

Message #54

Luke 11:14-23, 29-32

There was a time when people laughed at two brothers and thought they were out of their minds. The two brothers were sons of a United Brethren minister. These two boys had a secret obsession and that was to build a machine that could fly into the sky and take people wherever they wanted to go. Most people who knew Wilbur and Orville thought they were odd. In fact, many thought they were out of their minds. But on December 17, 1903, Orville Wright climbed into a 750 pound machine, empowered by a 12 horsepower gasoline engine and flew 120 feet in a first flight that lasted 12 seconds. At that moment those two boys proved the skeptics wrong. They proved that an airplane could be built and flown. They proved that it was possible for a human who does not have wings to fly. People had mocked them, talked about them, laughed at them and they proved them all wrong.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, He did some wonderful things in order to show the world that He was the Messiah and Lamb of God who could take away sin. To prove His word was true, He fulfilled prophecy; He healed the sick; He raised the dead; He cast out demons; He transformed lives. Because of this, a small minority believed, but a large majority did not. A great number of opponents and skeptics surfaced who mocked Him and hated Him and they did everything they could to discredit Him. There were those who said Jesus was out of His mind. In the end, He will prove the whole world is wrong.

In this passage, Jesus Christ met a man who could not speak because he was demon-possessed. This was one physical infirmity that was not physiological or psychological. This was real demonic possession (11:14). Demon possession may affect people in different ways. Truth is there are many today who are probably demon-possessed but we cannot spot it. Jesus did.

What Jesus did was to cast out the demon and the man started talking. Instead of all the people believing in Christ and rejoicing at what He did, “some” tried to discredit Him. Verse 14 says the crowds were “amazed.” The moment this man started speaking, the crowds became “speechless.” Just emotionally being amazed proves nothing. In fact, one could be amazed by what one sees and not like the ramifications of what one sees.

Matthew brings out the fact that some of the dis-creditors were Pharisees (Matt. 12:24) and Mark makes it clear that some of the dis-creditors were Scribes (Mark 3:22). So the religious leaders were not even looking for truth. They wanted to keep their power and clout. Keep in mind that Luke is writing this for Theophilus, and he wanted him to know the truth and realize a very important truth about faith in Jesus Christ:

ONE WHO REJECTS THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, IS ONE WHO IS AGAINST JESUS CHRIST, NO MATTER HOW RELIGIOUS OR SCHOLARLY THE PERSON PROFESSES TO BE.

One may appear to be very religious and very pious and very good, but if one rejects the truth about Jesus Christ or tampers with the Person and Identity of Jesus Christ, that one is heading to the wrath of God.

This is an intriguing passage for we get an inside look as to how religious people tamper with God's word. There are three specific methods that those who are false use to try to turn people away from truth about Jesus Christ:

METHOD #1 – Some reject the truth about Jesus Christ by blatant lies. **11:15, 17-22**

The Pharisees were faced with a real dilemma. People had seen it and people were talking. Jesus Christ had tremendous power over the Satanic world and they knew that this would sway many people. Instead of them accepting the truth about Jesus Christ and getting others to accept it, they made up blatant lies in order to keep many from a true relationship with God.

These people were religious and authoritative and their explanation for Christ's power was that He was Satanic.

Beelzebul was a heathen deity, who supposedly was the chief prince over all evil spirits. He was closely connected to "Baal," who was a Canaanite fertility deity. It has been debated whether or not the name means "Lord of Flies" or "Lord of Dwelling." Beelzebul is a term often used for Satan and clearly by saying Christ casts out demons by Beelzebul, they are claiming Jesus Christ is Satanic. Satan is clearly the one to whom the false allegers are referring because they identify Beelzebul as "the ruler of the demons." So they are alleging that Jesus Christ is a satanic agent who is doing what He is doing by Satan.

When the true power of God is on display, false religious people will surface who will try to discredit what is happening and they will even go so far as to say one is Satanic.

Now Jesus refuted their logic by presenting three logical deductions from what they were alleging; Jesus uses three "if clauses" to make His point.

Deduction #1 - If Christ is casting out demons by the power of Satan, then He is weakening Satan's kingdom. **11:17-18**

Verse 17 opens with the words "But He knew their thoughts." Jesus Christ knew the very thoughts of these people and He knows the very thoughts of all people. This is one of the proofs of His deity. Even when He was here on earth, He was still Omniscient, All-Knowing.

Now Satan is a proud, power-crazed, evil, created angelic being. The reason he was expelled from heaven is because he wanted to be "like the Most High" (Is. 14:14). His goal was to have a kingdom that controlled this whole world.

What Jesus is saying is if you are claiming I am Satanic and I am casting out demons, then I am weakening and dividing his kingdom. If you divide a house, you ruin the family so if I am dividing the Satanic family, I am ruining it. Why would Satan authorize one to demolish his own kingdom?

There is no strength in a divided organization, whether it be a political kingdom, a home or a church. No divided kingdom stands. All that exists in a divided kingdom is chaos. Satan's goal is to control as many as possible and he certainly would not cast demons out of a person. He desires to get his demons into people so he may have more and more control.

By the way, the assumption that Christ makes here is that Satan does have a kingdom on this earth over which he does rule by using his demonic forces.

