

Son of God or Charlatan; Matthew 12:22-28

I. Demoniac

A. Matthew 12:22–24; 22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”

B. Blind and mute

1. This was one of the Messianic signs and one that Israel desperately needed
2. Isaiah 42:18–22; 18 Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! 19 Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the Lord? 20 He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. 21 The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness’ sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious. 22 But this is a people plundered and looted; they are all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons; they have become plunder with none to rescue, spoil with none to say, “Restore!”
3. Isaiah 42:6–7; 6 “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

C. Beelzebul

1. The Pharisees are blind
 - a) Attributing God’s work to Satan
 - b) Calling that which is true, false
 - c) Calling that which is light, darkness
2. Acts 26:15–18; 15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 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 a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’
3. 1 John 1:5; This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

D. The Pharisees could not deny the marvelous power of Jesus, so they did the next best thing, they attacked Him calling Him a servant of Satan

1. “Beelzebul referred to the Ba’al (male Canaanite fertility god) of the City of Zebub
2. 2 Kings 1:2; Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.”
3. The Jews slightly changed the name to Ba’al of Zebul which meant “lord of the dung.”
4. It was a title for Satan. In later Judaism Zebul was the chief of demons.” Bob Utley

II. “Your Sons”

A. Matthew 12:25–27; 25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if

Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?
Therefore they will be your judges.

- B. Jesus presents an infallible, logical argument to try and open their blinded eyes
- C. There seemed to be a widespread practice of exorcism by the disciples of the Pharisees
 - 1. Mark 9:38; John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."
 - 2. Acts 19:13; Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."
 - 3. "I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazer, releasing people that were demoniacal, in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and captains. He put a ring to the nostrils of the demoniac, and drew the demon out through his nostrils, making mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed." Josephus
 - 4. If the Pharisees were willing to accept their own disciples' exorcisms (even with the suspect incantations and theatrical nose rings), then surely they should accept the miracles of Jesus "which are accomplished with only a word of authority" Coffman
- D. Jesus, when asked about a sign, says this about their exorcisms
 - 1. Matthew 12:43–45; 43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation."
 - 2. They cleaned out the unclean spirit, but left the house empty!
 - 3. Jesus cleaned out the house and replaced the unclean spirits with the message of the Kingdom!

III. The Kingdom is Here

- A. Matthew 12:28; But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- B. In this, Christ turned their own arguments against them. His works, accomplished by God's power, were proof enough that the kingdom of God was at hand. Coffman
- C. There is no middle ground here
- D. Either Jesus is who He says He is, or He is a complete charlatan; an impostor, a hack
- E. The Israelites had been waiting for the Messiah to arrive, the chosen one of God; and when he arrived, they blinded their eyes
- F. Mark 8:38–9:1; 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." 1 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

IV. Son of God

- A. The evidence is overwhelming
- B. Are we blind and mute?
- C. Have we let the words and actions of Jesus lead us to the Kingdom?