

# The Reasonable Savior

## Luke 11:14–26 (ESV)

### INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT:

As we have seen, Jesus is moved into the vicinity of Jerusalem where he will be for the remainder of his time on earth. As he does there is a sharp increase in opposition. He is in the territory of the Pharisees. These were the religious leaders of Israel. Rome had allowed a measure of moral and theological autonomy within the nations it had conquered. The Pharisees sought how to best live out Old Testament Judaism within the parameters of Roman authority—all the while awaiting that Son of David, that Messiah who would establish the eternal kingdom for Israel.

Part of the work of the Pharisees was involved - keeping things kosher (in keeping with the Mosaic Law) as well as interrogating those who made Messianic claims. Several had arisen that claimed to be the long-awaited Messiah.

- **Judas**, son of Ezekias led a rebellion in Galilee where he attacked its royal arsenal.
- **Simon** of Perea, a slave of King Herod, led a rebellion that burned down the palace in Jericho.
- **Athronges** in Judea who led a body of armed supporters who recognized him as king, against Herod Archelaus and the Romans.

Then came **Jesus of Nazareth**. He hadn't attacked any Roman garrison; his battles had been of a different sort. His birth had been surrounded by celestial signs and the arrival of foreign dignitaries. His teaching had been profound. His ministry had been marked by supernatural signs and wonders. Now, he was moving toward Jerusalem with remarkable resolve.

Could this be the one? If so, what would happen? Would he raise an army? Would he attack the Roman garrison at Fort Antonius? And most importantly, would he do the bidding of the Pharisees? Jesus had already made it clear that was not his intention.

- He didn't hesitate to perform miracles on the Sabbath.
- When he spoke, he failed to quote the key rabbis of the Pharisees and spoke of His own authority, often contradicting their rabbis.

At this point, every gathering where Jesus taught or performed miracles was infiltrated by agents of Jerusalem...watching, whispering, and seeking to turn the crowds against Jesus.

How would Jesus handle this new challenge? Would he take the advice of James and John, and call fire down from Heaven to consume his opponent? Not yet, at least. In this day of grace, Jesus reasons with them, He appeals to them, He employs the rules of logic to persuade them and those in the crowd to see Him for whom he is.

*With that context in mind, look with me at...*

**TEXT: Luke 11:14–26 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> “Now He was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled.”

**We read of demons and their work from the Garden of Eden onward.**

- The first example we see of someone having authority over a demon is through the **music of King David**. Remember Saul was tormented by an evil spirit, but the demon relented at the music of David.
- The book of Acts tells of a group of itinerant **Jewish exorcists** who were the sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva. They attempted an exorcism in the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. It didn't end well for those men.

The process of exorcism among the Jews was quite elaborate. It involved the shouting of incantations, the physical torture of the possessed. Oftentimes the rituals were to no avail, and at times, the demon would leave temporarily only to return leaving the poor soul in a far worse condition than before.

The exorcisms of Jesus were different - they were immediate, they were permanent, and the lives of the person delivered would be radically and eternally changed.

This was a problem for the Pharisees - what would they do with the fact that Jesus had such remarkable power over the forces of evil while they did not? How would they explain it? Verse 15 gives us their approach:

<sup>15</sup> “But some of them said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,’ <sup>16</sup> while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.”

**NOTICE:** they don't deny the exorcism. The fact that Jesus had driven out the demon and this man could now speak freely was not disputed. The evidence was clear. Instead, they attacked the means of deliverance.

**Beelzebul**, was a derivative of the name of a Canaanite deity that had been worshipped in the land before the time of Moses. Baal Zebul means “Baal the Prince” or “Baal the Lord.” By the time of Christ, this name had been modified to “Beelzebul” meaning, “the Lord of the flies”.

**ILLUSTRATION:** In 1954 William Golding wrote an amazing novel by the same title, “Lord of the Flies”. It is basically about the perils of teaching 4th-grade boys' Sunday school. :)

**BUT HERE** - The idea was that flies gathered around piles of dung, so this name for Satan was meant to insult him as the Lord of dung.

The charge they were bringing against Jesus was that he was casting out demons because he was in league with Satan himself. This was a great blasphemy. In fact it was very close to being the unpardonable sin, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

How would you respond to such an insult if you were God in the flesh?

