

The Gospel According to Luke

“Name That Tune”

Chapter 9:37-45

Introduction

You've played *Name that Tune*. Someone plays or hums a note or two from a familiar song, and you try to guess the name of the song. Radio stations do it all the time, as contests; there have been several TV shows over the years. If you have an iPod, the game is loaded on it as software, only it goes by the name *Music Quiz*.

Jesus played *Name that Tune* with His disciples, and with the crowd, at the bottom of the mountain. You and I don't immediately pick up on it, because we're not first century Jews. It's in His comments, in verse forty-one. Jesus said, **O faithless and perverse generation...** It was more than just a reproof for their lack of faith. It was like saying, “*Can you name that tune in five words?*” It was a line from a song – a song every Jew learned as a child. It was first sung by Moses, and it's recorded in Deuteronomy, Chapter Thirty-two.

Back in Moses' day, the Jews were about to enter the Promised Land. God wanted to warn them about the peril of following after the other gods that they would encounter among the pagan peoples. He wanted them to understand that idolatry, in any form, was far from harmless. Behind every idol was a demon. So God gave Moses a song, and told him to perform it for the people.

When Jesus spoke the words of Moses' song, every Jew present would have thought of God's warning. It was a direct quote from Deuteronomy 32:5. Another passage, also using the words **perverse generation**, reads like this:

Deuteronomy 32:16 They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods*; with abominations they provoked Him to anger.

Deuteronomy 32:17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to *gods* they did not know, to new *gods*, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear.

Deuteronomy 32:18 Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you.

Deuteronomy 32:19 “And when the Lord saw *it*, He spurned *them*, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters.

Deuteronomy 32:20 And He said: ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end *will be*, for they *are* a **perverse generation**, children in whom *is* no faith.

The Jews were God’s children, His sons and daughters. Following after other gods would involve them with **demons**, and would cause them to become a **perverse generation**.

With that in mind, this confrontation with the demon possessed boy takes on a deeper significance. **It becomes an object lesson:**

1. This man’s son was twisted and convulsed by demons.
2. God’s sons – the Jews – were twisted and convulsed by following other gods – idols, whose ultimate source were demons.

God was showing the nation what they had become. They had become like the gods they followed in their idolatry, rather than becoming like God Himself.

We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Look At What You Become Like When You Follow Other gods, and #2 Look Who You Become Like When You Follow God.

#1 Look At What You Become Like
When You Follow Other gods
(v37-41)

You’ve seen people who start looking like their dogs. It can be pretty comical – *so long as it’s not you!* Something similar is true of idols. Psalm 115:8 describes idols as **the work of men’s hands**, then says, **they that make them are like unto them**.

An idol doesn’t have to be a statue or an image. It can be an idea, or a pursuit – like power, or position, or possessions. You become **like** your idol in that it influences your daily decisions and direction.

You begin to look like your idol. When I was a businessman, the goal among my peers was power, position, and possessions. You dressed appropriately; you looked like a person who had achieved those things. You read books like, *Dress for Success*; you went to seminars to sharpen your image. You *looked like* money and success.

The Jewish leaders in the first century were concerned with their position and power, moreso than with the kingdom of God. They had sunk to the level of idolatry. The orthodox Jews, who practiced extreme righteousness, were walking around in pride rather than in humility following God. It, too, was a form of idolatry. The nation, as a whole, was in sad shape – not heeding the warnings of Moses' song.

The boy at the foot of the mountain was demon possessed, and Jesus would deliver him. But he also served as a powerful object lesson. He represented Israel as God's dear son, now twisted, contorted, and a **perverse generation**.

Luke 9:37 Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him.

There are always needs to be met; always **multitudes** needing ministry. Time on the **mountain**, away from the needs, is where you acquire the resources you need to serve in the lowlands. Notice, it's not just a need to get away, to get refreshed, by going on vacation. Jesus spent His time in prayer. It's not *diversions* that you need, but *devotions*.

Luke 9:38 Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child.

Luke 9:39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.

The world is an evil place. All questions about "*Why?*" God allows this kind of suffering trace back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve represented all their offspring when they exercised free will to rebel against God. Sin and death entered God's creation, and Satan became its temporary overlord. All blame goes to sin and self.

Jesus had been up on the mountain, with Peter, John, and James. The other nine disciples ought to have dealt with this case. After all, Jesus had recently sent His disciples on a mission with power and authority over demons and disease; and the demons obeyed them.

Luke 9:40 So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”

Curious. Why could they not **cast it out**? Jesus answers it in another Gospel’s account, by saying, **this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting**. On a very simple level, Jesus was telling them that they must maintain their ministry. He had gone up the mountain, to pray; it was in prayer, and by fasting, that Jesus maintained His ministry. The nine below had not prayed; they had not fasted. They acted as if the power and authority were theirs, not God’s.

