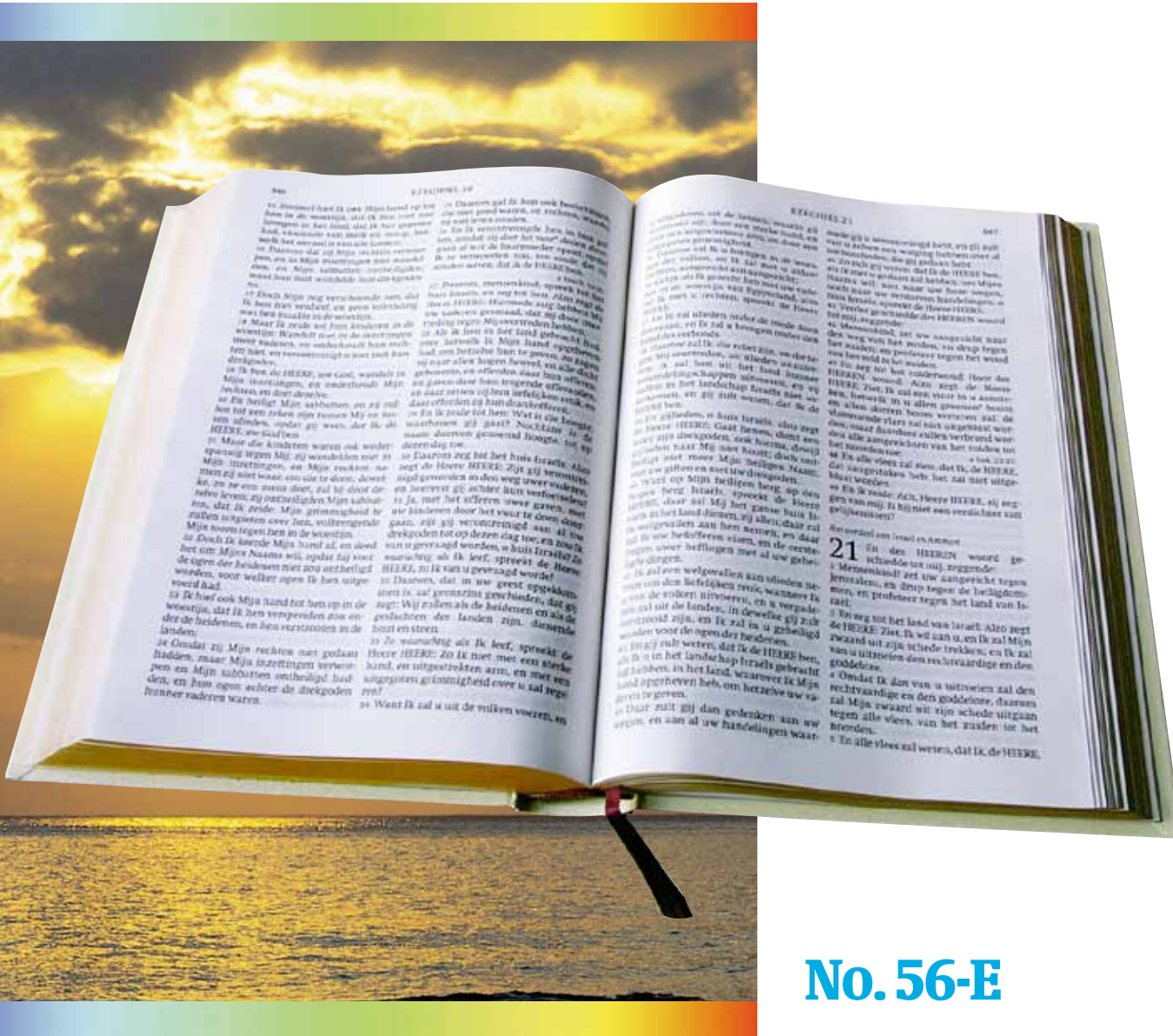


A Boy is Healed



All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3 : 16-17)

No. 56-E

Bible study

The idea is ...

Mark 9 : 17,20,26,28

17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.

20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly...

28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

The disciples could not cast out a "mute spirit". They wanted to, but could not, because it was not the intention. They did receive the power - and occasionally also the assignment - to drive out evil spirits. The fact that in this case they could not, is related to the deeper meaning of this story. The miracle of casting out is a sign and therefore, above all, has a prophetic and typological meaning; initially for Israel, but also for humanity in general and for individual human beings.

This Bible study addresses this and focuses on the position of the believer in this dispensation. The Lord is not on earth, but is beyond the scope of the world in his glorious position on the "mountain".