- Listen, I can't handle it when people tailgate me. I'm sure I wouldn't respond well to being called the Lord of dung.

Thank God, Jesus is not like me... instead of smiting them, he reasons with them. He employs reason and logic to try to talk some sense into his opponents.

THIS IS GOOD FOR US TO LEARN BTW, because Jesus said, **Matthew 10:25 (ESV)** [25. "It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household."](#)

**ILLUSTRATION:** If you don't believe that, just read **the letters to the editor** in the local paper. One of the men of our church tried to get pornographic literature taken out of school libraries and was basically accused of being a pedophile. Is that logical? Is that reasonable? Is that sensible? No, but it is predictable.

If Jesus was called the, "Lord of dung", how much more will we be called even worse? Well, in this text Jesus teaches us how to fight back, but how to fight back like a CAVALIER and not a THUG.

*Well, notice how Jesus countered their accusation. The first argument is...*

## 1. An argument from logic

[17 "But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. 18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. 19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you'."](#)

Much we can learn here - first we see that the kingdom of Satan is remarkably unified. There is not a single usurper among the myriad fallen angels that make up Satan's legions.

***The hordes of hell are united in their purpose of disunity.***

Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 2:11** that Satan has certain designs and schemes that we are not ignorant of.

The chief goal of Satan is disintegration among the image-bearers of God.

- He engages in **national disintegration** by stirring discord and division politically.

- He engages in **spiritual disintegration** by dividing people within the context of the church.
- He engages in the **disintegration of the family** unit by sowing discord between husband and wife and brothers and sisters.
- Ultimately, he wants to cause **personal disintegration** by bringing about the death of the image bearer.

The name Satan means the Adversary, the Accuser, the Slanderer. He sows discord, disunity, often through thoughts and whispers and his legions are remarkably **UNIFIED in their DISUNITY**.

Then comes Jesus - preaching the Kingdom of God, restoring unity, attacking and driving out Satan. Yet, the accusation is that he drives out demons... hundreds of them... by Beelzebul.

Jesus argues, that is entirely illogical. **Why on earth would Satan wage war on Satan?**

- Hamas doesn't attack Gaza city.
- Russia doesn't drop bombs on Moscow.
- Bin Laden didn't crash planes into Mecca.

Why on earth would Satan be employing His worst nightmare, the Son of God?

**Then Jesus raises a question** - if I drive out Satan with power and authority, quickly and ultimately, never to return... by whom do your sons, these Jewish exorcists drive them out? With their long incantations that were often ineffective or left the poor soul in a worse case than before? Well, the Pharisees believed these people did the work of God. Yet, Jesus who cast out demons with power and authority they believed did the work of Satan. It was entirely illogical.

Jesus said, "Your exorcists will testify to your fate on the Day of Judgment." Then he makes an incredible statement - <sup>20</sup> ["But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."](#)

**The finger of God** - the phrase was used in the Old Testament to speak of the power that led the children of Israel out of Egypt. It was the finger of God that parted the Red Sea and ultimately drowned Pharaoh's army.

That same power was active in the life of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus taught openly that He was God in the flesh - He said, "If you see me, you have seen the Father". Before Abraham was, "I am". In saying that sort of thing - he was either, in fact God, or He was a lunatic. Those were the only options.

**ILLUSTRATION:** A group of doctoral students were touring an insane asylum when they observed a man standing in his bed saying, "I am George Washington" over and

over. One of the students asked him, “Sir, who told you that you are George Washington”? To which the man replied, “God told me I am George Washington.” The man in the next bed sat straight up and said, “I didn’t tell you any such thing!”.

There was the argument from logic...secondly...

## 2. An argument from evidence

<sup>21</sup>“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; <sup>22</sup>but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. <sup>23</sup>Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

The strong man in this parable refers to the demon. He had taken possession of a palace, the demon-possessed man. He was well armed, so he guarded the palace. No one could cast him out, UNTIL a strong man comes who can overcome him, disarm him, and take ownership of the palace. Jesus is the stronger man.

BTW, if Satan has developed a stronghold in your life, in your family, the only hope you have is the man stronger than Satan - Jesus Christ.

Cry out to Jesus for deliverance. Last week, we looked at Luke’s version of The Lord’s Prayer. Remember in Matthew’s version he adds - **Matthew 6:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> “And lead us not into temptation, but **deliver us from evil.**”

Aren’t you thankful that God desires to deliver us from evil? The fact that Jesus taught us to pray that way indicates that it must be possible for evil to get a foothold in our lives.

