

It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons, That This Fellow Drives Out Demons

The Second Messianic Miracle: Jesus Heals a Blind Mute Matthew 12:22-24, Mark 3:20-22, Luke 11:14-15, John 7:20

DIG: Why was Jesus' family worried about Him? What did they think was wrong with Him? How did they misinterpret His actions? How did all the people react to Yeshua's miracle? What was so different about Christ's healing a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute? Why did the Sanhedrin conclude that by the prince of demons He was driving out demons? But what was *the real* reason that He was rejected?

REFLECT: When have you misinterpreted Yeshua's actions? When was the last time our Lord put you in a corner and forced you to make a decision? Did you trust in Him or your circumstances? What did you learn from the experience? How do you react when someone (maybe even you) blames God for something that the devil has done?

Once again the miracle-working Rabbi was being pressured by the crowds in Capernaum. Then Jesus entered a house. Peter and Andrew's home was in that territory and this was probably where He went. And again a crowd gathered, and it was so packed and demanding that Christ and His apostles were not even able to eat (Mark 3:20).

When the Lord's family heard that He was so engrossed by His work that He even failed to take care for His physical needs, they went to take charge of Him. This probably meant they decided to take Him back to Nazareth. That would remove Him from the strain of having so many people constantly pressing on Him to meet their physical and spiritual needs. The verb for to take charge of is *krateo*, meaning to get possession of, to take hold of, to seize, and is used of arresting someone (Mk 6:17, 12:12, 14:1, 44, 46, 49 and 51). They were intending to take Him by force against His will, for they said: He is out of His mind (Mk 3:21). His own family realized something was different. But they misinterpreted His actions and thought that He needed to be protected from Himself, but it also showed their concern for Him.⁶⁵⁶ His zeal seemed to be bordering on insanity to them. Messiah's healing ministry created a need for theories to explain it. Herod had his theory (Mt 14:1-12), the family of Jesus had theirs, and the Pharisees and Torah-teachers had theirs.

Then the Pharisees brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute (Matthew 12:22a). The act of casting out demons in that day was not particularly unusual. Even the Pharisees and their disciples also were able to cast out demons. Jesus would say later: **If I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out (Matthew 12:27)?** The Jewish people had already noticed that there was a difference in the way the Pharisees drove out demons and the way He drove them out (Mark 1:21-28).

The rabbis used a specific ritual when they drove out demons. The ritual had three steps. First, the exorcist would have to establish communication with the demon. When the demon spoke, it would use the vocal cords of the person being possessed to answer. Second, after establishing communication with the demon, the rabbis would ask for the demon's name. Third, once establishing the demon's name, he would order the demon out. Later, we find the Lord using this same three-stage procedure when Jesus asked: **What is your name?** The demon replied: **Legion, for we are many (Mark 5:9)**. Normally He would cast them out without any ritual which is what made His exorcisms so different.⁶⁵⁷

However, while pharisaic Judaism was able to practice exorcism using these three-stage procedure, there was one kind of demon they could do nothing about. If the demon caused the person to be mute, or unable to speak, there was no way of establishing any kind of communication with it. With no way of finding out the demon's name, the Pharisees considered it impossible to cast out a mute demon.

Long before the coming of Yeshua, the ancient rabbis separated miracles into two categories. First, were those miracles anyone would be able to perform if they were empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so. The second category of miracles was called messianic miracles, which were miracles only the Messiah would be able to perform. These miracles were taken from Isaiah 35:5-6 because the rabbis understood them to be clearly messianic. Jesus did miracles in both categories: general miracles but also messianic miracles. Because of rabbinic teaching that certain miracles would be reserved only for the Messiah, whenever He performed a messianic miracle it created a different type of reaction than when He performed other types of miracles. The rabbis taught there were three messianic miracles. The first was cleansing of a Jewish leper, the second was the casting out of a mute demon, and the third was the healing of a man born blind (see my commentary on [Isaiah 61 - The Three Messianic Miracles](#)).

