



14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. 15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. 16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.** 18 **If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.** 19 **And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.** 20 **But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.** 21 **When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:** 22 **But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.** 23 **He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.** 24 **When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.** 25 **And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.** 26 **Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.** 27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28 But he said, **Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.** (Luke 11:14-28)

This miracle is also recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew 12:22-37.

It is interesting to learn from this miracle that those wicked onlookers who sought after a sign from God were “tempting God.” Based on this principle, there is a lot of tempting of God taking place today in charismatic churches around the world who insist on signs and wonders. The only ‘sign’ they are likely to see is that of Christ returning to judge them.

If we may consider the world a jungle (and it is definitely so from a spiritual perspective), we pass through that jungle with a thousand hungry eyes watching our every move. At the first stumble (at sin) those eyes are inform every witness of our

failures. Those eyes belong to vicious and ferocious claws that are then bared to attack the very Savior who we represent in our living. That is the devil's way, and it has not changed an iota since that Old Red Dragon fell from Heaven as lightning. He has never, and WILL never, be anything other than the mortal enemy of your souls. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8) If it pleases you to sin, just be ready for the devouring lion. As God said to Job from out of the whirlwind (regarding that dragon, Leviathan): *Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.* (Job 41:8) The same is true of Satan – his power is beyond that of man to oppose. Only God can win the battle against such a vicious creature.

Perhaps we worry too much about the eyes of the world seeing what grand and successful people we are instead of how far we fall short of the righteousness of God. Benjamin Franklin said, *"If all of the world were blind, except me, I should not worry about what fine clothes I wear, what kind of house I owned, or what kind of furniture I had in it."* Give that some meditative thought, friend.

We find Jesus in today's text working a miracle of God in casting out a demon. Please remember that demons work for Satan and under his power and direction. They are the fallen angels which the tail of the great Red Dragon drew with him to earth at his fall. Man cannot fight such power as discussed earlier. So we need a power greater than that of the Devil – there is only One – GOD! If a disciple will exorcise a demon, he must do so in the Name (by the power and authority) of Jesus Christ. Satan has all kinds of soldiers, and many of those soldiers are human. Let us observe three stark facts revealed in today's text regarding those who witnessed the good works of Christ.

1. There were many in the multitude that marveled at the works of Christ and freely admitted that only the promised Messiah could perform such miracles. *And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?* (Matt 12:23)
2. Others in the crowd, however, were more casual observers – much like those we see filling the pews of the mainline churches every Sunday. They really did not WANT to believe so they asked for MORE than a miracle in overpowering Satan. *16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.* Those who lack faith always seek a greater sign regardless the miraculous wonders they have already observed. Worship to such people is more a matter of entertainment than of solemn and reverent audience before God.

The last group are those who were forever present to find fault with every move Christ made. They are still with us today - *15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.* Matthew tells us who those culprits were, in case you have not guessed: *24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.* (Matt 12:24) Be not deceived, the same people gather about you when you perform good works of love for Christ. You have many, as the villagers of Sychar, who will believe even a woman of ill-repute when she has been touched by Christ. They will hear and believe the testimony you give of how Christ has changed your life (if the evidence bears it out). Others will search for ulterior motives in your action – they will want you to do something that they consider 'impossible.' But Satan's best adherents are those who have a stake in the battle – these are HIS adherents. The Pharisees comprise the largest contingent of that group in our text today. Livid with jealousy over their little profit-producing empire of the Temple, they seek every means to undermine Christ. Of course, a favorite tool of the devil is to always begin with a question just as he did with Eve in the garden at Eden. Or, they will assign false motives or causes for a miracle. (as the serpent did to Eve in

the Garden at Eden – ye SHALL not surely die!)

Let us examine a cardinal charge the Pharisees made against Christ: **15 *But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.*** This name for the *Lord of the Flies* derives from an ancient Philistine god. I find it rather amazing that one of our required-reading texts in public schools today is “*The Lord of the Flies*”. Beelzebub is its true name and the Jewish religious leaders used it to refer to Satan himself. It was thought that the fly covered dead bodies and later, miraculously’ life emerged from those dead bodies in the form of maggots and, later, flies. What a blasphemy against the Lord of Heaven! But the tactic is still used today when we see, on very rare occasions, an honest politician attempting to honestly address a problem involving the public largesse. He is labeled as one who is trying to starve the poor, murder the elderly, and reap profits for himself. How does Christ address these beleaguering imbeciles?

