



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Gospel of Matthew

“An Unequal Cure and Uncommon Critics,” Matthew 9:32-34 – TRANSCRIPT

We have just a brief passage of Scripture to read for this morning as we complete our study of Matthew’s presentation of the credentials of the Messianic king of Israel. Then, next Sunday, we will be taking a rather lengthy passage from the Gospel of Matthew, and I would like for you, if you would, to read from Matthew chapter 9 verse 35 through the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, because we want to take that section in one message next Sunday. But this morning, only verses 32 through 34 of chapter 9. Will you listen now as I read these verses,

“As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was never so seen in Israel.’ But the Pharisees said, ‘He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.’”

May God bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee, Lord, for the privilege of the reading of the word of God, and of the study of its contents. We thank Thee for the Evangelist Matthew who, many hundreds of years ago, led by the Holy Spirit, has given us a beautiful account of

our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the skill with which he has constructed his book, showing us how the King has fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures concerning himself and his ministry. And now having been crucified for our sins, and having been raised from the dead, awaits the day for the consummation of the program which Thou has designed.

And we pray, O God, that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in this hour, in this room, Thou wilt work mightily to the conversion of the lost and to the edification of the saints, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be exalted.

We pray, Lord, that over and above all of our own thoughts, the thoughts of our great God may press down upon us and conquer our thoughts, bringing our thoughts into submission to thine.

We pray, O God, thy blessing upon every one present here, and we pray that through the ministry of the word, they may be encouraged and strengthened and built up in the faith. Now we commit this meeting to Thee and the meeting that follows tonight through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today in the continuation of our study of the Gospel of Matthew is an unequalled cure and uncommon critics. We have come to the subject of the demons again, and I am sure that if we are to consider this question just by itself, one of the things that comes immediately to the mind is the surprise at the immense part that the demonic world plays in the biblical world.

The Bible speaks about evil spirits. It speaks about fallen angels. It speaks about demons. Incidentally, let me say that in the morning service, once during the service, instead of saying demons, I said, deacons [laughter], and one of the deacons came to me afterwards and informed me of it – that I had said in the service, deacon, instead of demon, and he and another deacon had exchanged looks of horror [more laughter] and surprise. And not knowing anything to say, I said I did it on purpose [laughter]. If I should say that again, it is an accident, I assure you.

The Bible speaks about idols as if they were not simply material things but representations of something that lies behind them. It speaks of the angelic world as containing “lords.” Isaiah even pictures demon satyrs as hairy creatures dancing in the ruins of Babylon.

And in the New Testament, this stress upon the demonic and the spiritual world is continued. We have demons afflicting men with mental distempers, with moral distempers, and with physical distempers. They enter into men and control them in demon possession. And even the doctrines of the false teachers are said to be instigated by demonic activity.

What we learn from the New Testament and the Old Testament is that there is a spirit world beyond this world which we cannot see, which is highly organized, and organized unto the power of the prince of the spirits who has fallen, Lucifer, or Satan himself. And Lucifer and his minion energize idolatry and immorality and other forms of human wickedness. They inspire false teachers and assist in the campaign against the will of God.

It seems to me that one of the chief activities of Satan and his cohorts is the corruption of the message concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, if we are to discover Satan, one of the first places we should look is in the pulpit where the word of God is professedly proclaimed.

The ancient world of angelic beings and demons seems strange to us who live in the Western world today, and we want to ask the question, always, “Is it a real world?” Now let me assure you, as I did a few Sundays ago, I have never seen a demon. I have seen people who seem to be actuated by something that must be like a demon, but I have never seen a demon. I have never seen a fallen angel. As a matter of fact, I’ve never even seen a good angel, and that includes my wife [laughter].

