

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 11- Luke 11:14-28

217- Jesus Attacked- Part 2

September 1, 2013

Luke 11:14-28

14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.

15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

16 Others, to test *Him*, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls.****

18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

19 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

21 "When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.

22 "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.

23 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

25 "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

26 "Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

To the Glory of God

Now this is a very, very important text of Scripture because it boils the entire human race into just two categories as illustrated by verse 23:

1. Those who are with Jesus
2. Those who are against Him

And even though it is very rare to find anyone who is willing to place himself in the second category- the Truth is that the second category comprises the majority of people who are alive right now.

Most people on earth are lost and unsaved. They are not born again and so- by default- they are against Jesus. Now they may not actively try to dismantle Christianity or burn Churches down or kill believers- but they do not obey Jesus; and they do not follow after Him. They do not submit to His Lordship demands on their lives and therefore- according to the recorded Words of Jesus- they do not love Him. And while these people may not be mass murderers or child molesters- they are patently and sincerely *against* Jesus in what they do and what they think.

So cutting through all the man-made religion and all the confusion of human philosophies and ideas and ideologies and world views- cutting through all the muddle of human opinion- after all the dust has settled- you are either with Christ or you are against Him, and there is no third category where you might take up residence- no neutral ground and no middle position.

You are either with Christ in the sense that you acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord and you struggle to obey Him as the pathway to lasting Joy and you are actively participating in the work of gathering souls into His eternal Kingdom- or you are against Him and you are aiding in the scattering of souls away from the Kingdom of God and into eternal Damnation. You are either with Christ personally and in the enterprise of populating His Kingdom, or you're against Christ and with the devil in sending souls away from His Kingdom.

And there is absolutely no possibility of any neutrality about this. Nobody sits on the fence; nobody stands on the sidelines- you are with Jesus or you are against Him- period.

And keep in mind that it is not necessary to oppose Jesus Christ openly to be against Him. You don't have to think evil of Jesus or be hostile to Him- it's not necessary to physically or verbally attack Him or to attempt to discredit Him or to slander Jesus to be in the category of being against Him. It's not necessary to try to interfere with His Divine Purposes. Whoever is not with Christ gathering souls into His Kingdom is therefore necessarily against Him since there are no other alternatives.

So to make no decision regarding Christ; to draw no conclusion; to attempt to be neutral toward Jesus is sufficient to set you against Him. In fact- not even knowing Jesus is sufficient to set you against Him.

So as I told you last week- there are those who are with Christ and those who are against Him. There are those who are God's and those who are Satan's. There are those who are in the Kingdom of Light, and those who are in the kingdom of darkness. There are those who are children of God and those who are children of the devil. There are those who are fish on the left side and those who are fish on the right. There are those who are wheat and those who are tares. There are those who are sheep and those who are goats. There are those who are unrighteous and those who are righteous. There are those who are on their way to heaven and there are those who are running into hell as fast as they can.

And while this is very cloudy and nuanced and unknown and confusing to the majority of people on the earth right now- this division into one of two categories is absolutely unmistakable in the Bible. It is crystal clear from cover to cover in the Word of God and it is precise and it is definitive and it is determinative and it is undeniable. And this

leaves absolutely no one out. There is no such thing as anybody straddling the fence; nobody is standing on the sidelines; nobody is neutral. Nobody.

In other words- there's no such thing as an orphan in the world- spiritually speaking. No one is a spiritual orphan. You are either a child of God by the miracle of the New Birth or you're a child of the devil and there is no orphan category.

Either God Almighty is your Father or Satan is your father. Either your physical bloodline can be traced all the way back to Adam and his sinful Fall or else your spiritual bloodline is traced back to Jesus. Either your lineage stops at Adam and all the natural fallen descendants or else you have been adopted into the family of God by virtue of Sovereign regeneration.

And so everything hinges on your relationship to Jesus Christ. Jesus is either your Savior which automatically makes Him your Lord and Master or Jesus is your Judge. You are either with Christ by faith in Him and a part of His Kingdom and the gathering of souls into His Kingdom and a child of God or you are not with Christ in that enterprise and you are against Him and you belong to Satan. That is the central theme of this passage.

So this passage is not about demons and it is not about a formula whereby we can learn the secret of casting out demons. This passage is about Jesus and the attack against Jesus by the very people who should have known Him the best.