Though many may believe that Abe Lincoln was very original in his comment – “A house divided against itself cannot stand” he was only plagiarizing (without giving credit) the words of Jesus: **17 *But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.***

No military general would ever field an army comprised of half loyalists and half traitors. In the face of battle, every heart must be on the side of the cause else the possibility of victory is reduced commensurate with the numbers of traitors in the ranks. Satan is no fool – he is a cunning old genius. Even if he could do so, he would never allow righteousness in his ranks. This is what Christ represents – the perfect righteousness and power of God. God Himself has already proven that He will not allow evil in His ranks. When it reared its prideful head in Heaven, the rebel was cast out.

How strong do you consider that Finger which scattered the stars and distant galaxies into their places in space? **20 *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*** Rarely has that Finger written on earth, but it certainly has written. Can you count the times? Can you tell me how often that Finger has written on clay? Would you believe FIVE times! If you have difficulty finding those five times in the Bible, ask me and I shall tell you. That same Finger has more power than a million and more suns. If we can see that Finger defeated the hosts of Hell in casting out demons, do we not recognize that God is Omnipotent and the devil cannot stand against Him? (God has actually written a sixth time if we consider the clay of our hearts upon which, in these latter days, He has written His Law).

Who do you consider to be the most powerful politician today? Obama? No, he is only a small tool to that greater politician – his name is Satan. He owns the hearts and minds of more people than all the churches combined. **21. *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.*** Christ calls Satan the “*prince of this world.*” (John 12:31) Christ is the Prince and Lord of Life that does not perish, but the Prince of the world shall suffer as the world that is destroyed. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:* (Eph 2:2) I hope that you, Listener, are not disobedient before God for, if you are, the just quoted verse tells us that you have the WRONG

spirit. We all had our bodily homes kept by a strong man (Satan), but a Stronger Man has come and taken over the premises of our hearts if Christ has made His abode there.

Perhaps we need a house-cleaning, but we ALSO need occupancy! **24 *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*** Have you ever gone on a strict diet of small servings and no sweets? How did that work out for you? After a grueling few weeks (or days) you are famished! You return to the old diet of heavy foods with a vengeance and wind up doing more damage than the good you did for a time. Before we come to Christ, there is a repulsively wicked spirit in our members. It dominates all we do, think, and say. It is comfortable there in our hearts, but it cares for no good thing. You cannot evict that demon. No other man can evict that demon for you. It must be the Lord Jesus Christ who calls him out just as this text relates. When that wicked spirit is gone out, he will surely return if the One who evicts him is not at home in your heart. Jesus must take the place of the demon. He took the place of the demon in your heart on the cross at Calvary, did He not?

So Christ has answered the henchmen (Pharisees) of Satan in three distinct ways. This is the same approach we should take when confronted by the evil of error:

- 1) He argued from the rational and scripturally reasonable point of view. Why would Satan be divided against himself? God and Satan are at opposite ends of the pole. Reason from Scripture is our fortress against error.
- 2) He argued from the premise of Godly power. Who is greater, God or his creature, Satan?
- 3) Christ argued from the point of accomplished results. Is the heart safe in the hands of Christ?

Though not a part of our text today, the following two verses of the text have much bearing here: **29 *And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. 30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.*** (Luke 11:29-30) Do not we see men and women of otherwise sound sense running from tent to tent of the modern wonder-workers seeking after a miracle and sign? These fools are promised the wealth of the world if they will only send all of their wealth to the evangelist. But do we need a sign to believe? Has the sign not already been provided? Like Jonah, Christ was in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. He arose from the heart of the earth for you and me. What more do we need to know? Are we not an evil and adulterous generation if there ever was one? Please notice that it is never the God-fearing people who desire a sign, but those opposed to the Kingdom of God: **38 *Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*** (Matt 12:38-40)