

• Jesus' miraculous deliverances attributed to Satan by his critics

At some time in His travels, Jesus compelled a demon causing dumbness to leave a suffering man or woman<sup>□1</sup>. The crowds were amazed, but some maintained that Jesus had power over demons only because He was a servant of the devil<sup>□2</sup>. It was, they said, a demonic miracle. People who say they believe in the miraculous, but are then confronted with the miraculous, may well attribute the events they see to Satan. Many movements of the Holy Spirit have at first been attributed to Satan.

□1 11:14

□2 11:15

• Demand for 'special' signs

There were also people around who said they needed a sign of their own choosing, performed at their command and at their timing, before they would believe in Jesus<sup>□1</sup>. Jesus had done many miracles, many 'signs', but these were not enough for the critics. They wanted a sign specially laid on for them!

□1 11:16

• Jesus' responses

Jesus first responds to the claim that He is demonically empowered<sup>□1</sup>. Later He will reply to the request for a sign<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 11:17-26

□2 11:29-32

1. The test of a spiritual kingdom is the direction it is moving in

1. **The test of a spiritual kingdom is the direction it is moving in.** A kingdom or a family, says Jesus, which is internally divided will achieve nothing. Disunity is fatal<sup>□1</sup>. It is this principle that applies to Satan's kingdom<sup>□2</sup>. A man or a woman has just been **delivered** from Satan. Is Satan working against himself? Surely not. There were 'exorcists' in Israel, believing people who were used by God in this way. They were well-known to the people of Israel. Jesus says, 'ask them!' <sup>□3</sup>. The well-known and apparently well-recognized 'exorcists' in Israel will tell the Pharisees: Satan does not bring deliverance! The best proof that God is at work is when it is obvious that Satan's kingdom is being opposed. Satan will not cast out Satan, so when we see sin and Satan being put down we may know God is at work. On the other hand, no amount of excitement proves anything if the long-term results do not show any signs of the power of sin and Satan being repelled.

□1 11:17

□2 11:18

□3 11:19

• Is Satan working against himself? Surely not

2. Exorcisms are a proof of God's kingdom

2. **Exorcisms are a proof of God's kingdom.** Jesus says, 'If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you'<sup>□1</sup>. Demon possession is a fact. Some people seem to enjoy the fact; they see demons everywhere! Any time they visit a congregation anywhere they want to practise a 'deliverance ministry'. Personally, although I believe that demons are real and I believe that deliverance is real, yet a lot of what is called 'deliverance ministry' does not seem to me to be the real thing. I cannot see much evidence of Satan's kingdom being driven back by many of those who claim 'deliverance ministries' in our own days. After such people have gone, there seem to be more problems to handle than before they came, and the pastor has to sort out the mess! But still, demon possession is a fact! Real deliverance, not the 'playing' kind is a sign of the presence of God's power. The kingdom of God is here! Wherever Jesus is working there God's kingdom – His royal power – is at work.

□1 11:20

• Real deliverance, not the 'playing' kind is a sign of the presence of God's power

3. The work of Jesus is to bind Satan

3. **The work of Jesus is to bind Satan.** The devil is like a strong man in a castle guarding his possessions<sup>□1</sup>. He can be defeated only by superior power, but Jesus is the one who has that superior power.

□1 11:21

• After He has acted in power the 'possessions' of Satan are released

• Radically changed lives

• The Christian gospel is a conflict

• Jesus is at work deliverance from demons can take place without conversion

• We have to have Jesus in our life before we are safe from Satan

Jesus is 'the stronger One'<sup>□2</sup>. The result of the work of Jesus is release from Satan. We must notice that the work of Jesus comes first. After He has acted in power the 'possessions' of Satan are released. It is obvious that the 'possessions' are people; it was a person who was released according to Luke 11:14.

The 'plunder' of Satan is taken out of the castle and distributed. The parabolic detail must not be pressed too hard but it clearly refers to the way in which lives are radically changed after Jesus has been at work. People see the evil of sin and they reject sinful and wicked ways radically. They call upon God for mercy; they get close to God. They become zealous in serving God, they lose their obsession with worldly pleasures.

The battle between Satan and Jesus is a strong one. No one can be neutral in the presence of Jesus. 'Whoever is not with me is against me', says Jesus. The Christian gospel is a conflict, and there are only two sides in the battle<sup>□1</sup>. Satan's kingdom, in any particular area of life, is either going forward or backward. Any person is either getting increasingly entangled in sin or he is getting released from sin. The people who have accused Jesus of having demonic power<sup>□2</sup> in fact are themselves part of Satan's possessions and are being held fast by him.

There is another danger that Jesus warns of. When Jesus is at work deliverance from demons can take place without conversion. An evil spirit can leave but then return to the 'empty house' of an unconverted person's life<sup>□1</sup>. In which case 'the last state of that person is worse than the first'. Deliverance from demons must be followed by true conversion. There are degrees of wickedness. A temporary 'deliverance' from wicked ways, if not followed by true conversion, has no lasting value. This is the explanation of many who 'fall away' from what they claim has happened in their lives. But they were not 'falling away' from a life indwelt by the Holy Spirit; they are 'falling away' from a life that is 'swept and put in order' but not inhabited! Having escaped entanglements of Satan they are entangled again and are overpowered. Reformation without conversion is of no value. We have to have Jesus in our life before we are safe from Satan.

□2 11:22

□1 11:24

□2 see 11:15

□1 11:24-26

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