I have never seen one of these spiritual beings, and I am sure that you feel as I do. I have this desire deep down within to see at least one – just one – preferably of the

good kind [laughter] rather than the other. But I am not going to deny in any way the existence of these beings because I accept as my principium, as my first principle, that the Bible is the word of God. And I accept that worldview as over against other worldviews because I think, ultimately, it has been brought home to me and to my understanding by God himself who alone is the highest attestation of all truth. And therefore, looking at the Scriptures, I must accept what the Scriptures say in the firm that there is this world of the demonic, or the world of immaterial spirits.

Our society, since 1960, with its occult fascination, tends to support this, but it does not prove that. We have a fascination with astrology today, and as you pass out paying for your groceries, you notice the books having to do with astrology. Now, I used to usually shop for groceries about once a year, and it so happened that yesterday I was in a grocery store and really was doing a little shopping with my wife, and noticed that as you pass out at the counter where you pay for these things in the racks, there were various books giving you your own particular horoscope, and all of the things that you should look forward to, even in fear or in hope.

We are fascinated with witchcraft. And, even on the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* we have articles about covens of witches. We have a fascination with Satanism and even churches in which Satan is worshipped. We all know about that. They are generally in California, as you might expect, but nevertheless [laughter], we do have such things. And we have an amazing thing in that 150,000 Americans officially list spiritualism as their religion. Statisticians say that the figure probably should be much larger, from 500,000 to 700,000, who actually are spiritualists by religion. Now that’s an amazing thing.

Spiritualism began in the United States in 1848, when a woman by the name of Margaret Fox was just a little girl of 15 years of age. One night, her mother heard some strange things happening upstairs, and so she went up to find out what was the matter. And Mrs. John Fox, when she entered the room of daughters, Margaret and Katie – the room was dark – asked them what they were doing.

And they said they were in communication with the dead, and went on to tell her how it was being done, asked her to sit down, and they were asked questions of the ghost and received answers. If they received a rap, one rap, that meant the answer was no. If there were two raps, that meant that the answer was doubtful. If three raps occurred, the answer was yes. And they claimed the person with whom they were speaking was the ghost of a murdered peddler, who according to all that they knew by tradition, had been murdered in the basement of the house in which they were living. He was a friendly ghost.

As a result of this, there rose the religion of spiritualism, and it spread like wildfire after this story. In 1854, six years after this happened, there were 15,000 spiritualists. And the movement began to grow and expand, but finally, in 1888, Margaret Fox (then 55 years of age), often married, poverty stricken, and an alcoholic, claimed to be converted to Catholicism, and upon her conversion, she wrote a newspaper article in which she confessed that the raps that others had heard were really the snapping of her toes which had taken place in the dark of that room. She evidently was skilled in that particular activity [laughter]. She reversed her position a year later, but spiritualism was dealt a rather mortal blow, people thought, by her confession.

But then in the 1920s and the 1960s, there has been a revival of spiritualism, and again we have a number who are infected by that particular religion. I think [it is] also a rather interesting thing that there are now, in the United States, eighteen different spiritualist denominations, which would seem to indicate that unity is not one of the great doctrines of the spiritualists.

Well, do you need guidance? Should you consult an astrologer? Should you consult a psychologist? Should you consult a psychiatrist? Why don't try *I Ching*, like some of the folk singers and other important people today? *I Ching* is not a religion; it's a book. And it is a Chinese book translated into English, and its meaning is, “book of changes.” It's so difficult to understand, that one needs an interpreter to help one

interpret the interpretation of the translation. But nevertheless, *I Ching* has become rather popular, and has its adherents.

According to *I Ching*, you can obtain guidance by tossing sticks or coins – that’s at the heart of this philosophical system of guidance. Reminds me of the story that I heard many years ago of the gypsy who liked to walk down the road, and as the gypsy came to a fork in the road, the gypsy would toss a stick up in the air, and look at the stick, and then proceed down one of the forks.

A man was following behind the gypsy one day. He noticed what was happening, wasn’t exactly sure of it. Finally, he caught up with him at a fork in the road, and he asked him what he was doing. He said, “Well, when I come to one of the forks in the road, I want to know which way to go, so I toss the stick in the air, and if it points one way, that’s the way I go.”

