

Jesus Is Wrongly Accused

Mark 3:22-30

Mark 3:22-30 – *“And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”* ²³ *So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: “How can Satan cast out Satan?”* ²⁴ *If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.* ²⁵ *And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.* ²⁶ *And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end.* ²⁷ *No one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.*

²⁸ *“Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; ²⁹ but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation”*— ³⁰ *because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”*”

Background Notes

In verse 22, the “scribes who came down from Jerusalem” were the teachers of the Law of that day - they were the trained theologians of the day. The scribes and the Pharisees were proud and self-righteous. They didn’t want to believe the obvious conclusion that Jesus was the promised Messiah – and they didn’t want others to believe that either. So they came up with another explanation - that Jesus was casting out demons and doing miracles by the power of Satan! The name *Beelzebub* (or *Baal-Zebul*, meaning *Lord of the flies*) was another name they used for Satan. It was a terrible accusation.

What is interesting here is that the scribes did not deny that Jesus was performing miracles. Isn’t that interesting? They didn’t say that Jesus never really did these things. They couldn’t say that because there was too much evidence – but they tried to explain the miracles in a different way.

Incidentally, that is the official position of Orthodox Judaism today. Down to this very day they do not deny the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can check this out in the writings of the Jewish Talmud. Many people today question whether Jesus really did the miracles or not. They try to explain them away as creations or inventions of the early Christians. Orthodox Judaism never did this, and has not to this day. This is actually strong evidence that Jesus really did perform the miracles – that He really did them. Unfortunately, of course, the Jewish leaders “missed the boat” when they refused to acknowledge that these miracles were **works of God**.

Doctrinal Points

1. Demons are in Satan's kingdom - but Satan is a defeated foe.

Notice what the Lord said in verse 23: *"How can Satan cast out Satan?"* The Lord lumped all the demons into Satan's camp - into Satan's "kingdom." The Bible teaches that Satan was created as a good angel, but he rebelled against God and he fell from his favored position. A great number of angels fell along with Satan. All the evil spirits - all the demons that exist today - all were all part of that rebellion against God, and also fell. Demons are "fallen angels," and they're all part of Satan's kingdom. There are no "good demons" or "friendly ghosts." Any so-called "magic" is part of Satan's kingdom.

At times, some occult things may appear good, because Satan is a great deceiver. 2 Corinthians 11:14 says that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. But occult happenings are really all part of the kingdom of Satan, and that is what the Lord was teaching here about demons: *"Satan cannot cast out Satan."* He lumped all the demons into Satan's kingdom, because that's where they belong.

But Satan is a defeated foe! Demons are in Satan's kingdom, and Satan and the demons are our enemies – but Satan is a **defeated** foe. This was our Lord's point in verse 27: *"no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house."* The Jewish leaders were saying that the Lord's power was not from God, but was from Satan. The Lord said, that's not logical - that's unreasonable! It doesn't make sense! In essence the Lord said, "Here's the real story. I've entered the strong man's house." [The "strong man" in this little parabolic statement here is Satan.] "I've entered the strong man's house, and I've bound the strong man. I've taken over! I have control. The strong man is plundered - all his property is plundered. He's conquered!" That's what the Bible teaches: while Satan is the "god of this world," and he remains our enemy, he is a **defeated** foe. He's conquered. Satan's defeat came about because of Christ's work on the Cross.

However, as we know, Satan has not yet been confined to hell, but he is already a defeated foe. That's important to realize, because many people are scared of Satan. Well, if you're not walking with the Lord, you should fear Satan and the power of Satan. But as long as you're a Christian who is walking with the Lord, the demons - or evil spirits, or "white or black magic" - whatever - Satan himself cannot control you. He must submit to the authority of Jesus Christ, because he is a defeated foe.

2. Can the "unpardonable sin" be committed today?

Our second doctrinal point (and I'm sure many of you were waiting for me to get to this one!), is the question of the "unpardonable sin" (v29): *"He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is subject to eternal condemnation."* Can the "unpardonable sin" be committed today? The answer is No – and Yes!

