

28. The Kingdom of Satan

Luke 11:14-28

Luke: A Walk Through the Life of Jesus

In the last study in Luke, we observed the way that Jesus trained His disciples in the kingdom activity of prayer, i.e., how to pray for the Kingdom of God to come and touch those around us as well as to how to pray for our own needs. In this passage, Luke brings us face to face with demonic activity. We witness the effects of Satan's influence over the life of an individual, and we also see how the enemy used people to bring opposition to Christ's ministry. As Christians, while we live in these earthly bodies, we must remember that we will have opposition, for we are in a fight with an unseen enemy. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). As we read, we must be aware that, just as Satan used people to malign Jesus, he will also oppose any work of ours to release precious lives that are under the dominion of the evil one. The battle is one that continues to this present day. □

¹⁴Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. ¹⁵But some of them said, "By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." ¹⁶Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. ¹⁷Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. ¹⁸If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. ¹⁹Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁰But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you (Luke 11:14-20).

Question 1) Imagine what type of life this man had. What kind of frustrations do you think he experienced by not being able to speak? Why was the crowd amazed?

Demons Can Afflict the Human Body

Luke tells us that the man was mute. Not being able to talk would make one so dependent on other people. Think of the frustration of not being able to communicate your needs to others. How would you correct your children? How would you go to a restaurant and explain what you wanted to eat? He would have been conscious of often being misunderstood, but then the Savior came along. I can imagine that he made sign language in the healing line when he came to Jesus. However, the Lord didn't lay His hand on him to heal him; He perceived that the inability to speak was due to the infiltration of a demonic spirit in his life. The man was mute because of the presence of a demon that had managed to gain entrance and afflict the man's body. Luke tells us that the Pharisees accused Jesus of being in league with Satan in casting out this demon. It is evident from this that the healing was the result of this man having the demon cast out.

Demons manifest themselves in various ways. One of the ways is to bring physical affliction. Paul the Apostle writes that he was "given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me" (2 Corinthians 12:7). Some people think that Paul had a physical affliction, while other commentators remind us that the Greek word translated *messenger* is the same word translated

elsewhere as *angel*. It could be that Paul was saying that there was continual demonic opposition to his work, perhaps causing physical affliction by the frequent attacks against him in the various cities where he preached and planted new churches.

Turn with me to Luke 13:10-13, and also verse 16.

¹⁰On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” ¹³Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. ... ¹⁶“Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

Question 2) What was the cause of the woman’s crippled condition? Is it possible that some people’s condition in the 21st Century is due to a similar root cause?

What is significant with the above passage is that Jesus called her a daughter of Abraham, a woman under the Covenant of God, yet she is “crippled” by a spirit. The woman was not healed, but “set free” (v. 12b). Jesus then went on to give the reason as to why she was in this condition. Satan had kept her “bound” for eighteen years. The evil spirit was in some way causing the crippling injury. This case is similar to the man who was mute in Luke 11. In both cases, there was an evil spirit causing the affliction. When the demon was cast out, the root of the condition was broken, and she and the mute man were restored. This is not to say that all sicknesses have a demonic origin, but in these two cases, this was the cause.

The Blasphemy of the Religious Elite

Back to our passage in Luke 11, when the man could fully hear again, the crowd was amazed (Luke 11:14), but anger rose up in some of the religious folk who were watching. The deliverance left the man speaking. One would think that a person would need to learn to use his vocal cords again, but the Lord gave him the ability to talk as well as delivering him from the demon.

This deliverance occasioned much rejoicing! You would expect that all the people would be full of joy for this man to be delivered and set free from such a terrible affliction, but instead, there was such a shocking lack of compassion exhibited by the Pharisees looking on (v. 15). As one reads through the Gospels, one becomes aware that the religious elite never denied Christ’s healings and miracles. They could not, for there were so many, and they were convincing beyond belief. □

They had stood there as Christ had healed in front of them (Luke 6:11). The power with which Jesus healed and delivered people of demons made the religious elite look powerless. The religious leaders had to challenge this gospel of grace that Jesus was preaching because it was undermining their philosophy of righteousness by their works. The Orthodox Jewish leadership, therefore, conspired together and put out the word that Jesus was healing by the power of Satan, and that “**anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the**

synagogue” (John 9:22). To be put out of the synagogue was to be isolated from the community, a terrible threat in that culture. In our western culture today, we may not fully understand what this type of threat would mean. To be cut off from the community at that time would affect every aspect of your life. People depended upon one another, and community life was necessary, not just helpful. Your quality of life would deteriorate very rapidly if you were expelled from the community.