A Boy is Healed

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Introduction

Mark 9:14-29*

- 14 And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.
- 15 Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.
- 16 And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"
- 17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.
- 18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."
- 19 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."
- 20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.
- 21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.
- 22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."
- 23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."
- 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"
- 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"
- 26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."
- 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.
- 28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"
- 29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

The title of the following Scripture reads: "Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection." I mention this because that makes the story more or less complete. Chapter 8 ended with the so-called first announcement of the suffering. Subsequently, in chapter 9, there is the story of the transfiguration on the mount and the story of the healed boy. Then again there is the announcement of suffering, in particular the suffering of the Son of Man. In connection with the suffering, these two stories are told. The reason being that these stories are very much related to that. Both stories have their main significance in relation to the present position of Christ. That is, the position that Christ has achieved after or as a result of His suffering. This position cannot be described as one of glory in the world, because the overt, public glory of Christ is still awaiting the future. The world either does not know Him at all, or as the One who suffered and died, and that is the end of the story. However, besides the suffering of Christ, we also know these other stories. These two in-between, namely the transfiguration of the Lord on the mount and its meaning, which I will return to, and the story of the healed boy, which also has a prophetic meaning.

In this story of the healed boy we must notice two different things. First, we can take this story literally and can even see a practical application. The practical application is that where the Lord appears, evil powers, who- or whatever, must disappear because there is only room for the Lord. In this story, a father brings a sick boy to the Lord. This is done in faith, however weak that faith may be. As a result, the evil spirit and all its consequences are expelled. That is the immediate, more common and best-known application of the story. Second, we have yet another, much more important application. The phenomenon that satan's powers must give way to the power of God and of His Christ, is nothing special, for it is self-evident. From the worldly point of view, it is indeed special that it happens, but from Biblical ways of thinking it remains obvious. What makes the story special is not that this spirit is being driven out, but the fact that it is not being driven out for so long. This also has parallels in Biblical history.

Corruption

Professor Bettex once wrote that it was actually natural for a person, and certainly a believer, not to burn when thrown into a fiery furnace. In fact, it would be much more peculiar if a person burned when thrown into a fiery furnace. It must be clear that in any event, a believer is above corruption and fundamentally is not perishable and thus cannot be perished. For spirit is not burnt by fire; spirit is not flammable. If a human

* Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

being, in as much as he is spirit, is thrown into the fire, he does not burn there. It is not extraordinary that man survives there. It is actually the other way around, the fact that this human being usually dies in the fire is extraordinary. There must be something fundamentally wrong, and there indeed is. Furthermore, if it is true that the power of God is above the powers that work in this old creation, why are these powers always prevailing in this old creation? Why does my car rust? The answer is: Because of corruption. Why is corruption active in this world? If God's power is higher and far above corruption, why is there sickness, death and all kinds of misery in the world? The outsider, the non-Christian, at least those who do not know the Bible, always ask exactly the same question: if there is a God then why this and why that? That is a very intelligent question by the way, but not anymore if the questioner has reached the age of about fifty. After all, he or she has had all his or her lifetime to find the answer to that question, and that should be long enough. For the answer to that question is that something is wrong with the world. This world does not submit itself to the power of God and therefore it does not benefit from the power of God. This world submits itself to satan's power and is thus subject to the powers of satan. That is what can be said of the old creation, and that is how it is found in the Bible. I dare say that even without the Bible you should come to this conclusion.

The Mount of Transfiguration

What strikes in this story of the healed boy is not so much that he was healed, because we all expected that. The problem is, however, that it took a long time before he was healed, at least by the disciples, but it was waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus from the Mount of Transfiguration. That is what it is about. That is important because it implies a prophetic truth.

Mark 9:14

14 And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.

You must keep in mind that the Lord comes from the Mount of Transfiguration. The three disciples Peter, James and John from verse 2, saw the Lord Jesus in glorified form. After the Lord comes down from the mountain and reports to the remaining at least nine disciples (verse 14), it turns out that a large crowd has gathered. It is a kind of street crowd, and of course a few scribes are present. It says they were disputing.

Which is not surprising, for in the Bible that is always the case. Where the scribes appear, one quarrels. Among themselves they are usually also divided, but in any case, they form one common front against the Lord and against the disciples, that is, those who believe or follow the Lord. It is a fantastic situation, as it is described here. Not because it is so beautiful, but because it so beautifully matches the situation as we know it today in our world. It is about a nation, a large nation, a big crowd, humanity as such, to which also belong the scribes. It says He saw a great crowd around them and scribes disputing with them. The idea is that the crowd is for the most part led by those scribes. That is the meaning of such an expression. That this was the case is evident, for the Jews, as Jews, were usually led by scribes. There were no others; not even the Romans present in those days. Jews by definition were led by Jewish leaders, who, by definition, were scribes. It then says they were disputing. They apparently disagreed about the correct procedure to cure this boy, what it talks about in the following verses. There were discussions about this.

