

## DENYING THE UNDENIABLE CHRIST

**SCRIPTURE** Matthew 9:32–34: As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. <sup>33</sup> 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.”

<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

**SYNOPSIS** The last two miracles listed punctuate Jesus’ ministry of mighty works to present Him as undeniably the Christ. Jesus is the long-awaited, promised Messiah; the unique God-man come to redeem. He has come as the glory of a new dawn upon this darkened world dominated by sin’s suffering and satanic influence, to save us. He is the promised light come into the world to give sight and cast out darkness. He is the promised Son come to crush Satan. This passage is crowning and climactic in Jesus’ revelation. It also begins to unlock the riddle seen in Jesus’ rejection. Here there is no clearer witness to His identity according to Scripture and yet there is no clearer rejection of Him by those appointed as stewards of Scripture. The Christ is revealed. How will those who see and hear respond?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **POINTERS** — What do the pointers in these last two miracles signify? Discuss the importance of treating what Matthew records as historically and theologically contextual, and the progressive nature of the story.

More and more of Christ is being revealed in Matthew. “The more of Christ that is revealed, the more impossible it is to be indifferent about Him.” “There is no neutrality when it comes to Christ.” “More of Christ pushes you to a place where it is all or nothing. You cannot be a distant admirer. You will either reject Him or bow to the fullness of who He is.” How are you doing? Are you just going through the motions because someone else in your family is involved? Is it possible to be in church regularly and still reject Christ in certain parts of your life? In all of your life? How are you doing? Don’t jump before you think through your answer.

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2. **PARADOXICAL IRONIES** — Think deeply on your own for personal application and then discuss the following paradoxical/ironic lessons learned with your group. Examine your own thoughts and actions in light of the lessons learned in the passage. Consider God’s witness to your own heart and His witness through you in the world in which He has placed you.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

- a. **Blind–Sight:** The blind see and those who see are blind. As opposition rises, those who see becoming increasingly blind, yet it is the blind who see. Read and meditate on Matthew 13:15 and John 9:35-41. Can you see the pointers of God to God? Do you follow the pointers of God toward Jesus as God like a baby follows the line of its Father’s arm as he points to that which is best for the baby? Do you see Christ as everything and everything you could ever want, desire, or need? What does this look like in your life? Where/how can you improve your sight that you might follow all the more?

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- b. **No-Need–Needy:** Those who see no need for Christ in themselves are the neediest. The self-righteous see no need for righteousness, and that makes them most in danger of unrighteousness. Hope calls all who see their need. Those who see no need in themselves have no hope of being redeemed. Read and meditate on Revelation 3:17. People who are too proud to acknowledge their deep need are the most needy. Consider Matthew 9:12 in this light. The truly needy always see Jesus as their only hope. Jesus always appears most beautiful to the one with the deepest sense of neediness. The proud are self-satisfied and see no need for Jesus. Do we ever live as though we have no need for Jesus? Do you? How? Let’s be real with each other, confess our sins, and be healed (James 5:16).

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- c. **Open-Closed Mind:** We live in a post truth society that basically says, “I am open-minded.” What they really mean is, “I am open to what I want to be open to.” Post-truth minds—in their open-mindedness—are closed to absolute truth. What the eye sees is always dependent on what the heart desires. You will reinterpret reality to fit your desires. The pharisees went so far as to call/reinterpret God as Satan in order to fit their desires. They were so confident that they were right, they went to the extent of committing the ultimate blasphemy to maintain their position. They could not allow anything to interfere with their convictions. They could not deny what everyone saw, so in keeping with their precommitments they denied the undeniable—they reinterpreted reality to fit their desires. If you don’t see what your heart desires, do you reinterpret reality in order to fit what you are “open” to? What are we to do when God places us in a reality that does not fit with our immediate desires? How often does this happen to us? Is there any way for us to get to a place where this is not so often the case? What are some of the ways? Will you commit to do this for Christ’s glory and your joy?

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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

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- d. **Evil-Good:** See Isaiah 5:20. Exactly what the pharisees did. They called the ultimate and supreme good, the ultimate evil. What they attribute to be behind Jesus and His works ironically is what is behind them and their works. How does 2 Corinthians 4:4 relate to this irony in the Pharisees' thinking and assertions about Jesus?

See 1 John 3:8. How does this inform the irony further? See Genesis 3:15. Is Jesus as the fulfillment of this promise your only hope to drive out the darkness we are born into by His ushering in His glorious light? How much of your daily life is impacted by this promise? Why do we hope in lesser things?

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- e. **Death for Life:** Jesus brought life through His death. See and compare Hebrews 2:14-15, Matthew 9:35, and Luke 24:44-47. The needy come to Him. The proud deny Him. Do you have eyes to see Him? Are you always in a time of need before Him? Has His death brought you life so that you might die to yourself and live unto Him? Reflect on John 15:13; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Colossians 3:3-4; Romans 5:8; 8:10; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:10. He is the glorious One. Worship Him with everything you have knowing He is all you have! Please write out and then share examples as appropriate.
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