And this is a key turning point in Luke's Record of Salvation because it's a key turning point in the Life and Ministry of our Lord. As I told you last week- by the time you get to Chapter 11 in Luke's story- we are only a few months away from Jesus' Death. He has been ministering over two years now and there has been ample evidence for everyone to bow before Him; confess their sins; turn from those sins and trust in Him for Salvation.

Up to now there has been unbelievable teaching; powerful earthshaking miracles, mind blowing healings; incomprehensible casting out of demons; miraculous raising of the dead; Divine forgiving of sins. And it is categorically beyond belief that anyone who was there and saw and heard all this could come to any other conclusion other than Jesus was very God- God Almighty in human flesh; the long awaited Messiah and the only Savior of the world.

The evidence presented by Jesus is absolutely complete and sufficient and now we begin to see the crystalizing of the heart of man into one of those two positions- to be with Jesus or to be against Him. All the evidence is in and all that needs to be done- all that needs to be said- is the answer to a very simple but profound question:

What will you do with Jesus?

Will you bow before Him and confess your sins and love and serve Him forever or will you justify your own self-righteousness by attacking Jesus and trying to find fault with the only sinless Man Who ever lived?

And what is so very sad and so very hard to comprehend is that in spite of all the miracles; all the supernatural signs and wonders; all the amazing acts of Divinity performed right in front of them; in spite of teaching and preaching like no man had ever done before or since- in spite of perfect sermons from perfect lips; in spite of looking at pure sinlessness stand before them- the overwhelming majority of people who saw the Kingdom of God unfolding right before their eyes here in Israel in the 1st Century- rejected Jesus to His Face and then condemned Him and finally- they nailed Him to a tree and screamed for Him to die. It is amazing.

And this reveals a Truth about humanity that is very offensive and very insulting and yet it is as right as rain. And this Truth runs opposed to what is taught by many famous people in the modern Church- and this Truth is:

The Fall of Man was so radical and so devastating that absent a Sovereign Move of God's Spirit to unveil eyes and unstop ears and absent a Sovereign move of God to take out of Man a hard stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh- nobody will ever be convicted of their sins; nobody will ever repent; nobody will ever love God; and nobody will ever be saved- regardless of how many miracles they see; regardless of how many supernatural signs they witness; and regardless of how many gifts of the Spirit are manifested.

The manifestation of miracles does not save anybody. Never has and never will. The manifestation of signs and wonders does not bring conviction to anyone. Never has and never will. The performance of

physical healings or the casting out of demons does not bring one single soul to Salvation. Never has and never will.

Signs and wonders and miracles and healings and gifts of the Holy Spirit were given by God to Mankind for one reason and for one reason only- to give Divine credibility to the Words and the Teachings and the Writings and the Doctrine and the Revelation of the OT Prophets and the New Testament Apostles and to the very Person of Jesus Christ. Period.

And that is why miracles and signs and wonders and healings and gifts of the Holy Spirit were always very rare- even in Bible times- and why they all began to diminish and finally cease after the completion of the Holy Scriptures. It isn't that God has changed or that we don't believe in the Power of God- it is simply because these things accomplished the one single very narrow goal that God sent them to do and the Scriptures were confirmed as being from God and Jesus Himself was confirmed as being God and so these supernatural manifestations did their job and so they were no longer needed.

Miracles were never designed to be wholesale for everybody. Physical healings were never sent by God to heal everyone who was sick. That isn't what they were for. Jesus left plenty of people who were sick and who were oppressed and who were very needy out of the loop during His earthly ministry. And while you may categorize me as being hard or mean- Jesus was certainly not hard or mean and yet He didn't heal everybody and everybody who needed a miracles didn't receive one. That isn't my opinion; that isn't my theological position- that is a Biblical fact.

And even though Jesus did- at times- heal everybody in a particular region- that only happened a few times and it never happened again. So that is why I say that signs and wonders and miracles and physical healings and various gifts of the Spirit do not convict lost and unsaved hearts; they do not bring forth a confession of sin in unbelievers and they do not save a single soul. Only by preaching the Gospel are souls saved and only when God sovereignly overrides their natural and normal tendency to run and hide from God and to hate God and God sovereignly opens their heart to the Word preached.