Mark 9:15

15 Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.

Instead of discussing with each other, they went to the Lord Jesus and asked Him to end the discussion.

Mark 9:16

16 And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

"Do you argue with the people who follow me, with the believers, with my disciples?" Of course, the Lord stood up for His own. It is important to notice this. The Lord did not argue with His disciples. Some interpret it like that later on. That is why at this point I say that it was the other way around. It were the scribes and the multitude who disputed with the disciples, not the Lord. On the contrary, the Lord stood up for His disciples and represented them.

Mark 9:17

17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.

There was a man in the crowd who had a mute son. He could not talk. The intention was that this man would bring his son to the Lord, but the Lord could not be found. For He was on the mountain. He was seen there by Elijah and Moses and possibly by Peter, James and John, but not by those who were at the foot of the mountain. Thus they ended up with these disciples. It is them who this son was brought to. Of course, the peculiar thing is that we are not dealing with just this son of this one man. We are dealing with a crowd from which this man emerges. For the broader meaning of this story, it must therefore be clear that it is not just about one human being, one man and one son, but it is about a problem that not only concerns this man, but the whole crowd; said differently: all humanity. All humanity has a son. The idea is that the son or daughter, as that is what it could also be, represents a later generation. What this man represents is clear. He represents humanity as such. There is a lot more behind that, but I am not going to address that now. Humanity can be taken as a whole, but you can also talk about humanity at a particular time. When considering humanity as a whole, I think of Adam and all he has brought forth over the centuries. Humanity as such is a fairly abstract concept. But when it concerns a son, it concerns a certain generation of humanity. Besides, that is a very Biblical way of thinking. For example, in the prophecies we find the phrase "the daughter of Zion". (Zephaniah 3:14) That daughter also represents a later generation. It designates a believing Israel. It is not Israel in the sense of all Israelites who have ever lived, but it is Israel as it will exist at some point. All then living Israelites are this daughter of Zion.

Another example is found in Hosea. There we find the story of Hosea and his wife Gomer. They get three children in succession: Jizreël, Lo-Ruchama and Lo-Ammi. Those three children represent three different generations, three different times of the history of Israel. Jizreël represents Israel as it was scattered in the Assyrian exile (the ten tribes). Indeed, "Jizreël" means that it would be scattered by God. So it is not Israel in general, but Israel that was scattered in the past. "Lo-Ruchama" means "no-mercy" and it represents Israel that was driven away in Babylonian exile years later (the two tribes). God did not have mercy on that Israel, on the contrary. Later, Lo-Ammi was born, and that represents Israel scattered in captivity, as it actually still is in our days. Like the people were scattered in the year 70 of our era, at the time of the desolation of Jerusalem. The three children of Hosea and Gomer represent three points of time, three generations of the existence of the people as such. In the future, as it were, there will be another fourth or fifth. Then they will no longer be called Lo-Ruchama, but Ruchama, no longer Lo-Ammi, but Ammi, because God will have mercy (ruchama) on His people (ammi). You must be familiar with the

idea that "all" means the people in general, where the children represent a certain generation of that people at a certain time. Another example is Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, also a type of Israel. He had a daughter and that is Israel as it would exist in a certain generation. That daughter would die and when the daughter died, as the two tribes (Judah) died after the first coming of Christ, the woman having a flow of blood - a type of the ten tribes (Ephraim) - was healed, so the Church could be born from her. This is an example to show that I do not make this up, but it is a system found throughout the Bible.

A mute spirit

We are talking here about a man who is part of the crowd. The crowd is, as it were, the world, humanity in general. More specifically, this man from the crowd is Israel, but that is part of the crowd. What happens to Israel just as well happens to humanity in general. Israel is the illustrative example. Here Israel has a son who is said to have a mute spirit. So that is not just Israel's problem, although it is illustrated by Israel, but we find it in the whole of humanity. The universal truth is that mankind has become a "mute" or shall we say "lunatic" son. All humanity is like that. Just take a good look at mankind; the period in time does not matter. The fact that man has a mute spirit means that, by some unseen power, he cannot talk. Could he not produce sound? Yes, that is said a few verses later. Sound enough, it was not because of his vocal cords. It is expressly stated that he was screaming and calling. A "mute" spirit means this boy had nothing to say. At least he could say nothing sensible. That was literally true. This man could not say anything even if he wanted to. That is precisely the situation of natural man since Adam and all that has come forth from that. What does man have to say? In addition, the idols, known in the Bible as spirits, are described as dumb idols. (1 Corinthians 12 : 2) That is not because they are stupid, although most of them are, in a certain sense, but they have nothing to say. They try to say something, because the whole world is controlled by those same idols. The world is governed by the power of the air (Ephesians 2 : 2), of which satan is the chief. Thus, apparently those idols do have something to share. They are, however, mute idols because whatever sound they produce, the word they speak has no power.