Such was the hatred of Jesus by the Pharisees. They pronounced this type of isolation upon anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. They sought to put an end to the ministry of Christ, not only to thwart his ministry but also to tarnish His reputation by saying that Jesus was in league with Satan.

It never ceases to amaze me as to the hatred that rose up in some of those that witnessed the miracle, for as soon as the Pharisees saw the amazed response of the people, they said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons” (Luke 11:15). Beelzebub literally means Lord of the Flies; it became an alternate name for Satan. R. Kent Hughes, in his commentary on Luke, says of this passage:

In Ugaritic texts, the name Beezeboul meant Baal, the prince." But in the Old Testament (2 Kings 1:2-6,) the name is rendered “Beelzebub” (NIV), meaning Lord of the flies.” It was a deliberate distortion to deprecate the pagan god. The Septuagint translates this, *Baal, the fly god*. Beelzebub was and is a fitting name for Satan, but a monstrous slander when used for Christ. The hearts of the Pharisees and scribes were so hard that they said in essence, “Yes, Jesus has done a miracle, but only because he is in league with Satan, the Lord of the flies, the god of dung and carrion.” It was a calculated blasphemy of immense perversity.¹

Satan has always longed to sit upon the throne of the world and be called *lord* (2 Thessalonians 2:4). That has been his agenda for ages past (Isaiah 14:12-14). The word Baal in Hebrew means lord, ruler, or god. For many years under King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, as well as others, Baal was worshiped as God. Things changed when Elijah came on the scene and challenged Baal to a spiritual duel (1 Kings 18:21), i.e., the god that brought fire down from heaven would be proved as the true God. When the fire came down at Elijah's simple prayer, the result was that open Baal/Satan worship was broken and ultimately destroyed sometime later. Baal is none other than Satan himself. The false gods that were being worshiped in the Old Testament were demons or evil angels, setting themselves up against the Lord. It is interesting that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, translates Psalm 96:5 to say, “All the gods of the nations are demons;” whereas, most translations say that the gods of the nations are idols.

Other witnesses that saw the miracle of the mute man asked Christ for a sign to prove that He was not operating under the power of the evil one. The Lord Jesus could have just walked away and avoided the clash, but out of His mercy for the religious leaders and with the innocent ones around Him also listening to the blasphemy, He responded with two illustrations about civil war.

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: Luke Volume One*, Published by Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois. 1998. Page 426.

1. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? Satan would not defeat God by deliberately assassinating his own generals—where's the logic in that? He would be undermining his own forces. Satan is after control of the whole world (1 John 5:19). To lose control of anyone is against his plan. To think that Jesus was empowered by Satan to destroy his own kingdom is ludicrous. What king destroys his own army?
2. In v. 19, Jesus said that if He was driving out demons by Satan's power, under whose authority were the exorcists of the Pharisees driving out demons? All those that were listening to Him knew of the difficulty that the Pharisees had in delivering demons from people (Acts 19:13-16). All the witnesses had seen the authority that Jesus had, i.e., with ease, He drove out demons. If He was utilizing Satan's power and they were doing exorcisms by God's power, when it came to their exorcisms and the little success they had, then that was equivalent to saying that God had little power while Satan had much power. All knew how ridiculous that sounded. It would imply a severe weakness in Satan's rule if he were casting out his own demons. In one verse alone in Luke, the Scripture says that: "**demons came out of many people**" (Luke 4:41), and we have already looked at several instances of mighty deliverances from demons by Jesus. In Christ's ministry, conflict was common. Casting out demons was not unusual; it was the order of the day!

Question 3) What do you understand Jesus to be saying in verse 20? "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you." Explain in your own words what you think this means.

There are two ways we can interpret what Jesus means by the finger of God. The first is found in Exodus 8:19 when Moses brought the ten plagues against Egypt. At first, Pharaoh's magicians could duplicate the lesser plagues, but at the third plague, viz. the plague of gnats, it was beyond any occult power that they could conjure. Their testimony to Pharaoh was, "**This is the finger of God**" (Exodus 8:19). If this is the correct interpretation, Jesus was saying that the power of God was breaking through clearly to show them that He was and is the promised Messiah bringing the kingdom of God with power. The second possibility is that Jesus was referring to the finger of God that appeared in the Book of Daniel. A hand and finger appeared from the spiritual realm into the physical world, writing words of judgment on the wall against Belshazzar, the king of Babylon: "**Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall...**" (Daniel 5:5). With His coming, Jesus had brought the Kingdom of God to Earth. It was not fully manifest yet, for that is still future, but it is clear from the language of the New Testament that the Kingdom of God was and is breaking into the world.