It would be hard pressed to find anybody who has ever lived that witnessed more miracles and saw more signs and wonders and who personally stood there and watched sick people be healed by the Power

of God than these people right here in this passage. And what was their conclusions as to how Jesus accomplished all of this? Verse 15 tells us:

Luke 11:15

... He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons...

Nothing they saw or experienced brought these lost and unsaved Jews to the place of repenting and trusting in Jesus. Their hearts were hard and miracles couldn't soften it. Their minds were blinded and supernatural healings could not open it. Their souls were evil and spiritual manifestations could not make it good.

Absent a Sovereign Move of God to bring spiritual life to these dead and dry bones by causing them to be born again- they cannot see; they cannot hear; they will not serve God with joy and gladness and they will not love Jesus.

But this Truth goes even further than that. The Fall was so radically destructive and ruinous to the human race- that not only will signs and wonders and miracles and spiritual gifts not change a single heart or save a single soul- but even the very Words of God Almighty will not bring conviction or Salvation to a single person unless and until God Sovereignly interrupts that person's life and invades that person's existence and forcefully and violently change that person's nature.

We have to know that not only did God Himself perform miracle after miracle right in front of the Jews to free them from 400 years of slavery and deliver them with a great spoil of the Egyptians- not only did God utterly vanquish the mightiest standing army on earth at that time; not only did God lead them by day with a cloud and by night with a pillar of fire; not only did God give them water from a rock; not only did God feed them with angel's food; not only did God keep them all physically healthy so that there was not a single feeble one among them; not only did their shoes not wear out or their clothes wear out; not only did God love them and bless them and keep them and lead them and help them and defend them and shower them with His protection and His Grace.

But God spoke to them and God gave them the Promise of blessing after blessing after blessing if they would but love and serve Him and God promised frightening and terrible curses upon them if they would not serve Him.

And yet in spite of all this- the overwhelming majority of people did not believe; they did not trust; they did not love God; they did not fear God; they did not humble themselves; they did not turn from their sins and they died by the tens of thousands and the buzzards picked their flesh off their bones in the desert. How could this be? How is this possible?

The Fall of Man was so radical and so devastating that absent a Sovereign Move of God's Spirit to unveil eyes and unstop ears and absent a Sovereign move of God to take out of Man a hard stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh- nobody will ever be convicted of their sins; nobody will ever repent; nobody will ever love God; and nobody will ever be saved- regardless of how many Promises God makes to bless obedience and regardless of how many Promises God makes of terrible destruction if they will not repent.

It is my contention that most people in the modern Church do not have clue as to the devastating effects that the Fall had on Mankind. The basic knowledge of the Fall in most people's mind is that it separated us from God- which is true- but the Fall did infinitely more than that.

The Holy Bible teaches that Fall of Adam in the Garden destroyed not only the *ability* and the *power* for anyone who is lost to love and serve God gladly- it also utterly destroyed the *desire* or the *will* for them to love and serve God gladly. And this is so true- that absent a sovereign move of God to capture man and give him both the will and the power; to give him both the desire and the ability- no one will ever be convicted of their sins; no one will ever confess their sins; no one will ever love God and no one will ever be saved- no matter how many miracles or signs and wonders they see; and no matter how many glorious promises or terrible curses that God speaks.

So I will tell you straight up that I honestly believe with all my heart that nearly every single false doctrine and man-made philosophy or heresy that is being peddled all around us through the pied pipers of the modern Church could be confronted and utterly defeated in three days if just two Bible Truths were taught and understood:

A. The Absolute Sovereignty of God

B. The Radical Ruination of Man in the Fall

And so conversely the very opposite is true. The only reason why heresies and false doctrines and man-made philosophies have any traction with a single soul in the Church today is directly associated with the fact that they either do not know these two Doctrines at all or they do not know them in their fullness. And that is a fact- which is why I stress these two Truths so much and so often.

So in spite of the astonishing miracles, in spite of the power displayed, these people right here in this passage are hardening their own hearts into fixed states of unbelief- actively resisting and rejecting Jesus Christ to His Face- to the point where after a brief emotional high on Palm Sunday as they hail Him as the Messiah- only a few days later- these very same people will scream for His Blood and call for the sinless Lamb of God to be crucified on a cross- being totally and utterly rejected by His Own people.

And even here- verse 14 records for us a miracle that would have been the kind of thing that happened on a daily basis in the Ministry of Jesus and He was casting out a demon which He did all the time, sometimes one demon, sometimes several, sometimes many and sometimes large amount of demons such as the maniac who was cutting himself and living in the tombs.

