

Christ as Teacher

Key Verse: *“They were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.”*
—Luke 4:32

Selected Scripture:
Luke 4:31-37; 20:1-8

JESUS, BECAUSE HE WAS A perfect man, also had perfect abilities and talents. One of these was as a teacher. As a teacher, he had perfect ability to present the message of the Gospel, and to do so in a way which captivated and impressed his hearers, even those who considered him an enemy. Our Key Verse indicates this by stating that his words were ‘with power’—that is, authority and force—and those who heard him were amazed.

On this occasion, there was a man with an unclean spirit who had come to the synagogue, perhaps hoping that Jesus would rid him of this terrible condition. The evil spirits, of course, feared this possibility, and spoke through the lips of the man whom they had possessed, saying, “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.” (Luke 4:34) Jesus immediately commanded the evil spirit to be quiet and come out of the man, and “he came out of him, and hurt him not.”—vs. 35

Those gathered there were amazed, huddling among themselves, marveling that even the unclean spirits were subject to his words (vs. 36). The Mark account of this same experience puts it this way, “The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives

orders to evil spirits and they obey him.”—Mark 1:27, *New International Version*

On another occasion, Jesus showed his great authority and talent as a teacher in a different way. While teaching the people in the Temple, he was asked by the chief priests and scribes, who were surely attempting to stumble him, “By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?” (Luke 20:2) Jesus saw that their motives were impure, and that there really was no need to give them an answer, for it should have been clear to them that only the authority of God could be behind the wonderful deeds, miracles, and teachings which he had been putting forth, and which no one had been able to deny, duplicate, or question.

Jesus did respond in another way, however, using a method which we can perhaps use when questioned by others—he answered them with a question of his own, asking them whether the baptism of John was authorized by God or by men. (vs. 4) The Jewish leaders reasoned among themselves, soon realizing that Jesus had them in a mental trap. As they conversed together, they said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” (vss. 5,6, *New American Standard Bible*) Their answer to Jesus, recorded in verse 7, was that they did not know who authorized John’s baptism, surely a humiliating admission for them since they were the supposed religious teachers of the people. To their answer, Jesus simply replied, “Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”—vs. 8

These lessons were merely foretastes of the greater teaching work of the Christ in the kingdom, when all mankind will learn righteousness. “He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Mic. 4:2 ■