When God speaks or calls, He calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Romans 4 : 17) That is, God speaks, and it is there. In the beginning was the Word, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1 : 1-4) That means that when God speaks, He not only brings forth His ideas, but the moment He speaks, things also come into being.

Note**1**

In retrospect, I understand that this is one of the biggest mistakes we make and have made at school. You get a lot of different subjects in school. I always think this is so that you would not know that what you learn in all those different subjects belongs together and forms one whole.

His Word has power, He speaks, and it is there. As soon as God speaks, there is life and light. When God speaks, Christ appears. That means that God is not mute. As He speaks, His power actually appears. What He meant arises. That is the problem with idols. They speak, but nothing comes to fruition. They produce empty words, because they ultimately do nothing. They can deceive and occupy a person, but that only serves to prevent something from coming about.

I believe that many so-called world religions are simply satanic. Admittedly inspired, but by the devil himself and obviously not by God. Perhaps by angels, but not by the angels of God. The point is that by everything that is proclaimed and taught there, nothing is accomplished. It is only prevented that something is brought about. Thus, it is a power, but not a creative, founding or building power. On the contrary, it is a power that only obstructs. Therefore, in that sense, that word is powerless. As far as it concerns teachings, they are misleading. Man is thus not led anywhere but is prevented from reaching the right goal. That is why even more or less conflicting religions in the world have the same origin; however much they are at odds with each other. It is not about reaching a goal. They are focused on preventing the purpose that God has set Himself. At least, that they would distract people from that set goal. Often the conclusion is that there are so many religions in the world with "something good" in it, where Christianity ends up in the same list as all other religions. One has the Koran, the other the Bible. And what does it matter, if only you have a faith or a religion, it might help you get through life. Even then, the goal has been achieved, if only because of the multiplicity of other teachings. Even if you have not consciously become a direct supporter of satan. The idea is that the word of satan, no matter how it comes to us, has no power in it and does not build anything. The same applies to the word of man. If words from these idols cannot accomplish anything, how could man's words do so? Man has nothing to say either. If today I hear people talking with all kinds of serious arguments, then I always think: where did I hear that before? No, not everyone has heard it before. But did you think there was something new under the sun? Not at all! Because man is prevented by death from ever remaining (Hebrews 7 : 23), to use a term from the Bible, you get the phenomenon that new generations arise and die again and that at some point a generation appears that thinks it has found it. They imagine that. They are unaware of what they think they have discovered, had been discovered generations before and was afterwards forgotten, because it did not bring what they expected. By the time this generation realises that it will not be so either, this generation is over again. With that, man is kept from the Word that does hold power, namely the eter-

nal, incorruptible Word of God. (1 Peter 1 : 23) Because it is eternal, God is not mute, but He has the power of the Word. And because the word of men, and also of the idols, decays and cannot accomplish anything, the idols are called "dumb" and man is mute.

I do not know if you noticed it, but this mute spirit lives in a person who is thus also mute. That is the situation of humanity. He has nothing to say. He takes so long, but he has nothing to say and cannot accomplish anything. This situation can of course be changed, but only if the person consciously comes into contact with the One who does have the power of the Word. This is possible if man comes into contact with Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David. He not only has the power of the Word. He is the Word that has spoken. God speaks. He is the Word, and when He speaks, the Lord Jesus Christ appears. Here a meeting takes place between this man or a mute spirit, for a little while that is still the same, and the One who is the Word of God, by whom all things are. (Colossians 1 : 16) I think the bystanders were not aware of that, but I hope we are aware of this dramatic event. It is of the utmost importance to see what happens here.

Tearing, foaming, gnashing and pining away

This man is mute because he is controlled by a spirit that is mute. The father then says about that son:

Mark 9 : 18a

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away:...
[KJV]

All these words are different symptoms of the same thing and therefore basically have the same meaning. "Tearing" means "to tear apart", "to break". The connections are made to disappear. Things are divided. When something tears, the connection is lost. When I tear a sheet of paper in half, it is no longer one piece. It was stuck together, but you will never get it back together again properly. Tearing a sheet is necessary if you want to mix things up. Who would want to mix things up if necessary? That is what the diabolos does, the devil. "Diabolos" also means "jumbling" or "jumbler". He muddles things up. That is what happens in the world. **see note 1** Man tears things apart and puts them in different compartments. Everything is mixed up, torn. True communication about this is not possible and they do not form a unity. Who does that? That stupid spirit, of course.