And so Jesus is expelling these demons. He is forcefully invading the kingdom of darkness. He is violently overpowering satan and freeing up souls from their satanic bondage. And the multitudes, as they always did, marveled, wondered, were amazed, were astonished.

Now one of the things you will notice as you read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John- the four Gospel Records- and you can even see it in the Apostolic miracles in the book of the Acts- there was never was a denial of the miracles. Never. The people who saw the miracles never denied them. Saved or unsaved- they never denied that they happened because they were so undeniable. Dead people came back to life. Crippled people walked. Blind people saw. Deaf people heard. Mute people spoke.

There's no way the people could have ever denied the miracles and remained credible. And what is amazing is that they never intended to deny them- they never tried to deny them.

But what they *did* do- and they did this all the time- was to deny that the Source of those miracles was Divine. And that's what happened here on this occasion- and it divided the group into two groups. Look again at **Luke 11:15**,

But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

So the first group said or in reality- they were saying it in their minds- that what Jesus did is powerful and what He does is supernatural- but we refuse to acknowledge that it's the Power of God because that would require that we submit to His Authority and follow Him and so Jesus must be satanic.

Notice that they never dispute that what Jesus does is supernatural. They never dispute that it's powerful. They can't, the evidence is too overwhelming, too in-your-face. But they refuse to submit to Jesus and worship and obey Him and so there is only one other possibility that would allow for supernatural manifestations without requiring their service and that is that Jesus must be the devil.

So they called Jesus Beelzebul- which was a Jewish twist on an old Canaanite word meaning: *the lord of the high place*- which was a term referring to Baal.

And they took this Canaanite word and they corrupted it from meaning, lord of the high place to meaning: *lord of the dung* as a way to mock that false Canaanite deity. And over the centuries- Beelzebul became sort of their common word for satan, and so to add insult to injury these people conclude that Jesus did what He did by the power of the ruler of the demons.

Now keep in mind that they did not honestly come to this conclusion out of some loyalty to the OT Law or because they were trying sincerely to remain faithful to the partial and inferior Revelation of the OT. No, they came to this conclusion for the vilest and basest of reasons- because to acknowledge that Jesus was God would require that they love and serve Him.

So to be accurate about the miracles without having to acknowledge His Lordship over their lives- they called Jesus, "Beelzebul" which didn't in any way affect the reality about Jesus- but it damned their souls. Now look at the other group in verse 16:

Luke 11:16

Others, to test *Him*, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

Now these people had no intention of serving Jesus either but they weren't as crafty as the others and so they said that the only reason they didn't love and serve Jesus was because they wanted a little more proof- which was silly since they already had so much proof. This is like saying that they would not believe the 3 million other signs and miracles that they had seen but if Jesus would just do one more- that would cinch the deal and they would believe.

So all the supernatural manifestations that Jesus had already done right before them was not enough- so they hypocritically said that if only they had just a little more Divine credibility they would believe.

Now in one sense- this is understandable because if Jesus is not Who He says He is- then He is either a lunatic or He is diabolical because if Jesus knows full well that He isn't God but He is trying with all His Heart to make people think He is- then that is not just an error of judgment- that would be evil.

So it was their twisted and false theology that forced them to this point. Because if Jesus is not of God- then how do you explain the supernatural power? And if He is God- then why are we not obeying and loving Him? So Jesus had painted these evil hypocrites into a corner because they had only two options.

That's why I say there is no middle ground with Jesus. He is everything that He said He was or else He is absolutely false and untrustworthy. And this is why it so wrong and so evil and so hypocritical for anyone to try to say that they admire Jesus or that they think well of Jesus and Jesus is a great man and Jesus is a great humanitarian while all the while- they refuse to acknowledge that Jesus was God and they absolutely refuse to bow to Him and obey Him.

Because if Jesus was not God- then He was either a liar or a lunatic. If Jesus was not God and He knew full well that He was not God- then He would be trying to perpetrate a lie upon other people and manipulate them into thinking that He was God- which would make Jesus to be evil and that would mean that Jesus was not good at all- but would be one of the worst people in all of history.

And if Jesus just thought He was God but wasn't really God- then that would make Jesus diseased in His mind and somebody who needed

medication and a person that we should have mercy on and somebody that would deserve our compassion and thoughtfulness- but certainly not somebody who would deserve our love and service.

