

WHAT KIND OF MAN?

Gregory Lawhorn

Matthew / Matthew 9:32-34

Matthew 9:32-34 (2016 ESV) – 32 As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. **33** And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” **34** But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

INTRODUCTION

We have come to the final miracle in [Matthew 8-9](#). Jesus cast a demon out of a man, and healed him of the muteness caused by that demon. Not to take anything away from this miracle – certainly none of us can simply command a demon and heal muteness – but it seems anticlimactic. The high point of [Matthew 8-9](#) from a spiritual point of view is the conversion of Matthew himself. The high point in terms of Jesus’ healing work, at this point at least, is the raising of the little girl from death.

But in the two healing episodes that follow that resurrection, Matthew does not focus on the healings themselves, but the results of the healings. Last week we saw that the blind men were full of faith while they were blind and in need, but then showed zero loyalty to Jesus after He had healed them.

This week we see that the Pharisees present in Capernaum – and I have no doubt that they spoke for Pharisees in general – accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the prince of demons, by Satan himself.

The crowds were astounded by what Jesus did. In just a couple of days' time Jesus had performed a lot of miraculous acts. He healed many; He taught many; He blessed many. He showed grace and kindness to many. No one had gotten used to Him doing these things; they never really did.

But the Pharisees said that He did these works by the power of Satan. It would be easy to scoff at them, but let's not do that. Let's think about who Satan is, and who Jesus is, and then think about their words. While we don't want to give Satan any glory, neither do we want to be ignorant of his intentions ([Second Corinthians 2:11](#)). We need to understand our enemy or risk falling prey to him.

SATAN

By the way, I am indebted for the excellent work done in a book called *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*, edited by John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue. It is an excellent book, and I can't recommend it enough.

The word **satan** is found in the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew and Greek words are both *satan*, and both mean to oppose, or obstruct, or accuse.

Satan is a created spirit being. He is able to move quickly over the earth.

He possesses tremendous knowledge and power, but they are the knowledge and power of a creature, not God.

He is, for the time being, the god of this world. His constant aim is to destroy the works and people of God.

He is worthless, vile, and wicked, the Evil One.

He is a slanderer, a liar, and the father of lies.

He is a murderer, a roaring lion, always on the prowl for victims to devour.

He is the tempter; to him, human beings are sheep to be slaughtered, less than

insects are to us, to be destroyed and discarded without a thought.

He is incredibly self-deceived, believing that he can and should be like the Most High God.

But, he faces eternal torment in the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his demonic forces.

His works are exactly in line with his nature.

He lies and deceives on a constant basis. He pretends to be an angel of light; he used that pretense to deceive Mohammed, Joseph Smith, and countless others.

He snatches the Gospel from unbelieving hearts, keeping unbelievers trapped in their sins, forcing them to do his will. He seeks to deceive the children of God, and sometimes succeeds in a small way for a brief time.

He seeks to hinder the progress of the Gospel. For the time being he is waging war against the church, but cannot prevail against the church even on earth.

One day his war will be over, and he will be utterly defeated and humiliated, and imprisoned for all eternity under the judgment of God.

JESUS

But Jesus IS our Savior – merciful, gracious, kind, forgiving. He delivers all of His people from the tyranny of the evil. He forgave our sin-guilt through His blood. He broke the power of sin over us by joining us with Him in His death on His cross. He satisfied the righteous and fully deserved wrath of God against us, by taking our place on the cross. [Romans 8:34](#) tells us that Jesus is interceding for us at the right hand of God. [Hebrews 7:25](#) says that He because He lives for ever, He is able to intercede to the uttermost of our need, to the uttermost of all time. [First Timothy 2:5](#) says that there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. [Philippians 2](#) says that Jesus, though being God, did not consider His divine nature something to be jealousy clung to, but willingly emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and humbling Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, specifically death on a cross. Jesus rose from the dead for our justification ([Romans 4:25](#)) and for our own resurrection ([Romans 6:4](#)).

