**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #31**

**Mute Demon, Unclean Spirit, the Blessed, Sign of Jonah**

**Luke 11:14-23, 24-26, 27-28, 29-32**

**Luke 11:14-32 - Casting out the Mute Demon**

***1***[***4***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-14.htm) *And he was casting out a demon that was mute. And it came to pass, when the demon was gone out, the mute man spoke; and the multitudes marveled.*

***15*** *But some of them said, “By Beelzebub the prince of the demons casts he out demons.”* ***16*** *And others, trying him, sought of him a sign from heaven.*

[***17***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-17.htm)*But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls.* [***18***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-18.htm) *And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub.* ***19*** *And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges.* ***20*** *But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.*

***21*** *“When the strong man fully armed guard his own court, his goods are in peace:* ***22*** *but when one stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.*

[***23***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-23.htm) *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters.*

**Notes and Studies**

1. The whole passage is about the power of Jesus, but casting out a demon was not enough, for others wanted a “sign” from heaven like Deuteronomy 13:1-2 where a prophet is vindicated by signs, turning the sun back (2 Kings 20:8-11).
2. Jesus did not submit to the expectations of the crowd, he never did, for one reason, and that is to direct the crowd to the Kingdom and to the Father.
3. *Beelzebub* appeared first in [2 Kings 1:2-3, 6, 16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2Kings+1%3A2-3%2C6%2C16&version=NIV) as *Ba‘al Zəbûb.* It is variously understood to mean "lord of the flies or "lord of the (heavenly) dwelling. Originally it was the name of a [Philistine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philistines) god,[*Ba'al*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba%27al), meaning "Lord."
4. Jesus indicated in clear words that the Kingdom of God and the rule of Satan are not the same but are in fact in opposition.

a. The character of each is totally different; where tyranny rules under Satan, love rules under God.

b. The stature of each is opposite to each other, for God rules by his goodness and by giving gifts, Satan rules in servitude.

**Division puts an end to power**

1. Any division, even in the rule of Satan, will end its rule, for vices lack harmony and invite attempts of distraction:

a. Pride seeks dominance but all who have pride will fight each other.

b. Lusts seek self-satisfaction but that can’t be accepted by all who are in the domain of the Devil because of the lack of generosity.

c. Anger and dialogue are not on good terms.

d. All vices contradict each other and thus the kingdom of the Devil will not last.

**A Dialogue with Philemon: False Unions**

**George:** Can Satan play a game of union [*of being* unified] to cheat us?

**Philemon:** Yes he can by uniting those who fear, and those who lust after power and temporary gain, like the fear of a hard master or like the kings we read about in the OT. Daniel refused to worship a god that was a heathen god; he was not looking for a temporary gain. Vices can unite humans who have persevered till differences begin to work in their life and destroy their false union.”

**The Kingdom of God has arrived**

1. In verse 20, the manifestation of the Kingdom of God is his power now expressed as the finger of God. This term was well known to the Jews (Exod 8:19; Deut 31:18 and Ps 8:4). It is God’s power; Jesus used no charms or incantations for casting out demons.

2. Luke used the Greek verb ***ephthasen*** which means, “have just arrived.” Now the Kingdom comes with Jesus.

**Is Satan the strong man in verse 22?**

Yes indeed but Jesus is stronger:

*“When one stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.”*

**Who is “not with me” in verse 23**

1. This is one of the very few military sayings in the NT. The one who is “not with me,” as Origen of Alexandria added, is he “that gathers not with me scatters with Satan.” There is a kind of war going on.
2. Humans are with Jesus in the kingdom, or out with the devil scattering the sheep.

**Luke 11:24 -26- Return of an Unclean Spirit**

[***24***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-24.htm) ***“****The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, roams through desert places, seeking rest, and finding none, he says, “I will turn back unto my house whence I came out.”* [***25***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-25.htm) *And when he is come, he finds it swept and clean.*

[***26***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-26.htm) *then goes he, and takes to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.*

**Notes and studies**

1. This is not hard to understand if we remember that Jesus is the Stronger Man who came to invade the “strong one” and to “divide his spoils.” But the enigmatic saying has a background:

a. The unclean spirit that is the unholy will leave, but as someone was kicked out to the “desert” where there is no life and no one to keep company with the unclean spirit.

b. Then the unclean spirit will miss his abode, and here are the enigmatic words, *“seeking rest, and finding none, he says, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out.”* These words were understood in the ancient Christian tradition as someone who was cured by magic or incantations or charms where the possessed was temporally cleansed, but was not liberated from the subjection to demonic power. Then, the same unclean spirit brings others to make the end of this person “worse”.

c. This is the fate of those who are not in the kingdom; they may experience a temporary relief but as they have not God as their life, their end is worse.

**Luke 11:27-28 - Blessed are those who hear the word of God**

[***27***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-27.htm) *And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, “Blessed is the womb that bear thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck.”* [***28***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-28.htm) *But he said, “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”*

**Notes and studies**

1. What prompted the woman to utter this blessing, which touches Mary, is not clear, but two things happened in her presence:
	1. the casting out of the demon and
	2. the teaching on the kingdom.
2. Jesus did not accept what the woman said; seeking approval from humans was not part of his agenda. The next portion of chapter 11 proves this, for Jesus describes the crowd and the whole generation as “evil generation” (11:29)

**Luke 11:29-32 - The Sign of Jonah**

[**29**](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-29.htm) And when the multitudes were gathering together unto him, he began to say, *“This generation is an evil generation: it seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah.* [***30***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-30.htm) *For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation.* [***31***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-31.htm)*The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, one greater than Solomon is here.* [***32***](http://biblehub.com/luke/11-32.htm) *The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.”*

**Notes and studies**

1. What is the sign of Jonah?
2. Jonah the Prophet was told to preach judgment on Nineveh (Assyrian City) but refused to do this and escaped to Tarshish. He was send back against his will. And the whole event turned out to be God’s mercy more active than his judgment.
3. God taught Jonah a lesson by helping him to shelter from the heat and the sun by a plant that gave him shad for one day and then it withered.
4. Jonah was distressed but the dialogue between God and Jonah reveals how God cares for 120, 000 humans.
5. As all repented, after fasting God’s wrath did not touch the city.
6. Jonah is the sign for Jesus while he speaks of this “evil generation.” To this Jesus added the Queen of the South who came from far away just to hear the Wisdom of Solomon but here and now Jesus is greater because with Jesus the kingdom arrived.
7. Many NT Scholars take the sign as the saving of Jonah from the Whale; Jesus will be saved from the death.

**Letter from Philemon**

**Jesus more powerful than signs**

Brother George,

May the Lord Jesus who is our life grant you the stability of your faith that ideas may not be able to toss you and throw you away in the sea of thoughts that has no shores.

Those who look for signs put their trust in the sign not in the Lord. I mean they see something great and they turn their attention to the miracle and accept the power of our Lord. Just like the Jews who saw and heard many miracles, but these miracles did not change their hearts, and while they were fascinated by the power of Jesus, this power was not allowed to touch their hearts.

We need miracles but we need more converted hearts who can love their enemies and forgive injuries for this is the miracle of new life that the Lord is doing all the time. But we hardly pay attention to this continuous ministry of Jesus which takes place every day.

Love the Lord, for loving Jesus as Jesus loves you is the miracle that I seek every day.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you,

Pray for me

The feast of the Incarnation of the Son of God

(No date but 1968)

***Pope’s Notes***

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