So the only way that Jesus could ever be considered to be "Good" and noble and a great person is if He was telling the Truth about Himself and was, in fact, God Almighty in human flesh. But if that was true- then it would demand that we not simply acknowledge His Goodness- but that we love and serve Him and obey Him.

So these people were in quite a pickle because if you're not with Jesus affirming Him as the Son of God, then you're a part of satan's kingdom. If He's not from God- then He is hellish. Why? Because He claimed to be God and that is blasphemy. If He is not who He said He is, then He's the ultimate blasphemer. In fact, He's the most effective blasphemer ever. He has pulled off the greatest deception in human history.

So they were forced into this. This is the logical conclusion of their rejection. They have to go there because there can be no middle ground. You have to explain His supernatural power in some way, and you only have two options.

Now how did our Lord respond to this? I mean, this is out and out blasphemy of the blessed Son of God. So how does He respond? Amazingly He responds with grace and mercy. Jesus could have obliterated them off the face of the earth- right on the spot. He could have incinerated them with heavenly fire- right then and there. He could have opened the ground and they would have been swallowed like in the Old Testament. He could have brought a horrible judgment upon their heads instantly. But He doesn't. He does the very opposite.

Jesus acts graciously and mercifully by reasoning with them. What He does here is He speaks to them and calls them to rethink their conclusion. And this is unbelievable mercy being shown to them. Jesus wants them to abandon their blasphemous folly.

So, in speaking to them He gives these evil, sinful blasphemers three solid reasons to turn from being against Him- three reasons to stop blaspheming Him:

1. Blasphemy against Jesus is absurd
2. Blasphemy against Jesus has no moral integrity
3. Blasphemy against Jesus has no spiritual foundation

So let's go over these.

1. Blasphemy Against Jesus is Absurd

Luke 11:17

But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls.

Now keep in mind that these people are saying that Jesus cast this demon out of this man by the power of satan. In other words- they are saying that Jesus Himself is satanic. But the Bible says that they're only thinking this and so they don't know that Jesus knows what they're thinking.

But He heard them because He is God. And so He just steps in out of nowhere and says,

"Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste and a house divided against itself falls."

And you know what that would get out of them? A bunch of "Amens". Because this is what is called, "A Self-Evident Truth". And a self-evident truth is something that nobody in their right mind can argue against. It doesn't need corroborating evidence- it is patently obvious.

So any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, *aireo(?)*, destroyed, self-destructs. That kind of statement doesn't need any proof- and all these Jews would nod their head and agree with that statement. And then Jesus added

"Any house divided against itself falls."

And no one is going to argue with that either. And so all these blasphemers are all nodding their heads and saying, "Yes, Amen. *This is so.*" But then Jesus nails them against a wall and says this in verse 18:

Luke 11:18

If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

So right in the middle of all their heads nodding and all their "Amens"- Jesus has trapped them in the absurdity of their conclusion. If you are right and I am casting out demons by the power of satan- then that would be a good thing and satan would be in a self-destruct mode. If you are right- then satan has empowered Me to destroy his own kingdom. So their argument is absolutely absurd.

Everybody knows that Satan wants to destroy the Kingdom of God and the Work of God- but not his own kingdom. And while we would all agree that there is inconsistency in the kingdom of satan because evil is in itself inconsistent and because satan is not omniscient and because Satan is not omnipresent and because satan is not omnipotent. So there is a certain amount of wretched, wicked, evil independence from demon to demon to demon and you will find great inconsistency and a measure of chaos in satan's kingdom. But even though that is true- you will never find Satan purposefully energizing a person with the ability to destroy his own kingdom. That's a complete absurdity.

So when you look at the Life and the Ministry of Jesus- one of the main features that shines through is how He relentlessly assaulted satan's kingdom. I mean Jesus threw the demons out of people and cleansed them and made them pure. His power over demons was constant and relentless as He proved His Messiahship by His ability to overpower the kingdom of darkness.

So Whoever the Messiah is- He has to be able to crush the serpent's head. Whoever the Messiah is- has to be able to take back the earth from satan. Whoever the Messiah is- is going to have to conquer evil to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness. And Jesus demonstrated that He had that Power and authority over and over and over again. So this would be an absolute absurdity for Satan to be casting out his own agents.