The man said, “I noticed, however, that when you tossed it in the air just a moment ago, and it pointed that way, but you started out this way.”

He said, “I know. The silly thing pointed that way, but I wanted to go this way.” [Laughter]. So if you wish guidance, try *I Ching*.

We are told by the astrologers that we are living in the Age of Aquarius, an age that will be characterized by humanism, by brotherhood, and by love. I’ve never really noticed that we got out of the age of humanism. It seems to me that, as far as our philosophies are concerned, we’ve been humanists all along. Now, the astrologers are not really clear about when this age began. Some say it began in 1904, some say it began in 1936, still others say in 1962 it began, and some say, rather facetiously, that it began in the second act of *Hair*. [Laughter]

One thing we do know, it seems to me, is that it takes a kind of Satanic deception for a sane man to believe that there is something in that mixture of superstition, duplicity and business that is called astrology. And as I’ve said in the notes, if I seem to be treating astrology and the religion of the star-gazers flippantly, it’s done on purpose. I’d rather

stand on the side of Isaiah, who liked to chide the astrologers of his day by saying to the Israelites, who were in danger of being followers of them, “You have listened to so much advice that you are confused; call on your astrologers if you wish. They try to tell you what the future holds, but they are useless as dried grass in the fire. They cannot even deliver themselves. Sitting by their fire will not make you warm.”

Well what I’m saying, essentially, is this. The Bible tells us there is a demonic world. We cannot, so far as I know, prove that that world exists, but there are certainly some strange things happening in our society, that have happened down through the centuries, that would lead us to believe that so far as the Bible is concerned, it all could well be true. And as a Christian, accepting Scriptures, we must of course believe that that is true.

The exorcism of demons by our Lord was no fantasy or dream. The evangelist traces the deliverance of the deaf-mute by the exorcism of a demon by the Lord. This is the last of the Messianic signs. It is the last of the signs that point to our Lord Jesus as the true Messianic king, and in the remainder of our hour this morning, we want to take a look at this brief account of the healing of the deaf-mute.

The request of the friends is set forth by Matthew in verse 32. “And as they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man.” As you look over this 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, there is something that comes to mind immediately, and I think it is this. It is the rapidity of the cures of the Lord Jesus. One after the other is brought to our Lord, and our Lord heals them.

For example, here in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, we have just read recently and just studied recently of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, which our Lord accomplished on the way to the house of Jairus, where he healed Jairus’ daughter. Then, as he left that house, two blind men follow him, follow him across the village to another house. And in the house, the Lord heals the blind men. And now we read, as they went

out of the house, behold, they brought to him a dumb man, and he heals the dumb man possessed with a demon. One act of grace and mercy succeeds another.

One after another. And Mr. Spurgeon, somewhere, says something like this, “What an inexhaustible source of grace and mercy is the Lord Jesus.” He blesses and blesses and blesses and blesses, and then after all of that is done, there still remains an inexhaustible source of blessing.” So, one after the other, the rapidity of the cures, laying stress upon the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus.

Matthew says that they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon. The Greek word that is used to describe this is, however, a word that refers in other contexts to more than simply dumbness. It sometimes refers to a person who is deaf, and in the New Testament we have it in that sense. Then, occasionally, it refers to a person who is deaf and dumb, and I think that is the meaning here. So what we have in mind here is not simply a dumb person, but a person who is dumb because he was deaf, and the deafness was caused by the demon related to it. So he is really a deaf-mute, a person who cannot hear, and because he has never been able to hear, could not, therefore, speak.

So when they brought the dumb man, we are to understand that he was a deaf-mute. There is a causal relation, Matthew sets forth, between the demons and this affliction, because we read in the next verse when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke. So, it is evident, then, that here is a man who is possessed of a demon, and possessed of a demon in such a way that he was deaf and therefore dumb.

