

Theme: The trained religious leaders blasphemously claimed that Jesus was empowered by Satan, but Jesus showed that He had actually bound Satan and was plundering his house and kingdom to set people free and bring them into God's family.

## I. Intro - Saint Patrick (389-461 AD)

- A. Born in England; father a deacon; grandfather cleric
- B. Kidnapped and taken to Ireland; "Your ship is ready"
- C. Walked 200 miles to escape; eventually became a monk
- D. Vision - return to Ireland; opposed by Druids; great spiritual warfare - Breastplate prayer
- E. Ireland was transformed through this spiritual warfare!
- F. Today - Kingdoms In Conflict!

## II. Growing Popularity and Opposition

- A. Jesus returns to a house and crowds gather  
Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. Mark 3:20
  - 1. Jesus is back in town and the cross gather
  - 2. The crowd and its needs were unending
  - 3. Jesus and the disciples could not even eat!
  - 4. Jesus has been going away for rest, but what people see and hear about is this frenetic activity.
- B. Opposition from His own family!  
When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." Mark 3:21
  - 1. His family keeps hearing about the activity

- 2. They have probably also heard of growing hostility
- 3. They set out from Nazareth to go get Him - He must be out of His mind!
- 4. Even Jesus' own family does not understand Who He is and what He is doing, think that He is mentally unstable, and end up opposing His mission!
- 5. A quick reminder that the flesh does not determine our destiny nor understand the things of God!
- 6. God's family is determined by the new birth by the Spirit, not our physical lineage!
- 7. We will look more at Jesus' family next week.

### C. Opposition from the Jerusalem authorities

And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." Mark 3:22

- 1. Opposed by the teachers of the law - no surprise!
- 2. These are from Jerusalem - this is new opposition!
- 3. These are the greatest religious scholars of Israel
- 4. They see Jesus driving out demons - they can not deny what He has done.
- 5. Their verdict - Jesus is possessed by Satan!
  - a. Beelzebub - only in the Gospels
  - b. Seems to be related to a popular term for a high-ranking demon or even Satan
  - c. Beelzebub means 'Lord of the Flies' (named after Baal)
  - d. Beelzeboul/Beelzebub is the Prince of Demons

6. The scribes can not deny Jesus' power and miracles, so they ascribe it to Satan rather than God
  - a. This was not the charge at Jesus' trial but it was still remembered much later
 

"Yeshu of Nazareth was hanged on the day of preparation for the Passover because he practiced sorcery and led the people astray" (TB Sanhedrin 43a)

"And a master has said, 'Yeshu the Nazarene practiced magic and led Israel astray'" (TB Sanhedrin 107b)
  - b. Early Church Fathers also mentioned this false charge during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century
  - c. This is also a reminder of the limited power of miraculous signs - they knew Jesus was doing miracles but REFUSED to believe.
  - d. Just as physical lineage does not guarantee spiritual openness, nor does seeing the miraculous! Only the Spirit of God can enable us to see the Kingdom of God!
7. The crowds continue to grow and flock to Jesus, but the opposition - from both His family and religious authorities from Jerusalem - continues to grow as well.

### III. Kingdoms In Conflict

#### A. Jesus answers the charge with a parable

So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables:  
 "How can Satan drive out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. Mark 3:23–26

1. Think about it - Satan driving out Satan?

2. A divided kingdom or house will fall!
3. If Satan is working thru me to drive out his own demons, he is destroying his own kingdom!
4. If Satan is doing this then his power is gone - but clearly it is not!

#### B. The reality - Satan has been bound and Jesus is plundering his house!

In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. Mark 3:27

1. Since it can not be Satan doing this, Jesus must be stronger than Satan!
2. Jesus is the stronger one John had mentioned in Mark 1:7 - and He is not only stronger than John, He is also stronger than Satan!
3. Jesus had met Satan in the wilderness and bound him, and His driving out of demons shows that this has happened!
4. Satan was a strong man who bound people in sin, demonic possession, disease, and death, but Jesus had come to bind Him, destroy his work, and set the captives free!

Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce? <sup>25</sup> But this is what the Lord says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save. Isaiah 49:24–25

5. This was the message Peter preached!

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached — <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Acts 10:37–38

- a. Jesus was the Stronger One coming after John
- b. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit to deliver those under Satan's power!

6. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are in inevitable conflict, but Jesus has already bound Satan and guaranteed victory for the people of God!

#### C. A grave warning to the religious authorities

I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. <sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” <sup>30</sup> He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.” Mark 3:28–30

1. I tell you the truth - Amen, I tell you...
  - a. Only Jesus ever uses this phrase; 13x in Mark
  - b. This is a sign to wake up and listen!
2. Jesus is warning the scribes regarding their statements - there are in danger of blasphemy
3. They are equating the Holy Spirit with Satan!
4. Blaspheming the Spirit is an eternal sin!
5. Understanding blasphemy of the Spirit
  - a. This is unique - never said anywhere else

- b. This is spoken to the religious authorities, not just everyday Jews or Gentiles
- c. This is referring to the willful, settled, rejection of the Spirit's work through Jesus, hating it so much that one says it is the work of Satan.
- d. People who have done this do not worry that they might have done so! Their consciences are seared toward the Spirit's work.

6. I will discuss this more in AfterHours

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Do I see the polarizing nature of Jesus?

1. Crowds are flocking to Him; scribes despise Him!
2. Jesus has invaded Satan's Kingdom - and there is no neutrality!
3. Many today want to deny Christ's Deity and atoning work, but say they respect Him as a great moral teacher - but this is IMPOSSIBLE

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would be either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. - CS Lewis

4. The key question in Mark - Who is Jesus?

5. There is no neutrality here - the war of the ages rages about us, and we must be loyal to either Satan or God.

6. I urge you - hear the Spirit's call & look to Jesus

B. Do I see the reality of spiritual warfare?

1. Those who pledge loyalty to Jesus will be opposed by Satan and his demonic forces

2. One can not read the Gospels without seeing the reality of spiritual conflict and war

3. Don't think of *The Exorcist* or *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* - this is Hollywood

4. A better picture is found in *The Screwtape Letters*

5. Satan and his demons are out to harass, deceive, seduce, and destroy disciples of Jesus, and to keep others from the faith.

6. This should not make us fearful - our King has bound Satan and sent us to plunder the house!

7. We begin with defensive warfare in ourselves, putting to death evil desires and submitting to the Spirit's work in our lives. This is a great time of year for this!

8. Am I engaged in defensive spiritual warfare, recognizing the enemy's attacks in temptation, deception, and harassment?

9. We must also move on to offensive spiritual warfare, praying against Satan's work in others, attempting to deceive and enslave them, to keep them from Christ, and to deceive our culture at large.

10. Remember: disciples are called out of the crowd to be 'with Jesus', and are then sent back out to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom and to engage the fires of Satan.

11. This is not a call for a few specialists - it is part of life for every believer!

12. Am I engaging in spiritual warfare through prayer, fasting, serving others, sharing the Gospel, standing for truth, etc?

13. As we proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, we will encounter harassment, resistance, slander, and potentially worse - remember the enemy is Satan, not the humans around us!

14. Let's engage in the warfare for Christ our King!

C. The Table of the Shepherd-Warrior-King

1. Psalm 23 corporate reading

2. Jesus is our Shepherd-Warrior-King, Who cares for us, Who won the battle for us, Who feeds us at His Table

3. Come and be strengthened!

### Kingdoms In Conflict

Mark 3:20-30

February 29, 2023

Communion

Breastplate prayer

Teaching keywords: Spiritual warfare; Satan and demons; Christology

May Christ be your shield today: Christ before you; Christ behind you; Christ beneath you; Christ above you; Christ on your right; Christ on your left; May Christ be with you, Christ be in you alone and in multitude, near and afar; for all you face and for all your life, that you may live in the protection and power of his blessing.

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