And so here Jesus points out this absurdity and unmask the stupidity of their minds and their wicked thoughts by saying,

... For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

And they were completely exposed at that moment to be the frauds and hypocrites and blasphemers that they really were. Jesus reads minds and He hears things that human ears don't hear. And these unsaved Jews are caught in their own stupidity. So while these

pseudo- intellectuals always prance about and take great comfort in their superior intelligence as they deny the existence of God- in reality- their arguments are foolish and silly and nonsense and absurd. And they are really not smart at all- but are in fact foolish lost blasphemers who will stand before the God they don't believe in- trembling- for Judgment on their lives.

2. Blasphemy Against Jesus has no Moral Integrity

Luke 11:19

And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

Blasphemy- from whatever source- just isn't honest. Now all during the first century- according to the old rabbinical writings that we have uncovered- there were some of their own sons- meaning some Jews- who were rabbis, or the associates of rabbis, or scribes, or Pharisees- who engaged themselves in exorcisms.

And the legends are that they were able at times to cast out demons. And while they didn't always have success- they went through all kinds of gyrations much like Roman Catholic exorcists do today. And they called down their curses on the heads of the demons and they tried to interact with demons and they went through all of their labors in dealing with demons.

And within the context of OT Judaism- Jewish exorcists were said by the rabbis, and it is recorded in their literature, to be doing "The Work of God". That was their tradition and that's what they believed- even though it really wasn't true.

So the reason that this was such a potent point here was because it forced them to condemn the Jewish exorcists that they believed in. So their argument lacked honesty- it lacked moral integrity. There's no way you could say that what Jesus was doing was by satan and then turn around and say that what the Jewish exorcists were doing was by God unless satan was far more powerful than God because what Jesus did with demons was infinitely more potent than anything the Jewish exorcists ever did.

Let me give you an illustration. Turn quickly to **The Acts 19:11-16** and read the Word of God with me

The Acts 19:11-16

11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Now this is the only illustration in the New Testament where we see Jewish exorcists at work. And it's pretty sad- but this is also pretty funny. But this is typical of the Jewish exorcists of that day as well as any other religious exorcists of our day who are unsaved.

This kind of stuff is really nothing but game which the demons agree to play along to carry off the illusion of deception. But you never saw Jesus confront a demon like this. This never happened to any Apostle who had the delegated Authority of Christ. There is not a single record in the Bible of a demon arguing with Jesus or of refusing to obey Him- instantly. It never happened with an Apostle either. Jesus and the Apostles had complete and total Authority over all demons and the demons knew it. And also take note that neither Jesus nor the Apostles never screamed or yelled at the demon and they didn't have to constantly repeat their efforts. They just spoke and the demons instantly obeyed.

Now contrast that with the charlatans and the fakers in the modern Church and how they scream and holler and yell and shove the poor person all over the place trying to cast the demon out. Now look down at Jesus' rebuke of these fakers in **Luke 11:24-26**:

Luke 11:24-26

24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

25 And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

26 Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

So that's the best that the Jewish exorcists could do. The best they could do was a temporary sort of moral respite. The best they could do was hammer on the man and the demons would reduce their activity for a period of time- but then the demon came roaring back with seven of his buddies and the end of the man was worse than the beginning.

So that's the best kind of casting out that the Jewish exorcists could do- and yet the people called that- the Power of God. So here is Jesus demonstrating absolute and total authority over the demons and yet they are saying that Jesus is of the devil. So this argument was absurd and lacked moral integrity out of its sheer inconsistent nonsense.

And this is the way it is today. People are unwilling to receive the irrefutable evidence that Jesus is exactly Who He said He was. And so they make ridiculous and foolish choices. *"I don't accept Jesus as my Savior but I will gladly follow L. Ron Hubbard or Sun Yun Moon or Mohamed or Buddha."* Give me a break. Are you kidding me?

There is no greater evidence than that Jesus is the Power of God Who absolutely overpowered the kingdom of darkness and Who raised people from the dead and Himself is raised from the dead and you have the all this proof and yet you're going to follow Mohammed?

That kind of argument is pure hypocrisy that lacks moral integrity. This shows the dishonesty of your mind. If you've honestly looked at Jesus Christ and the irrefutable proof of the Biblical Record and then come to the conclusion after all that that you need to love and serve someone anyone else- then you're no different than these Jewish exorcists.