Now those people who study the Scriptures but do not believe them tell us that what is in mind here is not really a literal demon at all, or really a literal demon-possessed man. Rather, the people of those days, not really knowing the sources of illnesses and afflictions such as deafness and dumbness were inclined to trace them to some evil spirit. But the New Testament does not give any countenance whatsoever to a view such as that.

The New Testament, in this incident traces this affliction to the demons. Who are the demons? I think a few week ago I alluded to this; I’ll just repeat it again briefly in case there were some who were not here. When Satan was created, he was called Lucifer, the Son of the Morning. He was the chief, evidently, of the angelic hosts. But Satan, at one point in history, fell. And when Satan fell, a host of his angelic subordinates fell with him. The Bible speaks in one place of a third of the hosts, or suggests that at least. So a great number of the angelic beings who served under Satan fell when he fell.

Now as far as we can tell, the demons of the New Testament, these devils, are those individuals who fell with Satan when Satan fell. Now we know from the things that are stated in the word of God that Satan’s kingdom is a well-organized kingdom. In the Book of Daniel we read, for example, of the Prince of Greece and, I believe, the Prince of Persia, and they are angelic beings who are fallen who are referred to as the Prince of Greece and the Prince of Persia. So evidently, Satan’s hosts are so well organized that certain territories are parceled out to them.

Now if that is true, then, the demons were part of this well-organized host of evil spirits who serve Satan. Demon-possession, then, is not another name for insanity. When we read in the Bible that a person was possessed of a demon, we’re not to translate that into 20<sup>th</sup> century terminology of an insane person.

When we read in the New Testament of the possession of a man by a demon, we’re not to think of a person with multiple personalities or dissociation. We’re not to think of a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde kind of person. What we are to think of is demon-possession. Granted, we have not seen one – or at least I have not seen one – perhaps you have seen one. But still, if we accept the Scriptures as our principium, we must stand upon this. And we know, of course, that there is no way in which any one can disprove the statement of holy Scripture.

Von Ranke, a German historian who was one of the greatest analysts of the historical process – and anybody who ever did any advanced study in history would

know of von Ranke – more than once called attention in his historical writing to something subtle in history, which he said, “Remained at the finish as a sort of residuum, unexplained.” He said he felt as though “some occult force were at work in the midst of the apparent confusion.” And anybody who has grown up as I did, in the days of Adolph Hitler, when I was in college and studying history – and I spent a great deal of time studying modern history – Adolph Hitler was on the professor’s lips almost every day.

And if you’ve become acquainted with Hitler and the men associated with him, and also Hitler’s own personal history, you can see why a man like von Ranke, who lived before that time, might say that as one studied history and then looked at it in its wholeness, you might conclude that there is a kind of occult force at work in the midst of the apparent confusion. So when we read in the New Testament of demon-possessed men, looking at history realistically, you could believe that that might be an explanation of some of the things we have experienced.

Well after having stated in verse 32 that the friends of this dumb man brought him to the Lord Jesus, we read in verse 33 of the result of the exorcism. And when the demon was cast out – incidentally, do you notice how brief the description is? There is no statement here of the manner of the exorcism. The text is just a terse text that says “when the demon was cast out.” I think the stress of this, then, leads us to comment upon the ease of the overthrow of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons.

Beelzebub is a name for the prince of the demons, a name for Satan. He is called by the Lord Jesus in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter, when we deal with that, “the strongman,” and if one is to defeat the strongman, he must plunder his house and take his goods as spoil. He refers to what he is going to do, ultimately, on the cross when he dies for sin and makes it possible for men to be caught out of the possession of Satan and brought into the possession of God.

Now the terseness and brevity and conciseness of this text, it seems to me, stresses the ease with which the Lord Jesus is able to overthrow this prince of the Satanic world.