It then says: "He foams". That is an expression. Of course, it also means that foam came out of his mouth. The fact that it is mentioned here, is because foaming already plays a part in the Bible. "Foam" stands for bloating, for that which looks quite something, but is nothing. Foam is actually the effect of leaven and leaven is sin. Leaven makes the dough rise or rather foam. It is a type of the workings of sin. Namely the sin that makes things appear bigger. The dimensions increase, but the weight does not. That is, the specific gravity even decreases. It therefore becomes less. The peculiar phenomenon is that it is precisely that growth, that increase, which is not characteristic of the Divine, spiritual things, but rather for this old creation. Growth is only down here. This old world is growing, becoming ever bigger. That is what the astronomers also say. They say we live in an ever-expanding universe. That is ridiculous, but that is what it looks like. The world pretends to be getting bigger all the time, but in reality, it is becoming emptier. I believe it is the same with man. He gets bigger and bigger, also fancies himself more and more, but in reality, becomes an ever bigger hollow barrel and so becomes emptier and emptier. That is the situation. It is the same as when you blow up a balloon. That is also in the Bible. Man is proud of the knowledge he gains, and the Bible says that knowledge puffs up. (1 Corinthians 8 : 1) Not that knowledge builds up but it puffs up. It does not become bigger, it seems bigger. That is why man can fancy himself so much. But when he looks inside, he turns out to be so empty that he has to go looking for himself inside. This applies not only to man, but to all creation as such and thus also to humanity. If there is so little in it because it is all foam, because it is bloated, nothing can come out and man cannot speak either.

It then says: "He gnashes with his teeth". These are spasmodic chewing movements, but he has nothing to chew. One pretends to be processing something, but one has nothing to process. For "chewing" or "eating" means that one takes things and processes them. That it is made suitable for consumption. That the things we put into our mouths become one with ourselves. This way one consumes life, but it has to be processed. The human being chews, he gnashes with his teeth, but he has nothing to eat. He has no life and cannot find it. His teeth are chattering, but he has nothing to eat. You can also turn it around. The teeth are chattering, but he has nothing to say. If nothing goes in, nothing comes out. Sometimes I hear people say they have to testify about the Lord, but they do not know what to say. If there is nothing inside, it cannot come out. How could you speak about the One you do not know? How could you speak about Biblical truths if you do not know them yourself?

Then it says: "He gnasheth with his teeth and pineth away". To "pine away" means as much as "drying out". Literally that would mean that he gets a dry mouth. This is undoubtedly true, because when foam is on the mouth, there is often dehydration. Those two are related. That is the literal meaning. But that is not such a big problem, because then you take a drink. The point is that "pining away" means having no life anymore, because water, the fluid in the body, typifies life. Where there is no water, there is no life. So, it is just a picture of death. The other side is that if the mouth is dry, you cannot talk either. It is exactly the same idea that if one is speaking one also produces water. It is then said that someone speaks with consumption. That is how it should be. You should just not be able to see it. For the word is supposed to come with water from the mouth, because both are an expression of life that is brought forth.

What we see here all together is the effect of death, the effect of destruction in the life of man. He should speak, he should have power, he should live, but he does not have it. Instead, we find the effect of death. He tears him, he foams, he gnashes with his teeth and pines away.

What satan wants

Mark 9 : 18b

18 [...] So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.

The first thought is that of course man cannot do this. This is not about man as such. The point is that man is in the power of satan himself. Generally speaking, every person is subjected to the power of satan. The whole world, all of humanity, is not ruled by God, although some teach that, but is ruled by satan. He is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4 : 4) and the prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2 : 2) Only in the future will the Kingdom of Christ be revealed here on earth, but not just yet. The first thought is that a man cannot overcome satan. He is not up against the powers that operate in the world. That world that is apparently controlled by satan. It is remarkable, and even non-believers have sometimes drawn that conclusion, that sometimes certain movements in the world, including political, are set in motion, of which we actually know that no one really wants them. However, they do happen. How is it that it happens, while nobody really wants it? You can only draw one conclusion: there must be a higher power that wants it and that can exercise sufficient power over people to achieve that goal.

Do you know what satan wants, among other things? Satan is a warm supporter of the so-called peace movement. That is a movement among people to bring about such a change among the nations that they make peace with each other. Subsequently he will want to take power. However, in a very different way Christ gets the power. Not because we do not wage war, but because we surrender ourselves to Him because we submit ourselves to Christ. Because we submit ourselves to the God-appointed King over Zion. But not by peace. Satan aims for the union of the nations. Literally around Babel. That has been impossible for a long time, because there was no Babylon for 2,500 years. Apparently, satan has chosen a few other places. There have been many world empires in the course of time. At least, empires that claimed to be world empires, were meant to be world empires and did not become world empires anyway. Hitler's empire was indeed meant as such. A world war to create a realm in a series of world empires, as they have been in the past. He was not the first to try. Napoleon tried it too but could not manage it either. Charles the Great, the pope, you name it. The book "The History of the European Thought" is not about the European idea, but about the world view that all nations should be united under one government with, of course, the king of Babel at the head. That is, of course, satan himself. It is not what the world is up to, but what satan is up to. The special thing is that it never happened, but that is undoubtedly because it is not yet time for that. It will still happen, but on that occasion the Lord will intervene in His time. That is why it must wait until His time for the world to reach that goal. If God Himself had not prevented it in the course of the ages, that goal would have been achieved already. Probably even in the days of Alexander the Great.

