

In the Fulness of Time – Part 81

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Last month we began the discussion of Opposition Concerning the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12:14-37, specifically dealing with the Prophecy: The Holy Spirit would be upon Him, Matthew 12:14-21. We continue with:

The Agency: Casting out Demons by the Spirit of God. Matthew 12:22-30.

The Accusation: Casting out Demons through the agency of Satan. 12:22-24.

12:22 “Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw.”

The discussion of demon possession as Matthew 8:28 showed that demon possession, or *habitation* of human bodies was *real*, even though the participle, “*being demonized*” (*diamonidzomenoi*) was used. The context showed that Jesus “*cast out*” (*ekballo*) the demons and that they were permitted to go “*into*” (*eis*) the swine. In like manner *this* context shows that Jesus “*cast out*” (*ekballo*) demons (12:24) and later (12:29) that the stronger man could “*enter into*” (*eiselthein*) a strong man’s house to cast out the demon. The healing of blindness and dumbness was instantaneous and complete.

12:23 “And all the people were amazed and said, Is not this the son of David?”

This is the second of seven times the Messianic title, “*Son of David*” is used of Jesus in Matthew. Later in the Gospel it will be used by a Gentile woman, two blind men, the multitudes and the children. Obviously, the Pharisees were upset by the repeated usage of this title, and would do all they could to combat His growing popularity.

12:24 “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.”

Whether it is Beelzebub, Beelzebul, Baal of flies, Baal of dung, or any other title given by heathens to this god, Jesus calls this false god “**Satan**” in 12:26-27. For the Pharisees, it was the most despicable title they could think of, in order to draw to the attention of the people away from the question. “*This is not the Son of David, is it?*” Their accusation was as contrary as it could be; they were saying that He was not the Son of David; He was an emissary of the Devil himself! He is not our Mes-

siah! He is the greatest of all deceivers!

The Answer: Casting out Demons through the Agency of the Spirit. 12:25-30.

Jesus answers the accusation with three questions, at the same time delineating three principles.

The principle of the divided kingdom. 12:25-26

12:25-26 “And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?”

Whether it is an entire kingdom, a city or one house, internal strife will cause it to fall. The Roman Empire itself was a classic example of this; what could not be accomplished by outside forces was effected by its own internal dissension and demoralization. Disharmony in a church or a family can cause bitterness and division which may never be healed. What is true on earth is true “*in the heavenlies.*” Satan is called the “*prince of the power of the air*” in Ephesians 2:20 with his principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness under his control (Ephesians 6:11-12). But if these demonic forces should turn against him, his kingdom would not stand. This is precisely why it is erroneous to suppose that Satan may “pretend to cast out demons by restricting its power over the possessed person in order to give the impression of a cleansing” (John MacArthur, *Matthew*, Vol. 2, p. 308). Merely because Satan and his demons transform themselves as angels of light, does not mean that they oppose themselves in any way; rather, it simply means that they may perform “*great signs and wonders*” to deceive the very elect (Matthew 24:24). Not even in Revelation 13:11-15 does their deception by means of miracles include casting out demons. If it were so, then Christ’s words here in Matthew 12:26 are untrue. You cannot be a part of two opposing kingdoms at the same time; we have been “*delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son*” (Colossians 1:13). This is why God forbids any participation with demons (1 Corinthians 10:20-21). Since Christ is the Head of His spiritual kingdom, it would be ridiculous to think of Him as part of Satan’s dominion! “*In the fulness of time*” He will return and destroy that evil kingdom!