In fact Paul writes in, **2 Corinthians 10:4–6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup>“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”

If Satan cannot from time to time get a stronghold in the life of a believer, why would we need weapons to tear them down? Notice how we tear down Satan’s strongholds...

<sup>5</sup>“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, <sup>6</sup> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”

We destroy satanic strongholds by bringing our thoughts into subjection to Jesus Christ.

That is exactly what Jesus is doing here - He is waging war on the errant opinions of the Pharisees.

That is basically what happens every week here at this church. By preaching God's word, there will be times when it will come in direct conflict with opinions, thoughts you have had. You have to decide whether or not Satan wins or whether you will bring your thoughts under the obedience of Christ.

THINK WITH ME - You see, every sermon is, in a sense, spiritual warfare. The Puritans believed that it was so important that the people mentally engage with the logic of the sermon - they forbid the taking of notes.

*There was the argument from logic... an argument from evidence ....*

### **3. An argument from consequences**

<sup>24</sup>“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’.”

Now, notice that...why would an evil spirit wish to possess a person? It appears that it is more comfortable in a person than outside of a person. It finds rest.

You don't want an unclean spirit to be at rest (or at peace) with you. You want the Holy Spirit to be at rest (or at peace) with you. If the Holy Spirit is peaceably dwelling with you, a demon will never see you as a comfortable place.

However, notice - it is possible to have a well ordered life, that is nonetheless empty.

<sup>25</sup>“And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order.”

This person used to be in-dwelt by a demon, but something has changed. She has had a religious experience, she has gone through a 12 step program, she has read a few self help books, she changed her meds. NOW, things are working! She's able to hold down a job; her family is coming back around. BUT SHE IS STILL EMPTY.

Look what happens:

<sup>26</sup>“Then it goes and brings 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.”

This original demon goes and tells his superiors, “I have hit the jackpot. Remember that woman I was driven out of a few months ago? There is a VACANCY sign on the door of her heart. Not only that - she's got her life together. I say we all move in.”

You see - it is NOT the person whose life is a mess that the demon is drawn to - they want the one who has some influence, some self-respect.

Jesus now turns the attention back to the poor man who has just been delivered from this demon of muteness.

Jesus, the strongman, bound the demon, disarmed the demon, and cast him out of the man. No doubt this man's quality of life will dramatically improve. However, it will only be temporary if something greater than the demon does not fill the house.

In fact, the demon will find his orderly life very appealing - and will likely round up a few worse demons and invite them to join him in retaking control of the man's life.

The crowd, the Pharisees, rather than charging Jesus with being in league with Satan, ought to charge the man who was just delivered with making Jesus his Savior and king . That is the only hope of lasting deliverance.

### **THERE IS GREAT DANGER IN REFORM WITHOUT REGENERATION.**

It makes no difference to Satan where you go to hell from:

- It may be a bar stool or a boardroom.
- It may be a strip club or a Sunday school class.
- You may be hooked on drugs or hanging around a church.

The net gain of hell is all the same. The question that matters most is - have you been born again?

**ILLUSTRATION:** Suppose the worst sinner in Nassau County passed away. At that point he will never get drunk again, he will never use Fentanyl , he will never use Meth, he will never look at porn again. In fact, we can put a new suit on him. We can spray cologne on him. At that point he is FULLY SOBER, FULLY REFORMED, YET FULLY DEAD. The only thing that can help that man is life.

I've known men where the demon of drunkenness was GONE, but 7 demons of pride took their place. They are so proud of their sobriety - they give God no glory for it. They found it in their own human achievement.

NOW - when they were drunks, people pitied them and didn't want to turn out like that. But now, not only are they going to hell, but they may take a few with them. The last state is worse than the first.

### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

- Perhaps you are like the demon possessed man in this passage. You've played with something that plays for keeps.
- Others of you are like the Pharisees in this passage, you don't buy it. You chalk up the testimonies of people who have been changed to a fluke at best or something evil at worst.

The good news is - Jesus hasn't given up on you. He says to you like He said to these men who called him Beelzebul,

**Isaiah 1:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> “Come now, **let us reason together**, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”