



“The Insanity of Moralism”

Luke 11:14-28

March 12, 2023

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- 15 **But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."**
- 16 **Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.**
- 17 **But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.**
- 18 **"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 by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.**
- 20 **"But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**
- 21 **"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.**
- 22 **"But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.**
- 23 **"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.**
- 24 **"When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'**
- 25 **"And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.**
- 26 **"Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."**
- 27 **While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."**
- 28 **But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."**

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THE BLINDNESS OF MORALISM

- So again we have another miracle – the casting out of a mute demon.

Examples of physical disability or supernatural ability caused by demons:

- **Blindness - Matthew 12:22**
- **Self-destruction - Mark 9:17,18**
- **Supernatural strength - Mark 5:4**
- **Convulsions – Matthew 17:15**
- **“a woman who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years” - Luke 13:11**

Satan’s activity on earth –

- “Satan can put blasphemous thoughts into your mind, and then whispers that you cannot be a child of God if you have such thoughts.
- Satan can get you to question the truth of God’s word, his wonderful promises, and the mercy of the Lord who has never treated you ill.
- Satan can seek to persuade you that you have got no part in the matter of salvation, for you have only begun with the Lord but he has not begun with you. That is what Satan says.
- Satan can suggest to you that no child of God could be like you: so weak in faith, so corrupt, so hard and prayerless, so foolish and vain.
- Satan can come as your accuser, leading you to despair, or as an angel of light, leading you to presumption.
- Satan can present the world outside this church in the fairest colors, the fun place to be, that what’s out there is real, while this world of Jesus Christ is fantasy (the very opposite of what are the facts) and Satan tries to move you back into its ways from what he suggests is the tedium of Sunday worship.
- Satan can press you to abandon yourself to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. I am saying that Satan is active everywhere in our land today, even though he has no need to possess and indwell people to the same extent as he did when Jesus walked this earth.”

- Geoff Thomas

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THE BLINDNESS OF MORALISM

- So again we have another miracle – the casting out of a mute demon.
- Demon possession is the idea that there is a demonic spirit living inside of your body, affecting and controlling your body.
- **Note how Jesus cast the demon out:** No hocus pocus, no delay, no waiting period to see if it really happened, no re-trying. Just an instantaneous act and it was over.

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THE BLINDNESS OF MORALISM

"Beelzebul" -

2 Kings 1:1-3

- 1 Now Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.
- 2 And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of **Baal-zebub**, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this sickness."
- 3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of **Baal-zebub**, the god of Ekron?'

Luke 11:14-28

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- 16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.
- 17 **But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a house divided against itself falls.**
- 18 **"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 by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.**
- 20 **"But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**
- 21 **"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.**
- 22 **"But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.**
- 23 **"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.**
- 24 **"When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'**
- 25 **"And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.**
- 26 **"Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."**
- 27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed."
- 28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

“He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the captive free,

He makes the lame to walk again,
And causes the blind to see.

Hear Him, ye deaf! His praise, ye dumb!
Your loosened tongues employ!
Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame for joy!”

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16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

- **Baal-zebub** – “*Baal*” means “lord”, and “*zebub*” means “flies”. Lord of the Flies, also known as the god of dung, ruler of demons, Satan.
 - They are accusing Jesus of doing His miracles by the power of the Dung god – Satan.
 - That is the ultimate in blasphemy – saying Jesus is satanic. What blindness!
- John 7:16**
- 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon!
- John 8:48**
- 48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?!"
- John 10:20**
- 20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane.
- **Note:** This insane accusation is driven by moralism. Moralism has no place to go when it comes to Jesus.
 - Moralism is the belief that I can clean myself up, toss the “trash” out of my life, and lead a good clean life. Pharisaicalism is a form of Moralism. So is every other religion in the world.
 - Notice they want a “sign from heaven” – from God and not Satan.
 - But that is what they just got. How do we know this? . . .

17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.

18 "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 by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

THE INSANITY OF MORALISM

- "knew" – εἶδον – full and absolute knowledge. Jesus knew exactly what was going on.
- This is logic 101. You (kingdom, house) cannot fight against yourself or you will fail, be destroyed. "United we stand, divided we fall."
 - The work of Satan is demon possession.
 - **Think about it:** Would Satan destroy the work of Satan?
 - There is no reasoning here. This doesn't make any sense.
 - They are being pushed by the Pharisees and their Moralism.
 - So Jesus is saying, vs. 19, let's use your own exorcists who are claiming to cast out demons. How are they doing it? if you say by the power of God, then you have to say I am as well. We are both getting the same result. You are using a double standard.
 - These phony exorcists will testify and pronounce judgment on the Pharisees for their insane and blasphemous reasoning.

Acts 19:11-16

11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,
12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.

22 "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.