Also, in another of the accounts, you’re told that the nine disciples were involved in a doctrinal dispute with some Jewish scribes. They were distracted by people who just wanted to argue, rather than simply ministering to the people.

We’ve come to the heart of the episode:

Luke 9:41 Then Jesus answered and said, “**O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.**”

When the books of the Bible were originally written there were no such things as chapters or verses. Each book was written without any breaks from the beginning to the end. The chapter and verse divisions were added to the Bible for the sake of convenience. A man named Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters in the year 1227AD. Langton was a professor at the University of Paris and later he became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Robert Stephens, a French printer, divided the verses for his Greek New Testament. It was published in 1551. The first entire Bible in which these chapter and verse divisions were used was Stephen’s edition of the Latin Vulgate (1555). The first English New Testament to have both chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560).

In the first century, if you wanted to refer your audience to a particular Scripture, you would quote from it. When Jesus spoke, **or maybe**

even sung, the five words, **O faithless and perverse generation**, everyone knew He was referring to the Song of Moses, from Deuteronomy.

The words, **how long shall I be with you and bear with you**, are not part of that song. God did say, **how long shall I bear with this evil congregation**, in the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, when the Exodus generation of Jews refused to enter the Promised Land. Used together, by Jesus, the quotes seem to be saying something like this: His generation was as faithless as the Exodus generation. Just as the Exodus generation refused to enter into the Promised Land, so this generation would refuse to enter into the Kingdom on earth, by rejecting Jesus as their Messiah. Then, if you read the rest of the Song of Moses, it tells of God disciplining His wayward son, Israel, at the hands of a foreign power. In this context, that would be Rome – which, in 70AD destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, scattering the Jews all over the world.

Thus the demon-possessed boy is very much an object lesson. If they wanted to know what they looked like, spiritually, to God, then take a look at the twisted, contorted, **perverse** only son of his father. *It had to sting!*

You don't have to be demon possessed to be dominated by their deceptions. You and I have personally experienced, or seen in the lives of others, the results of following after other 'gods.' Whether it's the typical idols, like drugs, or alcohol, or sex; or whether it's more acceptable idols, like power or position or possessions; too many people become dominated by their pursuits. They begin to resemble their idols, and are eventually ruined.

The underlying spiritual principle is this: You become more like your gods. Or, *you can become more like God!*

#2 Look At Who You Become Like
When You Follow God
(v42-45)

We left the young boy demon possessed. So did Jesus, for just a moment, in order to teach the people the important lessons we've just

discussed. You'd think the Lord would have immediately delivered the boy; rushed into the confrontation. He didn't. Neither should we give-in to a sense of urgency, unless it is from the Lord.

Luke 9:42 And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him*. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

The other accounts go into more detail; Luke kept it simple. Do not become overly fascinated with the demonic, or with your power and authority over demons. Just maintain your ministry.

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples,

Luke 9:44 "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

Jesus seemed like a cosmic-killjoy with these comments. Not really. They are the perfect summary of the object lesson. We just saw that Israel was a faithless generation that would reject the Messiah. And that is exactly what would occur, as Jesus would be **betrayed into the hands of men** by the Jewish leaders, to be crucified.

Luke 9:45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

Not only **did they not understand**, but it was **hidden from them**. Spiritual truth can be like a treasure hunt, or a mining expedition. You need to dig for it.

Luke said, **they were afraid to ask Him**. That tells us they could have asked Him, but didn't. Maybe they didn't want to appear dull, or dumb, by asking stupid questions. *Let's not be like them!* Ask the Lord to show you things in His Word; then approach it like treasure you are hunting for... Or a long-term mining expedition.

I want to return to, and focus on, a word in verse forty-three. It's the word **majesty**, where it says, **they were all amazed at the majesty of God**. **It's the same word that was used to describe Jesus' glory that was revealed on the mountain when He was transfigured, and shone brightly with the glory of God.**

Here is the point:

1. Peter, John, and James had seen Jesus revealed in His majesty, *when the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.*
2. But **everyone** could 'see' that very same **glory** in Jesus' words and deeds, without Him shining outwardly in a transfiguration.

God's **glory**, God's **majesty**, is revealed through ministry, for all to 'see.' It is 'seen' every time someone is delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. It is 'seen' in lives that were once twisted, and crooked, and **perverse**, but are then made straight by following Jesus. It is seen in the families that are restored; in the lives that are rebuilt.

Ultimately, God's **glory** and **majesty** is seen in you:

Matthew 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Exodus Chapter thirty-four tells you that Moses' face glowed from being in the presence of God, and that he put a veil over his face so the people could not see the glory fading away. Today, you possess an unfading glory:

2 Corinthians 3:16 *Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *...But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Follow God, and you will become more-and-more like Jesus.

Conclusion

We all need time on the mountain to have glorious experiences alone with God. Personal and corporate worship takes us there.

We also need to shine in the dark valleys of this world, where people are bound by sin, and self, and Satan.