The Sanhedrin was still in **the second phase of interrogation** in determining if Yeshua was the Messiah (see [Lg - The Great Sanhedrin](#)). Everywhere that the Lord went the Pharisees were sure to follow, and they were watching His every move. And Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. It was Christ's **second messianic miracle**. Isaiah had written that when the Meshiach came the mute tongue would shout for joy (Isaiah 35:6). Thus, the casting out of a mute demon raised quite a stir among the Jewish masses. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David" (Matthew 12:22b-23; Luke 11:14)? They were willing to ask the question, but they were unwilling to answer it for themselves because they looked to the Sanhedrin for that decision for them (see [Eh - Jesus is Officially Rejected by the Sanhedrin](#)).

What they were really asking was, "Is this **the Messiah?**" Because **the Son of David** is a messianic title. Before this, when **Jesus** cast out other kinds of **demons**, **the people** didn't ask that question. They asked, "By what authority do you **driving out demons?**" But here, when **He** drove out a **mute demon**, the question changed because **Jesus** did what they had been taught by their rabbis' that only **the Anointed One** could do.

The stakes couldn't have been higher. By performing a messianic miracle, **Yeshua** backed the Sanhedrin into a corner and forced them to make a decision. They were left with two options. They could declare **Jesus the Messiah**, or reject **His** messianic claims. Their problem was that if they rejected **Him** they had to have an explanation of why **He** could do those things that they had been teaching that only **the Expected One** could do. They could not deny **His** messianic miracle. **But** instead they chose to reject **Him** and **His** messianic claims. **The Pharisees and the Torah-teacher's who came down from Jerusalem** said: **He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons He is driving out demons (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; John 7:20).** **The Adversary** is the prince of demons in the sense that **he** is **their ruler**, the first among them in importance, privilege and power. This is so important that all four gospel writers record this life-changing event. The Great Sanhedrin ruled that **the Son of God** was performing messianic miracles by the power of **Satan**. This was a major turning point in the ministry of **Christ**. Things would never be the same for Isra'el or for the world.

In the final analysis, thinking **themselves** to be very wise, **the Pharisees** said **Jesus** Himself was **demon possessed**. But not by a common **demon**, but **the prince of demons Beelzebub**. When the Jews were finally cured of their Ba'al worship after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity, the rabbis began poking fun at various gods and applied their names to different **demons**. Evidently the Ba'al prince, or *Ba'al-Zibbul*, was intentionally corrupted to lord of the fly, or *Ba'al-Zibub*. This was an acknowledgement that flies are to be found everywhere in the pagan city of Babylon. So they changed the last letter from an "l" to a "b," from **Beelzebub** (**Second Kings 1:2-3, 6 and 16**) meaning *lord of the royal palace* to **Beelzebub** meaning *lord of the flies* or *lord of the dung* for obvious reasons.

By attributing **His** miracles to **Beelzebub**, the first-century rabbis were in fact calling **Jesus** the absolute worst kind of sorcerer and idolater. In a striking parallel passage in the Talmud, some of the sages agree with Matthew's account. In discussing some rabbis and false teachers, it is said, "Yeshua the Nazarene practice magic and led astray the deceived Isra'el" (Tractate Sanhedrin 107b). What is especially curious is that the rabbis speculate that Yeshu (their corrupted name for Yeshua which is actually an abbreviation for "may his name be cursed," or *yemach shemo ve-zichro*) probably acquired the special sorcery from **His** time living in Egypt (**Mt 2:13-21**)! While coming to different conclusions than **His** the followers, the rabbinic literature strangely confirms many of the details of the life of the historical **Jesus**. Whatever our faith perspective, the Jewish historical traditions of the time confirm that, after spending some time in Egypt, **He** did areat miraculous sions in Isra'el that even **His** opposition acknowledged.⁶⁵⁸

For centuries **God's** people had longed for **the Messiah**, their **Divine Deliverer**. The hope of every godly prophet and teacher of Isra'el was to live to see **Him**; and every Jewish girl dreamed of being **His** mother. Yet, when **Yeshua** arrived **He** was denied and rejected. Here the Jewish leadership rejected **Jesus** as **the Messiah**. Later in the city of Jerusalem before **His** crucifixion **the Jewish people** screamed: **Let His blood be on us and on our children (Matthew 27:25)**. As a result of their rejection, the Jewish leadership and the Jewish people will have to ask **the Lord** to come back before **He** will return at the Second Coming. (see my commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming**).