23 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

"If" 1st class condition – "if and it is true".

"finger of God" – an anthropomorphism used to describe God's power.

Ex 8:17-19

17 . . . and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt.

18 The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast.

19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

Ex 31:18

18 When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

Ps 8:3

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers;

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

"then" – here is the reality – the kingdom of God has arrived, it is on you.

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24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'"

25 "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

26 "Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed."

28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

Matt 7:22-23

22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

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• **Illustration (21):** Satan is the strong man. He is fully armed. He guards his house (palace). Unbelievers are under his control and dominion. Everything is at "peace" – man is dead in his sins.

• (22) Jesus overpowers Satan. Disarms him. Sets people free. Plunder is that which is stripped away from a slain enemy.

• (23) Bottom line: No gray area. You are either with Jesus or against Jesus. On the fence? Then you are against Him. Undecided? Then you are against Him. Undecided is to be decided.

• You are either gathered together to Jesus or scattered away from Him.

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THE VACUUM OF MORALISM

• Jesus gives the crowd insight into the world of demons.

• Demons are free to come and go out of someone.

• They seek a new place to inhabit.

• Move through a dry, desert place. Not a good place to inhabit.

• Doesn't find a place.

• So the demon goes back to the person he left.

• When he returns, he finds a moral renovation has occurred. Person has cleaned up his life. **But remember** A pig that cleans himself up is still a pig!

• An empty house is a dangerous place.

• There is a vacuum. So this makes a great place to inhabit – a moral person. Fly under the radar.

• Religion – where demons traffic.

• Demon takes 7 more demons, more wicked, into the person.

• Person ends up worse than before.

• **Note:** It's not renovation that is needed, its occupation.

2 Peter 2:20

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

"How dangerous it is to be content with any change in religion short of thorough conversion to God. This is a truth which our Lord teaches by a dreadful picture of one from whom a devil has been cast forth but into whose heart the Holy Spirit has not entered. He describes the evil spirit after his expulsion seeking rest and finding none and then planning a return to the heart which he once inhabited and carrying his plan into execution and finding that heart empty of any good and like a house swept and garnished ready for his reception. And He describes him entering once more, with seven spirits worse than himself and he winds up all with a solemn saying, 'The last state of that man was worse than the first.' We must feel, in reading these fearful words, that Jesus is speaking of things which we faintly comprehend. He is lifting a corner of the veil which hangs over the unseen world. His words no doubt illustrate things which existed in the Jewish nation during His own time of ministry but the main lesson of His words concerns us. It is the danger of our own individual souls. There is a solemn warning to us here never to be satisfied with religion reformation without heart conversion." "There is no safety except in conversion. In thorough Christianity to lay aside open sin, is nothing unless grace reigns in our hearts. To cease to do evil is a small matter if we do not also learn to do well. The house must not only be swept and whitewashed, a new tenant must be introduced or else the leprosy may again appear on its walls. The outward life must not only be garnished with the formal trappings of religion, the power of vital religion must be experienced in the inner man. The devil must not only be cast out, the Holy Spirit must take his place. Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith. We must not only be moralized, but spiritualized. We must not only be reformed, but born again. Jesus is teaching us that conversion is more than mere external, moral renovation. It is a heart which has been changed and transformed and softened and given new and eternal life by the work of the Gospel by Jesus Christ."

- J.C. Ryle

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."
28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

THE DECEPTION OF MORALISM

- The crowd was amazed.
- The woman however, directed her praise to the wrong object.
- Suddenly Mary is brought into the picture. Why?
- Mary is not the focal point here, God's Word is.
- Is this the beginning of Mary worship?
- Moralism loves clean living, good people, reformed lives. That is why it is so deceptive. That is why it is appealing to so many people.

"As you go through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you're never going to find the immoral people blaspheming Jesus. It was always the moral ones. It's never the harlots, the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the riff-raff, the criminal element. It was the religious people. It was the self-righteous people. Moral people, religious people are self-congratulatory, they are self-righteous, they're confident in their own holiness, in their own morality. They are utterly deceived into believing that they have been delivered from the powers of Satan because they live moral lives. And the truth of the matter is they may be more infested with demons than a prostitute or a criminal. Moral people tend to have no vigilance and therefore no protection. . . It is better to be immoral than moral without Christ. It is better to be irreligious than religious without Christ, because morality and religion are a seduction. Morality and religion give the deception of all is well with God when it is not."

- John MacArthur

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Application

1. Moralism is deadly. It will lead you straight to hell.
2. Moralism distorts and perverts the truth.
3. The only solution to the barrenness of man's soul is for the Spirit of God to enter a person's life and take up residency.
4. God's Word, on this earth, is our most precious possession, because it leads us to the truth about ourselves, the truth about God and His Son Jesus Christ, and the truth about salvation.