The strongman has met his master in the Lord Jesus. And furthermore, the man who stands before the Lord Jesus, this dumb man possessed of the demon, could not even utter a word. The ease of the healing is matched by the readiness of the Lord Jesus to heal.

He doesn’t say, now wait until he’s able to recite the catechism, or until he’s able to plead for mercy, or any other thing. But the dumb man is brought before him. It is evident that he needs healing, desires healing – otherwise, they would not have brought him and he would not have been willing to come – and even though he does not speak a word, immediately so far as the text is concerned, the demon is cast out. The Lord Jesus is not Scrooge who holds and stingily bestows his blessing upon men. He is ready to heal, he is able to heal with the greatest of ease as he rapidly responds to the request for healing. And Satan’s dominion topples at the voice of the sovereign Lord.

This produces a reaction among the beholders, and it’s a beautiful, profound exhibition, it seems to me, of the two responses that men may make to Jesus Christ. We read in verse 33 of the response of the people, “And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke and the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was never so seen in Israel.’” Now, they were right. It was a remarkable thing, and I think there are some remarkable things that appear right on the surface of this account.

And one of them is that the man who stood before the Lord Jesus was a remarkable case to start with: a demon-possessed deaf-mute. An excellent test for a king. If it is true that he is a king – and remember, the Old Testament said that when the Messiah came, he would open the mouths of the dumb – in fact, in one passage in Isaiah, it says that he would make them sing. So here is a deaf-mute, if he is the Messiah, he should be able to heal him. So he is an excellent test-case for him.

But of course, in all of these incidents that we find, there are spiritual principles that lie back of them. And by application, this deaf-mute illustrates men who are under the power of the evil one and who are under the power of sin and consequently, cannot

respond to the word of God and to the witness of God apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

John tells us in one of his epistles that the whole world lies in the wicked one. What does that mean? Why that means that apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, every one of us is possessed by the devil. Not that every one of us is demon-possessed, but that we all belong to him. We are under his power. And when the Apostle Paul met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus Road, one of the commissions that the Lord gave him, according to Paul was, that he was to turn men from the power of Satan to the power of God, so that all men are under the authority and power of the evil one.

And the means by which he holds us in his power is our sin. Here is, then, a deaf-mute who stands before the Lord, illustrative of the fact that men outside of Christ are under the control of the evil one, and being under the control of the evil one, cannot respond to God. He has no voice for prayer. He has no voice for praise. He has no voice for testimony, and no person who has not yet come to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus may praise God properly, may testify to the grace of God, or can offer a prayer that glorifies our God.

The reason for this, as I’ve been saying over and over again, is that men outside of Christ are unable to hear. They are dead in trespasses and sins. The text that I think beautifully expresses this, and that I’ve cited more than once already throughout this section is 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14: “The natural man (that is, the man outside of Christ) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto him. Neither can he (not, neither does he) know them, for are they spiritually discerned.” So if we do not have the Holy Spirit as a possession to interpret holy Scripture for us, we cannot understand divine truth.

That is why so many people read the Bible and get nothing out of it. They do not find anything in Scripture that ministers to them. And sitting right by them may be

someone who is reveling and rejoicing in the truths of the word of God which seem to speak so directly to all of their personal needs.

About ten years ago I was in California at the University Presbyterian Church at Berkley, California. And I was listening to some of the ministry of the word that was being given there, because a friend of mine – an old friend of mine – was there, a woman who was a Bible teacher. Mrs. Weatherall Johnson is really the leader of the Bible Fellowship movement, and throughout the Western part of the United States, particularly, there is a great deal of study of the word of God by the women which has been led by Mrs. Johnson for some years. She was originally a missionary to China, and was actually in the same school in China that I was going to teach in as I was graduating from Dallas Seminary but was unable to do so because of the conditions in China when the Communists came in.