After His two logical answers to the religious elite, Jesus said:

²¹When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. ²²But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils. ²³He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters (Luke 11:21-23).

The Lord then gave an illustration of siege warfare, saying that Satan is like a territorial lord that

has fortified his territory and made his possessions safe. The words, “his own house” (v. 21) is translated from a Greek term meaning the courtyard of a castle. He has barred his gates, and he has fully armed himself behind his battlements to keep his possessions safe. What are his possessions that our King wants? God wants the release of precious people kept under bondage to Satan’s subjection and will. The Kingdom of God is advancing with the much stronger, all-powerful, Lord Jesus’ laying siege to evil spiritual defenses: **“I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18)**. Gates speak of the defenses of hell. The spoils of war Jesus talks about in verse twenty-two are those liberated from Satan’s dominion: **“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” (Colossians 1:13)**.

No Neutral Territory

In this cosmic war that all humanity experiences, we should not think that we are in a neutral territory or that we can be “on the fence” as spectators and not be involved in this battle. There are only two sides. We may think that we are of a different belief system or religion and, therefore, outside of this cosmic war, but this is a mistaken belief and a deception of Satan, our enemy. Many people like to think that they are in neutral territory, but no matter what they believe, the battle rages, and they are on one side or another according to these words of Jesus. You have to serve somebody, but you get to choose who you will serve. From everything that I know of him, Satan is not a good slave master!

To all those who were listening to the interchange between Christ and the religious elite, Jesus said, **“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters” (Luke 11:23)**. The truth is that there is no invisible fence; you either belong to one kingdom or the other. If you have given your life to Christ, you have crossed over from the territory and authority of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. **Jesus has come, “to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18)**.

Some are deceived and calmed by a false religion that has no power against demonic and evil forces. There are those who like to think that they are not for Satan, but they are aware that they do not have the assurance and peace of Christ in their hearts. Often, the opposition to the working of Christ is so strong that a person is not even aware as to why he is in opposition to Christ. Deception is such a powerful tool in the enemy’s tool chest. If you have been born-again by the Spirit, you are on the side that is involved in gathering precious lives to Christ, doing what you can with your time, energy, and money to gather in the harvest. If you are on the other side, you are scattering the harvest, even though you may be doing nothing to oppose Christ’s work. Today, if you are honest with yourself and find yourself on the wrong side, then it is time to lay down your arms and surrender to King Jesus. He will abundantly pardon you for your sin and rebellion against Him.

Many years ago, the above Scripture, Luke 11:23, **“He who is not with me is against me,”** was what became a hook in my heart. I came across it while reading a book about prophecy, and I could not get it out of my mind. The Lord Jesus hooked me with it, and He would not let me go, thank God! The night that Scripture came to me, I had a dream or vision of Jesus’ Second

Coming with the angels, which left me terrified. Before I had the dream, I convinced myself that I was a good person and in a type of neutral territory. I saw myself as someone trying “to better himself.” However, this dream convinced me that I was on the wrong side. In the vision, I wanted to hide from the Living God. Please don’t find yourself in that position. If today, you also are hooked by that Scripture, allow Him to draw you to Himself. You will never regret giving your life to Christ. He is not a hard task master. Jesus called His disciples, “my brothers.” Everything He had, He received from the Father, and everything He received, He gave away. He laid down his life for His brothers.

There are many differences between the way things operate in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Let’s consider the way these two kingdoms operate. In God’s economy, He gives away what He has. God gives good gifts to His children. In contrast, Satan is called a thief and a destroyer. Providing and creating is what God does. Stealing, killing, and destroying is the work of the enemy, Satan. We can see so much of this in this present world in which we live. Truth and light are present in the kingdom of God; whereas, in Satan’s domain, there is only darkness, deception, and lies. He is called the Father of lies, and there is no light in him. If people’s eyes could only be opened, I am convinced that they would not choose the kingdom of darkness. We are told, however, that people are blinded to this truth. Satan keeps people in his kingdom by distracting them and letting them think that there is no choice. Being unaware of reality does not change reality. It just means that you are blind to the reality in which you are living. This is the chief strategy of Satan. He wants people to be blind and unaware.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Question 4) What do you think are some of the best strategies of Satan to keep people asleep and unaware of their own spiritual need?