Deduction #2 - If Christ is casting out demons by the power of Satan, then your sons are also Satanic. **11:19**

Jewish exorcists were known to exist during the time of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:49). There is even a record of some of these Jews attempting to cast out demons (Acts 19:13-15). They were known to be Jewish exorcists, but when they invoked the name of Jesus that took their religious exorcisms to an entirely new realm. As David Garland said, when those exorcists tried to "pirate Jesus' name as if it had magical power *they are struck down*" (*Exegetical Commentary on Luke*, p. 482).

Casting out demons has always been an intriguing subject to those not grounded in truth. In fact, Jesus said there will be many who will be cast into eternal fire who cast out demons (Matt. 7:19, 22-23). They use Jesus' name, but they do not actually know Him.

The Jews believed that all Jews were Jewish sons of God. In other words, these people believed that their Jewish sons had the ability as a child of God to cast out demons, so Christ says they will be your judges. In other words, the fact that you will admit that a Jewish child of God can have power to cast out demons will eventually judge you.

Dr. Richard Lenski said this is a typical reaction of one who blatantly denies and rejects truth; they try to "ascribe identical effects to absolutely opposite causes." He says when people do this, there is something "viciously wrong" (*Luke*, p. 636).

Reversal argumentation comes from Satan, in which good is called evil and evil is called good. In this case, Jesus Christ, who is God, is called Satanic and the Satanic leaders who are alleging this are claiming they are good.

Deduction #3 - If Christ is casting out demons by the power of God, then God's King and Kingdom are present. **11:20-22**

There of course was another option. Jesus Christ was God and what He was doing was from God. It is interesting that He says I can control demons with "my finger," which is the finger of God. This was the same conclusion arrived to by the Egyptian magicians. They realized that the plagues against them were from the "finger of God" (Ex. 8:19).

Demons are no match for God's finger. Jesus came along and was much stronger than Satan or any of his forces and just His finger can put them out of business.

We certainly learn here that God's kingdom had come to Israel in the Person of Jesus Christ and the miracles Jesus Christ was doing proved this point. The purpose of miracles was not to entertain a crowd, but to display the fact that Jesus Christ was God and that He brought the Kingdom program to Israel.

He literally was offering a real, literal Kingdom to Israel that would give her the Promised Land, a Righteous King and a glorious Kingdom; and this Kingdom would rid the world of Satanic and demonic activity. This will literally happen in the 1,000 year millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:1-3).

In **verses 21-22**, Jesus pictures His Kingdom work as a major war with Satan in this world. Satan was the strong man who was dominating the world until Jesus showed up. Jesus showed up far stronger than the one controlling the world.

Until Jesus showed up Satan's world was undisturbed, which contextually included the religious world. Everything was going along fine for him, until one stronger showed up. He showed His power by overpowering his forces. By Jesus casting out demons, He is showing that He has total power over the entire Satanic world and He was actually claiming the spoils from Satan, which were the people He was freeing.

We once again see from this text a critical point. No matter how Satanic or demonic a person has been, if that person will invite Jesus Christ into the life, that person will be set free and one who was once a child of the Devil, will become a child and the spoils of God.

METHOD #2 – Some reject the truth about Jesus Christ by demanding more proof.

11:16, 29-32

Another group challenged Jesus Christ to show them some other signs from heaven. These people wanted more proof and were willing to accept the powerful things they had already seen God do. Having this man speaking was not enough of a sign for them. This group was demanding more signs. **Jesus Christ never does signs or miracles by demand.**

Christ answers them in **verses 29-32**. He calls them "wicked" for rejecting what they had already seen God do. Christ says, "I'll do no more signs" except the one of Jonah in which I'll go into a tomb for three days like Jonah was in the fish three days and then I'll come out.

Christ was so irritated that He said in **verse 31** that the "Queen of the South (Sheba)," who was willing to travel half-way around the known world to hear Solomon proclaim the truth, will be a judge against these people because one far greater than Solomon was on earth, Jesus Christ, and they were questioning and demeaning Him.

Christ says I will not give you any more signs. You have the greatest Person and Teacher to ever be on this earth and you are rejecting Him.

In fact, in **verse 32** Jesus said a heathen city like Nineveh totally repented to the preaching of Jonah and one far greater than Jonah was standing right before them and they wanted more signs. Truly this was a “wicked generation.”

METHOD #3 – Some reject the truth about Jesus Christ by neutrality. **11:23**

To Jesus Christ, neutrality is opposition. Every person must take a side when it comes to Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as “impartiality” when it comes to Jesus Christ.

To see the power that Jesus Christ has over the Devil and to remain neutral and not believe in Him is to actually be against Him.

Jesus Christ forces all of us to make a choice. The miracles He did were not cute tricks for entertainment purposes. These were displays of the fact that He is the God/Savior/Messiah/King.

No one can remain neutral about Jesus Christ. The entire eternal Kingdom program of God is found in Him.

We either believe in Him or we don't. We either accept Him or reject Him. We either receive Him or we don't. It is your decision. Jesus Christ forces you to make a decision.

Luke expected those who read this gospel to make a decision. Jesus Christ is the entire Kingdom program of God for every person. His miracles prove it. Will you accept Him?