

Mark 9:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

Analysis

A father from the crowd answered Jesus: 'Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit' (Διδάσκαλε, ἦνεγκα τὸν νιόν μου πρὸς σέ, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον). The address 'Master' (Didaskale, Διδάσκαλε, 'Teacher') shows respect. His statement 'I have brought' uses the aorist tense, indicating completed action—he specifically sought Jesus but found only disciples. The 'dumb spirit' (pneuma alalon, πνεῦμα ἄλαλον) refers to a demon causing muteness. Mark's Gospel emphasizes Jesus' authority over demonic powers (Mark 1:23-27; 5:1-20; 7:24-30). The father's desperation is evident—he exhausted human resources (the disciples) and now appeals directly to Jesus. This illustrates the pattern of human extremity becoming God's opportunity. When human strength fails, divine power is revealed.

Historical Context

First-century Palestine had no medical understanding of conditions like epilepsy (v. 18 describes seizures). Such afflictions were attributed to demonic oppression, consistent with New Testament worldview acknowledging spiritual warfare. Exorcism was practiced in ancient Judaism—certain formulas, incantations, and rituals were employed (Acts 19:13-16 mentions Jewish exorcists). However, Jesus' exorcisms were unique: immediate, authoritative commands without magical formulas, demonstrating the kingdom of God breaking into the present evil age. The father's appeal to Jesus as 'Teacher' reflects respect for Jesus' authority,

though his full understanding of Jesus' identity was incomplete until after the miracle.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the father's direct appeal to Jesus after the disciples' failure model persistent faith that looks beyond human helpers to the ultimate source of power?
2. What does the existence of demonic oppression causing physical affliction teach about spiritual warfare's reality and Christ's authority over it?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἶς	ἐκ	τοῦ	ὄχλου	εἶπεν	Διδάσκαλε
And	answered	one	of	G3588	the multitude	and said	Master
G2532	G611	G1520	G1537		G3793	G2036	G1320
ἥνεγκα	τὸν	υἱόν	μου	πρὸς	σέ	ἔχοντα	πνεῦμα
I have brought	G3588	son	my	unto	thee	which hath	spirit
G5342		G5207	G3450	G4314	G4571	G2192	G4151
ἄλαλον·							
a dumb							
G216							

Additional Cross-References

Mark 9:25 (Spirit): When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

Luke 11:14 (Parallel theme): And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

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