The idea is that satan aims to make the world into one and man is not up against that power. The people who have come a long way in the direction of the intention to make all nations come together, had satan on their side! Because they took a road that was in accordance with the will of the "prince of this world". (Ephesians 2 : 2) Why did they not reach their goal? Because it was not God's time yet. Because God is still long-suffering toward us, because He does not want any to perish, but that all come to repentance. (2 Peter 3 : 9) I quote these occurrences as examples to show that humanity is actually governed by higher authority, but not by God Himself. God is the One who occasionally puts the brakes on and stops to protect mankind against itself. The power of satan is, however, present, even in our days. Man cannot prevent that, and we cannot prevent it either. The working of satan in the world continues.

A faithless generation

Mark 9 : 19

19 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

This is an abused and often misinterpreted statement. For to whom did He say this? To His disciples? No! He answered "him", not His disciples. He said that to that man, where He later changes to plural. This statement can only be clearly understood if we realize that it is not only a statement about that man and his son. It is also a statement about Israel, of which they are first and foremost a type, and subsequently of all mankind, of which in turn Israel is a type.

The Lord was there in that faithless generation. Moreover, if we had not read this story and I had asked you who this faithless generation was, you would not have answered that these were the disciples. You would have said Israel as well. It is Israel, because it is a representation of the world and of humanity in general. We should actually put many statements from the Gospel of John next to this, where the Lord constantly speaks of the fact that He is now with them, but that He would leave them in the foreseeable future.

John 12 : 35b

35 Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

The light, namely Himself, would disappear from this world. Moreover, the statement: "How long shall I be with you?" indicates that the Lord would no longer be with them after His sufferings announced at the end of chapter 8 and here in this chapter from verse 30. These two announcements about His suffering, after all, speak of the fact that he would leave them, that faithless generation, be exalted and go to heaven. He would leave them behind and that completes the story. These are precisely the two things that are discussed in these two stories, with the announcement of suffering on both sides.

One story speaks of the Lord, glorified in heaven. A Lord as He can be seen by the believers. If they at least follow the Lord and are focused on Him. Just like Peter, James, and John, for they see the Lord crowned with honour and glory, sitting at the right hand of God.

On the other hand - at the same time - the Lord is not down here. Down here is the working of the mute spirit, of satan. There are also believers on the earth, and the intention is that the believers will resist the power of evil. Can they do that? No. They were able to resist, in the sense that they were not possessed by such a mute spirit. But they could not exorcise that spirit from another, so that nothing changed in the circumstances. We believers, living here on earth, cannot change anything about the situation in the world. Were the believers in the world, in Europe or more specifically in Germany, able to prevent the rise of Hitler? No. They undoubtedly wanted to. They will even have prayed for that, but it did not help a bit. Why not? On the one hand we find the truth here that the power of satan can be overcome. Where the Lord appears, one believes in Him and calls Him Lord, this power is expelled. However, that applies to the individual man who comes to the Lord. Theoretically, it also applies to the nation that comes to the Lord. Only in our days no nations come to the Lord. If a man comes to the Lord in faith and asks the Lord to meet his unbelief, the power of satan will be broken. (Mark 9 : 24) If we want to believe, but have such trouble, the Lord will come to our aid. The intention is that the believer is constructed in faith. As long as he is on earth, there is a building up, growth, and therefore also in faith.

A higher typological meaning

That is one side of the story. The other side is that the disciples could not drive out the spirit. They wanted to, but they could not. Why not? Because it was not the intention. Apart from this story, what could the disciples do? Could they drive out evil spirits? They could certainly do that, and the Lord even gives them that assignment on occasion. Why not now? Because of the prophetic significance of this story. All these miracles are signs and thus have a higher prophetic or typological meaning. In the glorification of the Lord on the mountain we have seen that this glorification was not a public glorification. It did not happen publicly, but for these three disciples who were set apart on a high mountain. He was transformed in front of them. There were only a few who saw the Lord in glory on the high mountain. Most did not see that, not even most of the disciples. What it depicts is clear enough: only where the believers are aware of their heavenly position, their heavenly calling, they see the Lord crowned with honour and glory.