Does Self-Reformation Make One Good Enough?

Two thousand years ago, the Apostle John wrote that “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). This level of control is brought about through the control of territories by controlling people. Donald Grey Barnhouse once put forward an interesting theory as to the schemes and strategies of Satan to control people:

What would things look like if Satan took control of your city? Over a half century ago, Presbyterian minister Donald Grey Barnhouse offered his own scenario in his weekly sermon that was also broadcast nationwide on CBS radio. Barnhouse speculated that if Satan took over Philadelphia, all of the bars would be closed, pornography banished, and pristine streets would be filled with tidy pedestrians who smiled at each other. There would be no swearing. The children would say, “Yes, sir” and “No, ma’am,” and the churches would be full every Sunday . . . *where Christ is not preached.*²

² Doctor Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Christless Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), p. 15.

Being a moral person can be a powerful delusion. In some ways, it can be a dangerous lie, causing a person to be blind to his spiritual need. What do I mean by that? A person who lives a good, morally upstanding life is easily deceived into thinking he is good enough for the Kingdom of God in his or her own merit. Some of the hardest people to reach are those who have lived all their lives, thinking that they have never sinned and they are good enough to be admitted into eternal life by their good works. This was why Jesus was accused of being friends of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19), He enjoyed the company of those who knew they fell short of God's standards, and they did not reject the grace and mercy of God. This was something that the religious Pharisees did not understand. Those who had lived immoral lives were often more open to hearing the truth that Jesus spoke. The reason was simple: they knew their need of a Savior. Jesus proceeded to explain the devious schemes of demons to hinder a person entering into life:

²⁴When an evil spirit comes out of a man; it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." ²⁵When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. ²⁶Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. ²⁷As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." ²⁸He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:24-28).

Christ described the danger of trying to clean up your life without coming to Him. He said that evil spirits try to find another home [a person to inhabit], but it is just an arid, barren desert. Demons live in the unseen realm and do not need food or drink. Jesus uses the desert as a metaphor for where a spirit cannot find rest and expression of its evil inclinations. It decides to return to its original home. When it returns, it finds the house swept clean, put in order, and inviting occupation, and worse still; the situation was that God was not occupying the person's life. The evil spirit then went and found seven other spirits to come and occupy the home so that together they would be stronger and, hopefully, would never be evicted again. The condition of the person so inhabited is, therefore, worse because God is not seated in the temple of the heart, i.e., the Lord is not the occupying Spirit.

The Pharisees were deceived into thinking that self-reformation was enough. It is a beautiful thing for a man to be delivered, but if he turns out to be a Pharisee like the people challenging Jesus, it would be tragic. Come to Christ. Give your life wholly to Him. Invite Him to fill you with His Spirit. Place Christ on the throne of your life, and let Him rule in the way He wants.

Question 5) Do you remember a point in your life when you were first aware of your need for a Savior? Was there a specific incident that convinced you that you needed God? If you can, briefly share the event or reason that convinced you of your spiritual need.□

Luke then closes with a woman making an outburst of praise to the woman that bore Jesus. The Greek construction of the sentence has Jesus agreeing with the woman, but Christ goes further with the statement, "He replied, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it' "(Luke 11:27). More blessed are those who are hearers and doers of His Word. Jesus was not correcting the woman or reproving her for her statement; instead, He was agreeing and adding to

it. Yes, the woman that bore Him was, indeed, blessed. However, He wanted those listening to understand that they had access to the blessing of hearing and obeying the word of God. This was within their grasp.

The woman was bravely affirming her faith and choosing her side! She decided to gather with Christ. Think of how merciful Christ was in answering the threats and slander of the Pharisees. He could have chosen to ignore their accusations; instead, He extended mercy and truth to all that would hear and obey, including the religious men who were slandering Him. If today, you are hooked by the Word of God, will you choose to respond to Him? If Jesus were to ask if you would gather with Him, what will be your response? Would you give Him your life today? Ask Him to come into your life and forgive you for all of your sins. Today can be your day to receive Him as Savior and Lord. Today, you can choose your side. You can want to gather with Him.

Prayer: Come into my life and save me, Lord Jesus. I desire to have You at the center of my life. Forgive my sins. I want to receive new life in You. Please take me from the kingdom of darkness into Your kingdom where You reign as Lord. Amen!

Keith Thomas

Email: keiththomas@groupbiblestudy.com

Website: www.groupbiblestudy.com