WHAT KIND OF MAN IS JESUS?

[Matthew 9:34](#) (2016 ESV) — **34** But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

The issue the Pharisees raise is, “What kind of man is Jesus of Nazareth?”

Well, let’s just take what we’ve seen in Matthew’s Gospel over the past 61 sermons. With one thing and another, it’s actually been 90 weeks since we began this journey through Matthew. Matthew brings the first part of his Gospel to a pause here, telling us what the Pharisees thought about Jesus, and giving us the opportunity to think about Him ourselves.

So let's summarize the past 61 sermons.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and countless others. (1:1-17)

He was conceived not by a man, but by the Holy Spirit. (1:18-25)

He was worshiped in His infancy. (2:1-12)

He was immediately preceded by a prophet of God. (3:1-12)

He was publicly and audibly affirmed by God the Father, and visibly affirmed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism. (3:13-17)

He was directly tempted by the devil after fasting 40 days, and never yielded in the slightest. (4:1-11)

He fulfilled God's promise to Israel that a great light would shine in the darkness. (4:12-16)

He called on sinners to repent for the sake of reconciliation with God. (4:17)

He had such influence with others that they left their professions to follow Him for the rest of their lives. (4:18-22)

He traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in synagogues, and healing every conceivable kind of illness and affliction. (4:23-25)

He taught His disciples with divine wisdom and authority. (5-8)

He healed a leper. (8:1-4)

He healed a paralyzed man at a distance. (8:5-13)

He healed Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. (8:14-15)

He cast demons out of many, and healed them of the effects of demon possession, fulfilling God's promise that the Messiah would bear our illnesses and diseases. (8:16-17)

He set the terms for those who follow Him, refusing to negotiate or meet their demands. (8:18-22)

He calmed a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee. (8:23-27)

He cast demons out of two idol-worshipping Gentiles. (8:28-34)

He forgave the sins of a paralyzed man, and proved His authority for forgive sin by healing the man of his paralysis. (9:1-8)

He called Matthew, a hated tax collector, to follow Him, and Matthew immediately did so, leaving not only his tax booth, but his sin, behind. (9:9-13)

He announced the fulfillment of the New Covenant, describing it as new wine that belongs in new wineskins. (9:14-17)

He healed a woman of a hemorrhage that had lasted well over a decade. (9:18-22).

He raised a girl from the dead. (9:23-26)

He healed two blind men. 9:27-31)

He cast a demon out of a man, and healed him of his muteness. (9:32-34).

These aren't theories, but historical events. They happened at a specific time, in a specific place.

So, what kind of man is Jesus Christ? That's the question Matthew wants us to ponder, and to consider, and to answer. What kind of man is He?

Well, He's a **one-of-a-kind** man, the One promised by God the Father, the One who fulfills the Father's will.

He is a **divine** man, God Himself in human flesh.

He is a **holy** man, untouched by sin, utterly pure in His every thought, word, and action.

He is the **New Covenant** in living form, bringing salvation to every person whom the Father gave Him to save.

He is a **good** man, healing, comforting, teaching, encouraging, never harming, never increasing suffering.

He is **Savior**, bringing sinners of every kind out of the domain of darkness, and into His Kingdom of light.

He is **Lord**, exerting power over illness, disease, disability, nature, demons, and human beings.

What kind of man was, and is, Jesus Christ?

Savior!

Lord!

The only One worth living for.

The only One worth dying for.

The One worthy of all our praise and all our thanks and all our devotion.

WHAT KIND OF MAN ACCUSES JESUS?

So then, what kind of man would then accuse Jesus of doing His miraculous works by Satan's power?

What kind of man would dismiss every single one of these truths about Jesus Christ, and trample Him underfoot as a tool of the devil?

What kind of man, even if aware of only a few of these things, would accuse Jesus of having satanic motivations?

What kind of man would say that Jesus is a thief who comes to steal, kill, and

destroy?