Mrs. Johnson and I were discussing some of these questions that were related to this. She said, “Lewis, I had an experience not so long ago that illustrates what we’re talking about.” She said, “I was ministering the word of God, or someone was ministering the word of God, and after the ministry at this conference, this young man came up to me and said, ‘Mrs. Johnson,’ and Lewis,” she said, “he was a student at CalTech” (and may of you know that this is one of our premier scientific institutions in this country). She said, “He said, ‘Mrs. Johnson, Einstein doesn’t bother me, but I have difficulty with this literary stuff,’ as he put it. ‘I don’t seem to be getting what others are getting at this conference.’”

She said, “I had the opportunity to point out to him that the reason he was not getting this, whereas he could get the things of Einstein, was that in understanding the word of God and in understanding spiritual truth, one needs the illumination of the Holy Spirit, because as Paul said, we are dead in trespasses and sins and cannot understand.”

Sometime, over twenty years ago, I looked at *National Geographic* magazine, and there was a very interesting article on the bats of Carlsbad Caverns. And since I had just been to Carlsbad Caverns, I read the article. And there was a paragraph in it that, it

seems to me, illustrates beautifully this important point that we cannot understand spiritual truth if we do not have the Holy Spirit.

The bats of Carlsbad Caverns winter in Mexico. In May, they come back. There are from 5 to 8 million bats that live in Carlsbad Caverns. If you have ever been to Carlsbad Caverns in the evening when they go out for food, you will know all about them (I presume if they are still there). Each evening they used to stream out of the caverns for water and food.

Bats are among the surest fliers in the world. They move accurately in blinding darkness. When I went through Carlsbad Caverns, after you went about halfway down, they turned off all the lights, and I remember being impressed that that was the most beautiful illustration of the Scriptural expression: “the blackness of darkness forever.” You literally could not see your hand before your face—it was that black.

Now Carlsbad Caverns is filled with stalactites and stalagmites. Stalactites are those things that hang from the ceiling, that look like icicles, and stalagmites are those things on the floor that look like a pyramid. Now as you look out over those caverns, and you realize that in the blackness and the darkness there a bat can fly in and out among them with unerring accuracy, you have to admire whatever apparatus they have.

Scientists have investigated this question, and they discovered something about the bats that illustrated the point that I’m trying to make here. They took some of the bats, and they wired their mouths closed. And they discovered when they did that that they flew right into the objects. And as a result of that, they discovered that bats fly with a kind of echo-location, a natural sonar or radar. They emit little squeaks which bounce off of these obstacles, and by the echoes they are able to fly.

Now, the striking thing about this is that bats make a lot of noise when they fly, as you know. You can hear the beat of their leathery wings. They make noises when they are enraged, and they make noises when they are in pain. But they make no noise whatsoever, so far as the human ear is concerned, when they utter these little squeaks by

which they fly. In other words, the human ear is able to pick up the frequency of the sounds of pain or rage, but the human ear is unable to pick up the frequency and sound of the squeaks by which they fly. Now the only way that we could do that is to be a bat, I guess, to have the capacity for understanding that particular wavelength of sound that a bat does. In other words, it is something that is beyond our kin.

I’ve often said, in a room like this there are many sounds here that you and I cannot hear. There are disc jockeys that are playing certain records now. There are news programs and probably also sports programs, and various other types of things that are going on right in this room, and the moment that we have before us a radio receiver, we’re able to tune them in. But since our ears are unable to pick up high-frequency sounds, we cannot hear them. They’re here, we just don’t have the capacity for it.

Now, the word of God is like that. There are certain things in the word of God that we can see. We can certainly see the word of God. We can certainly read these words, “And the demon was cast out.” But as far as spiritually understanding this, we cannot understand the spiritual significance of it until the Holy Spirit illumines us by opening our ears, coming to dwell within us and be our teacher.