Demon possession was the basis of their explanation of how, on the one hand, **Jesus** could perform messianic miracles, and on the other hand, **He** was not **the Messiah**. This is not only reflected in the biblical account, but also in rabbinic literature. **The rabbis teach that the reason they had to have Jesus executed at the Passover, which was contrary of the practice that executions should not take place on feast days, was that He seduced Isra'el with the practice of sorcery.** There is a close association between sorcery and demonism. **The rabbis also teach that when Yeshua was down in Egypt (see Aw - The Escape of Jesus to Egypt), He made cuts in His skin and inside those cuts He inserted the unspoken name of YHVH (see my commentary on Exodus At - Moses' Second Objection and Answer).** **They teach that Jesus did miracles by that means.**

Therefore, the given reason for Messiah's rejection was demon possession; however, the real reason was His rejection of the Oral Law (see Ei - The Oral Law). This action by the leadership of Isra'el set the stage for Jewish history for the next 2,000 years. To this day Jews believe that **Jesus** was **demon possessed**.

In 1915 Pastor William Barton started to publish a series articles. Using the archaic language of an ancient storyteller, he wrote his parables under the pen name of Safed the Sage. And for the next fifteen years he shared the wisdom of Safed and his enduring spouse Keturah. It was a genre he enjoyed. By the early 1920s, Safed was said to have a following of at least three million. Turning an ordinary event into an illustration of a spiritual truth was always a keynote of Barton's ministry.

There came to the City wherein I dwell a man who delivered a Lecture, and Keturah and I we went. And the subject whereof he spake was one about which he knew very little. But he spread that little over the surface of an Interesting Talk, and the people enjoyed it and so did we. Yea, and we were profited thereby, although the Lecturer knew little more than he told us.

And there came another man who spoke on the same subject, and we went to hear him. He was a man of Great Education. And I said, Now shall we hear something worthwhile. But he began by telling us the History of the Subject and the Various Attempts to Clarify it. And then he spake of the Various Theories that had been Suggested concerning it, and the books

that had been written in Divers Tongues with regard to it. And he said that a certain opinion had been held by scholars, but now no longer highly regarded, but that the opinion that was to take its place was in dispute. And he suggested Various Aspects of the theme which he said he could not Discuss because it would require a Volume on any one of them. And about that time it was time to stop, and he stopped.

And as we journeyed toward our home, Keturah said, He certainly is a man of large knowledge.

And I answered, Yea, and for the purposes of the audience it were better if he had known the tenth part of what he knoweth. For the first man carried all the goods in his show-window, and this man blocked the sidewalk with dray-loads of unopened cases and bales of indigestible and useless wisdom.

And Keturah said, I have heard that a Little Knowledge is a Dangerous thing.

And I said, Believe it not. A little knowledge is good for seed, but there is such a thing as that a person getteth drowned in his own knowledge. For the first man knew little, but used that little effectively, and the second man knew much, and it was useless.

And I said unto Keturah, Like unto a Spider that is entangled in its own web, so is the person of much knowledge who is unable to employ it. Better is it to know little like a child and be able to use it wisely, than to know much and to get lost in the swamp of it.

And Keturah said, Nevertheless, I think that knowledge is good, and much knowledge is better than a little.

And I said, All human knowledge is small, and the difference between the one who knoweth much and the one who knoweth little is too small to waste much time in futile distinctions. For in the sight of God the wisdom of both is foolishness. But the value of knowledge is in the use of it.

And Keturah inquired of me, saying, Art thou a man of much knowledge or of little?

And I answered, If so be that I am able to use my knowledge and get away with it, what doth it matter if it be little or large? Behold, though I be ignorant, yet have I not trouble in finding people yet more ignorant, and if the stream wherein they swim is over their head, what doth it matter if it be an inch or ten thousand cubits?

And Keturah said, I do verily believe that among the ignorant men of the earth there be some who are more ignorant than thee; and if any of them do think thee wise, I shall not tell them that it is not so.⁶⁵⁹