What kind of man would say that any one thing that Jesus did, much less the totality of His teaching and works, was evil and wicked and vile from top to bottom?

What kind of man would say that Jesus Christ, God the Son and the Son of God, full of grace and truth, was actually indistinguishable from Satan?

Well, in all honesty, a man like me; a person like you.

A sinner. Proud. Arrogant. Rebellious.

Willing to say anything, even about God, for the sake of self-justification.

Willing to demonize the holy, lovely Son of God in order to continue to pretend that we are not that bad.

Intellectually dishonest, ignoring every last scrap of biblical evidence, picking and choosing areas to criticize, all the while ignoring every sound and reasonable answer.

Trapped in tradition, whether an inherited religious tradition, or a self-defined tradition.

Following the thinking of both Satan and Eve, both of whom thought they could be like God, or at least force God to give me what I demand of Him.

You see, the Pharisees were not so different than you and me.

They were simply dead in their sin, unable to think or act differently than they did.

They were slaves to their sin, as all sinners are slaves to sin.

They built a system that perfectly fit their spiritual blindness and permitted it to continue.

They were terribly afraid of what the Romans would do to them if Jesus continued to do what He did ([John 11:48](#)).

They were frightened that Jesus' influence over the people meant the loss of their power and privilege.

You've heard the saying, "The bigger you are, the harder you fall." The Pharisees considered themselves to be big men, leaders, the heart of truth and righteousness in Israel. And they fell in such a hard way, bringing so many down with them.

The resurrection should have ended their unbelief. You see, if Jesus' disciples were lying about the resurrection, all the Pharisees had to do was go to His tomb and produce His decaying corpse. But they couldn't, because the tomb was empty, and they knew it. They and the chief priests had asked Pontius Pilate to assign Roman soldiers to guard Jesus' tomb in order to keep Jesus' disciples from stealing His body. After Jesus was raised, those soldiers went to the Pharisees and priests and told them what had happened, that an angel had

come and opened the tomb, which was now empty – the only eyewitnesses to the resurrection were unbelieving Roman soldiers! Rather than accepting that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the priests and Pharisees paid off the soldiers, and told them to say that they had fallen asleep – a capital offense – and the disciples snuck in and stole Jesus’ body.

BRINGING IT HOME

What kind of man is Jesus Christ? He is Lord and Savior. He is God in human flesh. He is worthy of all our praise. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He is, as the song says, strong and kind. He is our faithful high priest, our mediator between ourselves and God, our advocate with the Father.

What kind of person rejects Jesus? Someone who is dead in their sins. Someone who is utterly blind to the judgment they face.

People think that unbelievers will become believers if they only see enough evidence. Well, the Pharisees saw it all, and heard it all. They were instrumental in calling for Jesus’ crucifixion. They saw Him die. They saw Him buried. They knew that His tomb was empty, and the only rational explanation was that God had raised Him from the dead.

Yet, they chose their traditions over the Son of God and His merciful, gracious Gospel. Beloved, if a natural person, dead in their sins, in rebellion against God, could be convinced by the evidence that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, the Pharisees would have been convinced. The evidence is absolutely overwhelming, but couldn’t convince anyone. That’s because of the nature of spiritual death. It’s not that unbelievers don’t WANT to believe and obey, but that they CAN’T believe and obey. If someone said to you, “I refuse to believe that Jesus is Savior and Lord,” you can rightly say to them, “Actually, it’s not your choice; you couldn’t believe in Him even if you wanted to.” Being spiritually

dead doesn't mean a sinner DOESN'T respond to God at all, but that they are unable to respond positively; they only respond with unbelief and rebellion.

What kind of person trust in Jesus Christ and follows Him? Someone whom God has graciously granted a softened heart, open eyes, faith to believe, new life in Christ, repentance and obedience. He does that work within us by His Spirit, according to His grace. The first step in evangelism is always, always, always prayer. Telling someone about Jesus Christ is our work; getting that message any deeper than their eardrum is God's work.