Maybe I can illustrate it another way. If you have ever looked at a pile of stones in an ordinary light, you have discovered, of course, they look just like that, just like a pile of stones. But if you take a pile of stones into a dark room, and throw upon them what someone calls black light or, ultra-violet rays, then they become amazing objects of beauty. The ultra-violet light ray is the unseen part of the violent end of the spectral band of light, and it is a very good illustration of the Holy Spirit illuminating the pages of Scripture.

The Bible is fluorescent to the illumination of the Holy Spirit. If you take the Bible and put it under the eyes of men who have never experienced the new birth, and do not have the Holy Spirit, it looks like any other book. As a matter of fact, it looks like foolishness, so Paul says. But if you take that same book, and put it under the

illumination of the Holy Spirit, then it responds just as stones do to ultra-violet rays. And you see beauties and the flashing of light of divine truth, which you never see apart from his ministry.

It fluoresces with new and remarkable beauty under the illumination of the Spirit, and anyone who has ever experienced the illumination of the Holy Spirit knows exactly what I’m speaking about. So here is a deaf-mute who stands before the Lord Jesus – a beautiful illustration of a man outside of Jesus Christ, who has never come to the knowledge of the Lord and the possession of the Spirit. That means that he has a divine teacher now who has written the book and it able to instruct him in it.

P. T. Forsythe used to say, the truth we foresee depends upon the men we are. And that’s a good statement, providing we understand he means by that, the truth we see depends upon our relationship to the Holy Spirit and the new birth. So it’s a remarkable case.

Now, it’s a remarkable cure, too, because the demon, exorcised, never returned. By the way, that would seem to suggest that once we come to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that knowledge we possess is something we possess forever. We do not have a man becoming a believer in the Lord Jesus and then a few months later becoming an apostate. If that happens, so far as we know outwardly, that is simply the evidence that he did not come to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Because when a person comes to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, a new life becomes his, and that new life must express itself. But I don’t want to stress that; that’s only an implication of this passage.

The text says, “And when the demon was cast out, the dumb spoke.” Now that’s a kind of second miracle. How did he know how to speak? He had never heard. And yet, not only is the demon removed, he now is able to speak. We do not read of any teacher who came to teach him the alphabet, to teach him phonetics, to teach him syntax and grammar. He did not take a Berlitz course. This is a kind of a second miracle: he is able to speak having been a deaf-mute.

I wonder what he said. Well, I’ve put in the notes what I think he said. I think he undoubtedly must’ve praised the Lord and praised God for the deliverance that he had. I think he might even had said, “The Lord has put a new song in my mouth! And he might even have sung some praises to the Lord Jesus and to God the Father in heaven. For the text of the Old Testament, remember, said, “He would make the tongue of the dumb to sing.”

I have a friend – I knew about him before I ever knew him – he was an Irishman. He was really just a bum for a number of years, and he lived the kind of life you would have expected a bum to live. He was an alcoholic. Every word that came out of his mouth, so former acquaintances said, was some expletive. In fact, a well-known Christian man in New York City used to say about Mickey Walsh, “When Mickey Walsh was converted through the Rescue Mission, he didn’t have enough language left as a Christian to order ham and eggs.” [Laughter]

Now Mickey Walsh became a Bible teacher. He began to study the Scriptures, and my first acquaintance with him was on the platform of one of the Bible conferences around the country. This man had, by virtue of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, become a very acceptable Bible teacher. And until a just few years ago when he had a heart attack as a man in his seventies, he carried on a ministry with the touring professionals who play golf around this county and around the world. An amazing man, and you should hear the language of that man now. It’s lovely.

It’s an amazing thing that which conversion to Christ accomplishes. And it’s not surprising in the light of this remarkable person who performs the miracle. Israel had had it’s Elijah, and Israel had had it’s Elisha. Israel had had it’s Moses and all of these men performed mighty miracles, but there now stands in the presence of Israel the incarnate God, that which Isaiah speaks of as “the Mighty God.” He has omnipotence in his hands, he has omniscience in his head, omnipresence in his being, and he has the elect on his heart.

