful condition. The care of the lad had wearied his father. It was a very sad case. The lad had survived near death experiences by the constant care of his family but his life was a continuing accident waiting to happen

The disappointment of the man

The man brought the boy to the disciples but they could not heal him. The man had persistence enough to take the issue to Jesus. The disciples for a second time had difficulty with the demonic work which even sought to corrupt the human geno function (cf the Nephilim) and enters into the depths of the mind. It is only the mighty name of Jesus Christ that dislodges Satan.

The disappointment of Jesus

Jesus replied, "O generation without faith and squinting or twisting or distorting or deteriorating (Greek διαστρεφω)-"How long will I be with you? How long will I hold you up? This reminds us of Aaron and Hur holding up the hands of Moses."How long will I maintain and support you (Greek ανεχω is often used of "warfare")?" "Carry him hereto me!" We are dealing with two aspects of grace. We are being advised both of the grace of Christ's ministry among the Jews and the period during which He would continue to support their existence or maintain their identity. For the LORD the problem was widespread. The answer to the first was 29 AD"and to the second AD70-although behind the shadow the LORD has maintained the Jews through centuries of polemathy and will one day enter again upon the stage of history to defend them personally.

The rebuke of Jesus

Jesus censured and laid responsibility on the demon or Satan and the devil left the boy and he was healed from that hour. There was a "penalty" to be paid by the devil for this action. There was no chance of a repeat entrance of the demon. Expulsion meant chaining. Exorcism is not as simple as it looks -it is an intense and inter-dimensional spiritual procedure in the sense that it deals in the imprisonment of evil spirits or their restriction from further interacting with humanity. It is in this area that human beings -even the disciples were limited- although the evil spirits became "subject to them" in leaving off their control of other lives as is the testimony of Luke 10 17 & 20



From Paper to practice

What was the criticism of the disciples? Was it always able to be levelled?

Was Jesus disappointed with the man's lack of thorough-going worship or faith?

Do we have reason to believe that the LORD still loyal to his weak disciples & upheld them?

Was the LORD disappointed with the downgrade that had brought his people under Satan's control in the last generation before the dispersion?