Where believers, from the Scriptures, get to know their Lord and Saviour, who is greatly exalted by God and who is seated as King and High Priest on the right hand of God, they consciously participate in that heavenly position. We know a Lord who has already been crowned with honour

and glory in heaven. But while we are with that glorified Lord on the mountain and see Him there as the High Priest and King (think of Moses and Elijah) to the order of Melchizedek, while we take that heavenly position, we have the situation on earth where on the one hand is the working of satan in the natural man, while on the other hand there are indeed believers, including ourselves.

Believers have that position in heaven on the one hand but on the other hand they are with two legs on the ground. From our heavenly position we see Jesus crowned with honour and glory and we walk in His light, for He has a luminous, shining form. But as far as we are here on earth, we are up against the power of satan in the world. Besides, against it we can provide ourselves with the spiritual armour: "the shield of faith", "the helmet of salvation", and the "sword of the Spirit". (Ephesians 6 : 11-18) It is not that the power of satan attacks us, but that it is in the world. We are concerned about this. It all looks gloomy and frightening, but what do we do about it? Nothing! Because the Lord does not want it. If He had wanted it, He would have done what He also suggested in the past, namely, send His army of angels. He did not do that, and we should not ask for it at this time. The Lord Jesus did not ask for it. Do you think that when we ask, He will do it? **see note 2**

The intention is not that we fight against the injustice in the world or against the power of satan in the world. The intention is that we share the victory of Christ over the world, because we have conquered the world. Because what is it that overcomes the world? Our faith! (1 John 5 : 4) When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe in the One who has conquered the world. If we are part of Him who has conquered the world, then we no longer fight against that world. For it has already been overcome. If we fight against it, it is an expression of our unbelief. Then we certainly do not believe that He has already conquered the world. In practice, that is the right answer. Why do people fight against the world and the course of events in the world? Ultimately because they do not believe that Christ has conquered the world. They think it must still happen.

That is a misunderstanding. It has already happened. From the Word of God we know the Lord Jesus. He is crowned with honour and glory (Hebrews 2 : 9), greatly exalted (Philippians 2 : 9) and sitting at the right hand of God. (Colossians 3 : 1) That will not happen in the future. That has already happened. We live from that. What will happen in the future is that it will also be made visible to the world. The world will then not be overcome, but judged. He is already on the throne. God says, "Yet I have

Note 2

There are pious people who think so. At least, if you can believe them. I always have great difficulty with it and wonder if they themselves really believe it. They ask us to pray for the country, so that it would go well with the country. Do they really believe that it works? Why do they not do it themselves? They do it themselves, but it does not work. Why do they think it will work if others do it? For years we have had to pray for the capital. Well, we see what has become of it. It has only gotten worse. Of course, we can always ask ourselves if it would have been worse if we had not prayed for it. The fact is that nothing has changed, and the question should be: why not? Because the Lord does not want it to!

set My King on My holy hill of Zion." (Psalm 2 : 6) Not: "I will set My King over Zion", but: "I have set My King over Zion." To that Son He says, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance." (Psalm 2 : 8) The Son only had to say it. But even if He does not demand anything, He still says, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." (Psalm 110 : 1b) That has officially already happened. It awaits the practical elaboration in the future.

We should not be impatient and wanting it to happen today. Because although it will not take very long anymore, it is still too early today. God has said it will wait, and also the Lord Jesus says that. The Bible also gives guidelines what it waits for. In any case, it will not happen as long as the Church is still on earth. That is sufficient for us, because it means that as long as we are here, nothing changes for the good in the world, only for the worse. We know that the unrighteous - the man of lawlessness - will have to be revealed. (2 Thessalonians 2 : 7-8) That is not possible yet, because we are still here. So that it will not be revealed but it will work in secret. It therefore says: "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work [...]" (2 Thessalonians 2 : 7a) The working of the antichrist, of the beast, will thus be revealed in the future. It is about the working of satan himself, because he works in secret. It has always been like that, but in our days in particular.

In our days you even experience that some activities are considered to be the epitome of Christian endeavour, while in reality satan himself is behind it. That happens in our days. What can we do about it? Nothing. What do we want to do about it? Hopefully nothing either. What is expected of us is that we submit ourselves to the will and the plans of God and thus accept that He has determined that the judgment of this world is not yet coming. And precisely because it does not come, we know our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, sitting at the right hand of God. That is what we live from. It would be contrary to our current position under the throne of grace to expect God to bring judgment to the world. It is either one or the other and if I may choose, rather this way than otherwise. Rather that the world is developing this way, that the power of satan in the world is increasing, than live in the days that God will send His judgment over the nations. Fortunately, we do not have to choose, because we have someone who has chosen for us.

