

PARABLE OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

Luke 11:14–23

In this parable Jesus confronts his detractors after healing a demon-possessed man. In Matthew's account we learn that the man had been deaf and blind. Without a moment's hesitation our Lord expelled the demon, leaving a crowd of onlookers amazed.



But the scribes and Pharisees stood by coldly unimpressed by this miracle. Unable to deny the supernatural power of Jesus, they attribute it to *Baalzebul* ('Lord of the House'), an ancient name for Satan easily transliterated to *Baalzebub* ('Lord of the Flies'). They suppose Jesus to be a servant of Satan, following his will and deceiving the people.

Before they speak a word, Christ refutes their argument, asking why the Evil One would empower someone to banish his servants. Moreover, Jesus recalled that the Pharisees had disciples who also claimed ability to cast out demons. Were they, too, agents of the Devil? The sign the Pharisees demanded had just been on display for all to see – the hand of God driving the enemy away and making a wretched deaf and dumb man whole again.

Jesus explains, *"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace."* [v21]. In this parable Satan is depicted as a strong man, 'Lord of the House', confidently guarding his property. Then another more powerful than *Baalzebul* breaks into his stronghold and humiliates the Devil, seizing his possessions and even his armor! The victor in this contest is Jesus, and the possessions he took away are lost sinners.

Luke 8:38–39 reads, *"The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."* In this way what once belonged to Satan were distributed as gifts. Paul explains, *"When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."* [Eph. 4:8]



Many who marveled at the words of Jesus still hesitated concerning him. To the doubters our Lord said, *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters."* [v23] Kingdom disciples understand that faith leave no room for doubt, and we may not broker any compromise with the defeated enemy!

Evening Lesson, Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2019