

“A House Divided”

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Texts: Luke 11:14-26; Matt. 12:22-37

The Pharisees Rebuked **Matthew 12:22** Then a demon-possessed man *who was* blind and mute was brought to [a]Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. 23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” 24 But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, “This man casts out demons only by [b]Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”

25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, “[c]Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and [d]any city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he [e]is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? 27 If I by [f]Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? For this reason they will be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong *man*? And then he will plunder his house.

The Unpardonable Sin 30 He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. 31 “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32 Whoever [g]speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever [h]speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Words Reveal Character 33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak [i]what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 The good man brings out of *his* good treasure [j]what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure [k]what is evil. 36 But I tell you that every [l]careless word that people [m]speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 For [n]by your words you will be justified, and [o]by your words you will be condemned.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Footnotes

- [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) Lit *Him*
- [Matthew 12:24](#) Or *Beezebul*; i.e. ruler of demons
- [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) Lit *Every*
- [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) Lit *Every*
- [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) Lit *was*
- [Matthew 12:27](#) V 24, note 1
- [Matthew 12:32](#) Lit *will speak*
- [Matthew 12:32](#) Lit *will speak*
- [Matthew 12:34](#) Lit *good things*
- [Matthew 12:35](#) Lit *good things*
- [Matthew 12:35](#) Lit *evil things*
- [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) Or *useless*
- [Matthew 12:36](#) Lit *will speak*
- [Matthew 12:37](#) Or *in accordance with*
- [Matthew 12:37](#) Or *in accordance with*

As we are considering the parallels between Matthew 12 and Luke 11, we note first that Jesus is teaching but the location is different and the setting in Matthew 12 is controversy (with Pharisees regarding Sabbath violations) whereas in Luke 11 we are in Bethany, at the house of Mary and Martha (near Jerusalem but not in her midst and the atmosphere is that as among friends). So when we read in Luke **And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb/mute** a mute demon we are not certain as to the location. In Matthew the tension is palpable: **Then a demon possessed man who was blind and dumb; and he healed him so much that he both spake and saw. Casting out/exorcism . . . versus healing.** What does this tell us about deliverance ministry? And what does it say about divine healing? We remember in Luke 11 that the seventy returned rejoicing that **even the demons were subject to them** in Jesus' name. **The possessed man was brought to Jesus in Matthew was a provocation, an incitement or as a temptation/test.** Would Jesus heal on the Sabbath which the Pharisees beloved was profited by the Law?! The Sabbatarian controversy is not evident, or present in the Lucan account! That is not to say that controversialists were absent but their identity is masked (we don't know if they were Pharisees or not or even if they were simply an extension of the Sabbatarian party). The Lucan account is in a teaching setting and the subject matter was prayer, in response to **Lord, teach us to pray.** (v. 1) So either they were seeking evidence of a breach of the Law, or demanding a sign from heaven. The latter is what the crown in Luke 11 received. **But some of them said, "He casteth out devils through the power of Beelzebub."**

What twisted logic! Or, what perverse reasoning. Jesus urges them to use their common sense: **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, a house divided cannot stand.** (Luke 11:17) Jesus suggests that if they write off his deliverance ministry as a work of the devil, are they willing to dismiss the work of their exorcists as equally demonic? **Let them** (your own sons) **be your adjudicators! But if I with the finger of God cast out devils** (there's your sign from heaven!) **No doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.** (v. 20) Please recall my assertion that deliverance was a messianic credential, a sign of the messianic times/day or occasion. *Know by this deliverance, exorcism, or complete healing—as a sign—that you are in the presence of the Messiah! The real one as authenticated by the signs prophesied ahead of time regarding him.*

In such a manner, in Luke 11, we are delivered to the doorstep of a major matter; the dominion of Satan, the prison house of Satan which holds imprisoned, holds enthralled the whole world. I want us to hold that thought in mind: the spiritual captivity of the whole world! **When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, (or secure). But when a stronger that he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils (that is, he sets his captives free, his prisoners!).** That, of course, is merely another way to parse, to express, or expound the liberating gospel message. *You/we were formerly imprisoned, in spiritual captivity to the devil, but when Christ appeared, and overpowered Satan, disarmed and bound him, we were loosed, set free and liberated from his power and control—we obtained a new, true and eternally good master!*

This rather extensive treatment of our spiritual oppression, imprisonment is summarized in Matthew 12:29 thus: **Or else how can we enter into a strong man's house and carry spoils and his goods, except he first bind the strong man and then**

**he will plunder his house.** Plunder, the very term reminds us of the warfare we are in. And if we remember that we are stolen property to begin with, then salvation takes on the contours of restitution, or even reparations. Of course, Christ came to restore to the Father that which was stolen from him by a lying, thieving murderous Adversary.

Does this not seem plain, clear and obvious to us? How could we miss it? I have a suggestion: perhaps in our dividing the world in two—at least!—if separating the world into us versus them, we tend to lose sight of the universality of our spiritual activity. The Europeans were as much in the thrall of the devil as the native populations to which they came offering “civilization.” They brought the devil with them and, surprise, he was already here ready to greet them! Imperialism? Already here. Slavery? Already in practice—human trafficking, abduction and kidnapping? Yes, and thievery, order, fraud, drunkenness and immorality, prostitutions and domestic violence. And those who picture the indigenous peoples as more excellent, or noble savages were as brutal, savage and wicked as those they esteemed their betters. There is nowhere where warfare did not plague humanity *because that is how things are in the prison house of Satan!* The bottom line is that we are all in trouble, all of us without exclusion and the “red pill” of our actual condition has not altered ever.

Except that Christ has come and set the captive free. Amongst the European refugees from the world-wide theaters of warring nations, their were those who had sworn allegiance to a new kind of king, in a new kind of kingdom. It is a monarchic form of government! That’s sad for those who think that democratic republics are the be all; and end all of human governance. God is, like it or not, into governance. Governance is built into creation, and the contours of governance are not hidden from us because they are clearly set forth in Scripture. Exodus 18-20 outlines the administration of justice very clearly—and the ten commandments crystallize inviolable directives. If we wish to know how God would have us act—love of God and love of neighbor are expanded and extrapolated there—no matter how we scoff and mock, we cannot honestly claim to not know how to behave if we truly desire to live together in peace and thrive. And I am fairly certain that God really doesn’t care how restrictive we find those laws to be. Our rebellion is foolish and temporary. Or at least so we are forewarned. Scripture is neither obsolete, or worn out—it has not been tried and found wanting. It has, rather like Christianity, been untried. Period.

**Amen.**