All this is not meant as a criticism of the life and intention of other believers. It is meant to answer the honest question every honest believer sooner or later has to deal with. At some point he will have to ask himself that question why nothing changes. Why does everything remain as

it was? Why do we still live just like in the days of the Middle Ages, in a world that is in darkness, full of superstition? It is true that people now believe something else, but it is still superstition. Why do we still live in a world ruled by deceit? Because satan still walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5 : 8) That will only change after the Church has been taken away from the earth. Only then will a battle break out on the earth. A battle in which the Lord will make known His victory over this world. He will not win the victory, but He will show it to this world, because the victory has already been won. Satan does not know that yet. He only knows that his time is short. But he will find out, just not by us in our days.

Victory

That is the story of this lunatic or healed boy. As long as the Lord is on the mountain and shows Himself in glory to the disciples, those disciples here on earth cannot oppose or suppress the power of satan. While one sees on the exalted Christ, one cannot gain victory in the world. That is not the intention either. It is one or the other. Where the believer sees the circumstances in this world, the workings of satan, and gets stressed about it, he never gets any further. In some cases, he becomes active because he thinks he has to fight it. The misery of this is that it makes him busy and tired with work that does not correspond with the will of God at all. It is true that the power is to be fought and expelled from the earth, but not now! Forty years after the rapture of the Church, the power of satan will have been driven out of this world for the duration of a thousand years. That does not come about through the workings of the Church in the world, but through the revelation of Christ in and to the world. However, the Lord is now on the mountain. When He comes down from the mountain, only when He appears from heaven and reveals Himself here below, that world appears to be full of a crowd that is arguing with scribes.

The only thing that is needed, however, is that the victory is made known to satan, so that he is expelled. In the forty years that follow the rapture of the Church, that will actually happen. In those days, that nation that is mute now, that has nothing to say, that has no message - Israel - will still speak. After all, Israel is the first nation in which this spirit will be extinguished. The people will then no longer be mute but will receive the Word of God and will also speak and preach to the world. Again, it must be said that this situation will only exist in the future and is not something of our days.

The present dispensation

We must bear in mind that this whole situation of Mark 9 gives us a description of our present dispensation. What we have to learn is that we should not engage in things we should not engage in, because it will have no effect. The tragedy of the story is that if we were to fight the power of satan in the world, we would actually do exactly the same as all those so-called "-isms". The only purpose of this is to keep man and especially the believer from the things that are really important. It wants to keep him from serving the Lord.

One cannot serve the Lord by doing something that the Lord does not want us to do today. In fact, the idea of expelling satan's power from the world is the same as the idea of improving the world. If you think that is right, you must consider that it is the same message the serpent preached to the woman. He said that one must improve, must be as God and above all must do his best. What is more, one has to do this by oneself. That message is so attractive, because it appeals to the pride of man. Would it not be nice if the world is improved and the power of satan in the world is conquered by us believers? By the power that we can develop, the power of Christ through us, but nonetheless through us?

However, it is not the intention that the Lord governs the world or any country. It is the intention that the Lord Jesus Christ rules in your and my heart, in our lives, and that we personally submit to that Lord. If you do that, you will no longer have the haughty thought that you should improve your country or the world, that you should expel satan or more of such things. That is not the intention.

The intention is that we are pulled out of this world and that we follow the voice of the Lord. (Galatians 1 : 4) He takes us on a high mountain. He has only set us apart and there we will see. Not the Son of David sitting on the throne of His father in Jerusalem, but the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God. (Matthew 26 : 64) Then we should rejoice (John 3 : 29) about the fact that the Lord left us here, because He whom we love is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven. We should be happy with Him. We should share in His joy and thus have the same expectation of the future as our Saviour Himself, namely the expectation of the glorification of Christ over, in or to this world. That is the blessed hope of the believer. (Titus 2 : 13) Not that the world is improved, not that the power of satan is cast out, but that the One we love will be revealed to the world in glory. (Colossians 3 : 4, 1 Peter 5 : 1) We look forward to that.

Our longing

In that sense, it is true that we are waiting for things that are becoming new. It is true, of course, that all things have already become new, talking about Christ and about His life in us. In the world these things are not seen yet, but that is what we long for. That longing will be fulfilled, not in our days, by whatever kind of activity of man or believer. It will be fulfilled when the Lord Himself appears on the clouds of heaven to evacuate us first or better to repatriate us. He will bring us into our house, our Father's house, where we already belong and what we long for. When that is done, He will indeed reveal His power to and in this world, with all its consequences. Ultimately, however, it will lead to the revelation of this exalted Christ sitting on His glorious throne. (Matthew 25 : 31) It will also lead to the revelation of His kingdom that is still hidden in heaven, and thus on that high mountain. Let us not make the mistake of fighting the world and satan. Let us focus our eye on Him who has drawn us out of this darkness. (Colossians 1 : 13)

Amen