You are in effect saying that Jesus is of satan and that you choose a vastly inferior agent of Satan as your god. This is not a rational or honest argument. It is completely irrational and it lacks any moral integrity at all. And it demonstrates beyond any doubt your own lack of honesty because there is no comparison between Jesus and anybody else- if you look honestly at the evidence. So if you reject Jesus Christ

after honestly looking at the Biblical record- you don't bring doubt on Jesus- you simply prove the dishonesty of your own heart.

3. Blasphemy Against Jesus has no Spiritual Foundation

Luke 11:20

But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Blasphemy like this shows their absolute lack of spirituality. These people were so lost and so sinful and so self-righteous and so hard-hearted and so hateful and so determined to reject Jesus- so blind and so dead that they considered themselves to be the enlightened and the religious and the righteous- yet they couldn't even recognize the King of heaven when He stood there and talked to them.

They couldn't see the Kingdom of God when it was right in their midst. The god of this world had blinded their minds so the light of the glorious gospel can't shine to them. They are the natural men who understand not the things of God.

And so stating the obvious as compared to the impotent Jewish exorcists who deliver nobody and heal no one, Jesus says if I'm doing this on the other hand by the Kingdom of God, or in the Kingdom of God, if I'm demonstrating the finger of God at work, then you are in a serious situation, very serious. They didn't even entertain the possibility that this might be the King.

Now take a look at that phrase "the finger of God." It's a very important phrase. Way back in **Exodus 8**- God began to do a series of miracles to deliver Israel out of Egypt. But the Egyptian magicians did their trickery to try to replicate the miracles of God. So in **Exodus 8:16** Moses hits the ground and the dust flies up and the dust immediately becomes gnats. And the gnats cover the land.

And even though the Egyptian magicians had a trick rod where they could throw it down and make a snake- they can't get close to making gnats out of dust. So in their perplexity they cried out in verse 19:

Exodus 8:19

... This is the finger of God...

Now these are Egyptian Gentile pagan deceivers- magicians- yet even they knew the finger of God when they saw it. They knew what wasn't like what they did.

There was a time in Exodus when the finger of God wrote the Law on stone but the occasion of the finger of God they're referring to here is that **Exodus 8** event when the comparison between the genuine Power of God through His servant Moses is compared to the false and deceptive power of Egyptian magicians.

So the Jewish exorcists were just like those phony magicians of Pharaoh. They couldn't do what Jesus did. They couldn't even come close to what He did. The only difference was the Egyptian magicians knew their limitations while these Jews didn't.

You take any religious leader, any religious false teacher, anybody from the history of the world and all its religions in ancient times, in modern times, even current times, and compare them to Jesus Christ and you will see that they can't even come close. What Jesus did in this world could be explained as nothing other than the very Finger of God indicating that the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

So to say that Jesus is a liar and a blasphemer and an agent of Satan, then or now, is absurd. It is damning as well. Either He is a blasphemer or you are.

So the bottom line is that satan and his demons have no capability to save themselves against Christ when He comes to rescue a soul from their kingdom. They are powerless against Him. And we are all living testimonies of that, are we not? We have been all rescued from the kingdom of darkness- satan's kingdom- where we were held captive was plundered by Christ and His power and He delivered us forever.

So the record is set and the decisions are made. Jesus brings it to its culmination in verse 23,

He who is not with Me is against Me and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

And so you are faced today with the fact that you are in one or the other of those two groups and there is no third option. There are no spiritual orphans. You are either satan's or you are Christ's. It's always so helpful to see how our Lord with such simple words grasps such profound realities and makes them unmistakably clear to us.

And my plea to you today is to take a look at where you are and be sure that you understand the incomparable Christ Who was moving with the Finger of God and therefore is the King who brought His Kingdom. No one is to be compared to Him. And you only have two options. You either affirm that He is who He says He is, or you cannot say anything other than that He is the ultimate blasphemer because He claimed to be God and He is not. So you are either with Him or you're against Him.

So I pray that you can see the irrationality of rejecting Jesus Christ. Understand the inconsistency of rejecting Jesus against all the evidence. Understand the lack of spirituality, the spiritual deadness and blindness of rejecting Jesus. These Jews couldn't see what was obvious, it was the Finger of God because the stronger Man had plundered the palace of satan and stolen away souls for God's Kingdom.

Amen. Let's pray.