He’s able to take an Augustine out of a professorship of rhetoric and make him a man of grace. He’s able to take a Luther out of an Augustinian monastery and take all of the monkishness out of him and make him a man of grace. He’s able to take a Calvin from his legal studies and from his humanist studies, and make him probably the greatest theologian that we have ever had. He’s able to take a John Wesley out of an Anglican ministry and make him a flaming evangelist, and he’s able to do something even with you. Isn’t that amazing? [laughter] It was never so seen Israel until you were converted.

Well, the reaction of the Pharisees is different, of course. They have no voice to praise. They have one to impeach: the Holy One of Israel as a sinner. Malignity is no less devilish because it is masked as piety, someone has said. It’s better to be a skeptic, a scientific skeptic, and trace all of the miracles of the Lord to natural causes than it is to trace them to Satan, which is what these religious leaders were doing.

They said, “He casts out his demons by the force of Beelzebub” – by Satan himself. But the reason they say that is because their hearts are out of touch with God. Samuel Rutherford said a long time ago, “It’s common for men to make doubts when they have the mind to desert the truth.” I am convinced myself that a lot of the doubts that surround individuals who listen to the word of God are not caused by any intellectual problems, they’re caused by moral problems. They’re caused because deep down within, they’re in opposition to the truth of God.

They know God deep down within. God has implanted the knowledge of himself innately in their hearts. They have been created in the image of God. They know that God exists, but they suppress the knowledge that God has put in their very being. And of course, the greatest kind of wickedness is to suppress the truth in the name of revealed religion.

Well, our time is up. I want you to notice this. There is a great diversity of approaches to the king. The ruler comes and asks that he touch his daughter. A woman sneaks up and reaches out her hand and touches him. A blind man stands before him,

pleading and calling out before him constantly, “Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!” Another stands by his side crying out the same thing. And then there’s a dumb man who stands mutely and passively before him and the Lord Jesus performs the necessary healing in each case. There are many ways to come to Jesus Christ.

It’s like the Tabernacle in the Old Testament, that great picture of divine salvation. If you read the Book of Exodus, you’ll discover that the Tabernacle had one gate. A person, in order to come in to the Court had to go through the one gate. And then inside, there was the altar of burnt offering, and then the Holy Place, and finally the Holiest of All, and the ministry was carried on by the priests in the court and in the Holy Place and Most Holy.

There were many ways to the gate. There are many ways to come to Christ. Every single person in this audience who has ever come to the Lord Jesus has come in a different way. I came out of the insurance business. You may have come out of some other business, or as a student, or because your father or mother led you to the Lord when you sat upon their laps a little child. All of us have different stories, for there are different ways to come to the door.

But in the Tabernacle, there was only one way in. One gate. And in that one gate, we have illustrated the fact that while there are many ways to come to Christ, there is only one way to come to God, and that is through Christ. “I am the door,” he said, “if any man enter in by me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.” Many ways to come to the door, but all must go through the door. All of these different kinds of people who had different kinds of experiences and different kinds of needs, all came to him, for there is only this one way of salvation.

Through all of this saving activity, one can see its beautiful universality. He is responsible to all the different kinds of needs that we have. You don’t have to worry whether you’re one of the elect or not, come and discover that you are. But if you don’t want to, you’ll never be able to stand before God and say, “I couldn’t come because I

wasn’t one of the elect.” The gospel message is proclaimed to you. You may come. May God give you grace to come to him. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] We thank Thee and praise Thee, Lord, for the privilege of reading and studying holy Scripture, and we thank Thee for the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit. We praise Thee for the great truth of regeneration which has led to faith and the permanent indwelling of the third person of the Trinity.

We thank Thee for the Son of God who shed his blood, making an atonement for sinners. And O God, if there are some who have not responded at this very moment through the Spirit, lead them to the response of trust in him that means life.

Now may grace, mercy and peace go with us as we part.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.