A number of Christians, and maybe some of you, worry about the possibility of committing the “unpardonable sin.” You may wonder if you think negative or bad or wrong thoughts about the Holy Spirit, if you have committed the unpardonable sin. Or if you don’t recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, have you possibly committed the unpardonable sin? Or if you attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to coincidence, or just to human works - or worse yet, to the work of Satan - have you committed the unpardonable sin? A lot of people worry about that. What’s the answer? Can the unpardonable sin be committed today?

The answer is basically: **NO!** The specific sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that is mentioned here in Mark 3 cannot be committed today. The unpardonable sin in Mark 3 was that the Jewish leaders literally saw with their own eyes the physical miracles of the Lord Jesus here on earth, but they refused to admit that He was Messiah. Instead they attributed His miraculous works to **Satan** – and **that was unpardonable!** The scribes and Pharisees of Mark 3 are in hell forever, with no escape. The special circumstances surrounding that sin, in that situation and in that setting, cannot be duplicated today, because the Lord is not physically here on earth today.

However, there is an unpardonable sin that can be committed today, and that unpardonable sin is to reject Jesus Christ. To reject Christ, and to die without acknowledging Christ as Savior is unpardonable. Christ-rejecters will be in hell forever. There’s no second chance. There’s no way out.

Rejecting Jesus as Lord actually **is** blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, because the work of the Holy Spirit today is to draw people to Christ. That’s what He’s seeking to do today. If a person does not submit to the probing of the Holy Spirit, but rejects Jesus Christ and dies in that sin, it’s *unpardonable* - there’s no second chance.

Practical Applications

1. Let’s be patient and logical in our witness.

Isn’t it amazing to see how, when the Jews attributed the Lord’s works to Satan, the Lord Jesus didn’t just walk away! When they made that terrible accusation, we would have thought that the Lord would just have walked away! We wouldn’t have thought that He would stand there and reason with them – but that’s what He did! He challenged their illogical statement. In essence He said, “What are you talking about? How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself it can’t stand. It won’t last long. If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand.”

In spite of their illogical accusations, Jesus actually remained and talked with these Jewish leaders. He reasoned with them. Talk about patience! Jesus was patient, and He was logical in His witness with these unbelievers.

There will be times in our witnessing when we feel like walking away because of derogatory remarks or a blind refusal to listen to the truth. But we need to follow the Lord's example here: We need to be patient. We need to point out how the non-Christian position is unreasonable, just as our Lord did here. **And** we need to be ***prepared to present a logical case for our faith.***

2. **Don't be surprised if the world misinterprets our motives.**

In Mark 3 we see that our Lord and His wonderful miracles of mercy were totally and deliberately misinterpreted. This may happen to us, too. In John 15:18 the Lord Jesus said, "*The world hated me; it will hate you.*" And 1 John 3:13 says, "*Don't be surprised if the world hates you.*" So we can expect the world to misinterpret our motives and actually be hateful toward us.

Many of you know that my wife Margie and I are foster parents for newborn babies. This is kind of a neat thing: she does all the work, but I enjoy the babies! [laughter] But, believe it or not, we've gotten some roundabout feedback that some people think we do this *for money*. Unbelievable! I've got to say this is a complete misinterpretation of our motives! In fact, if you add up all the costs involved (not even to mention all the work!), we actually *lose* money!

Our motive, as many of you know, is to care for these babies as a clear and obvious witness of our belief that life is sacred and God-given, and should not be destroyed. Our motive is to encourage women not to have an abortion (praise the Lord when that happens!), but rather to bring the baby to term and place the baby for adoption. So we volunteer to bridge the time gap between the baby's birth and the baby's adoption. (In fact, just today a baby left our home with her new adoptive parents!) But the world (and even some believers!) will often misinterpret a Christian's motives. "What's in it for them?" or "There must be an ulterior motive!"

Now it's important to make sure our motives **are** pure! It's a terrible thing when our motives as Christians are not pure. Our witness to others will be useless and worthless if we aren't serving the Lord from a pure heart.

The world misinterpreted the Lord's motives, but He didn't quit—He didn't "throw in the towel." In the same way, don't be surprised if the world misinterprets *your* motives as you seek to follow and serve the Lord. But let's follow the Lord's example.

Let's not quit! Let's hang tough, and continue to serve the Lord!