

MESSIAH IS OF GOD'S KINGDOM AND HOUSE

MATHEW 12:22–30

Introduction

The opposition to Christ reached its height in this event (see note, Mat 12:1-50). Christ was scorned and diabolically attacked. He was blasphemed, not only accused, but *charged* with being of the devil. Again, He kept calm and remained level-headed and went about proving that He was of God, the true Messiah. He answered the monstrous charge by giving four logical and irrefutable arguments. (See notes, Mark 3:22-30.)

- I. Jesus proved His Messianic power (vv. 22-24).
- II. Argument 1: a divided allegiance destroys (vv. 25-26).
- III. Argument 2: denying Him is inconsistent and illogical (vv. 27-28).
- IV. Argument 3: a strong man has to be bound before his property can be taken (v. 29).
- V. Argument 4: neutrality is impossible — one is either with Christ or against Christ (v. 30).

I. *Mathew 12:22–24 Jesus Christ, The Messiah*

Jesus proved His Messianic power.

1. The proof: a demon-possessed man (blind and mute) was healed. Note three things.
 - a. The man was “brought to Jesus.” Family or friends cared enough to bring him. How desperately some people need family and friends who care enough to help them.
 - b. Jesus had compassion on the most evil, on a man thought to be so evil that he was “demon-possessed.” The demon made the man both blind and dumb, yet Jesus had compassion upon him. His compassion reached out even to the most evil person.
 - c. Jesus has the power “to deliver and heal” immediately. The one necessity is coming or being brought to Him.

Thought 1. Christ's very purpose for coming to earth was to conquer Satan and break his power over men. In some cases, Satan's power was imagined; in other cases, it was real (and still is). When a man is held in bondage by anything, Christ cares and craves to deliver the man (see Heb 2:14-15. See *Evil Spirits*, Mat 8:28-34.)

Thought 2. A man without Christ is “blind and mute” to the things of God.

2. There are two reactions to Jesus' Messianic power.
 - a. The people were amazed. They wondered *in hope*, “Could this be the Son of David, the promised Messiah?” They thought He might be, yet they were not quite sure. He was not doing the things they had been taught the Messiah was to do (see *Christ, Messiah*, 1:18). He seemed to have no concern for political and national affairs. He had neither mobilized an army nor led an uprising against the Romans as the Son of David. Contrariwise, He was demonstrating compassion and love for needy persons who were destitute in spirit and hurting in body. He was proclaiming a message of personal salvation instead of national deliverance.
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Such behaviour was so different from what they had always believed and been taught. He claimed to be the Messiah; He even claimed to be the Son of God. They wanted to believe; they even hoped, but they just were not sure.

- b. The religionists (Pharisees) denied Jesus (see *Religionists*, Mat 12:10; *Religionists*, Mark 3:22 for the reasons). When they saw the people's turning to Jesus, they did two things: (a) they set out to *shatter* the people's hope and belief lest they lose their own position and hold on the people, and (b) they charged Jesus with being from the devil and possessing the power of the devil (see *Beelzebub, Satan*, Mat 12:24).

Thought 1. The people were open to the possibility that Jesus might be the Messiah, but the religionists were not. Why? Why are some minds and hearts open and others closed to Christ? Too often the difference has to do with peer acceptance, reputation, pride, wealth, possessions, fame, power, livelihood, public esteem, applause, praise, position (1 John 2:15-16; see 2 Cor 6:17-18).

Thought 2. *Obstinate unbelief* is serious, critically serious (see *Beelzebub, Satan*, Mat 12:24). In every generation there are those who cling to their unbelief despite witness after witness. The evidence of the Lord's presence in lives builds up to an undeniable point, yet they still persist in unbelief. They attribute any change in a human life to the power of the mind or to some psychological power of suggestion or to human faith. And they attribute any change in natural events to a fluke in nature or to an unexplainable and yet unknown or undiscovered cause. They will attribute the unexplained to anything just to keep from having to confess Christ and to surrender themselves to Him.

3. Jesus' answer was to give four logical and irrefutable arguments for His Messiahship. The open heart and honest mind must admit four arguments.

MATHEW 12:24 BEELZEBUB, SATAN

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Mathew 12:24

The charge against Jesus was that His power to deliver men from evil was not of God, but of the devil (see *Beelzebub*, Mark 3:22; *Satan*, Rev 12:9). The idea was that He was sent by the devil to deliberately deceive people and to lead them away from the true traditional religion and beliefs. Note two things.

1. The evidence of supernatural power was clearly seen and admitted even by the enemies of Christ. Some force other than human power was healing people and performing miracles. Jesus' enemies were forced to look for answers elsewhere.
2. The depth of unbelief is seen here. It is *obstinate unbelief, a rooted malignity* that is full of malice and attempts to injure. It is an unbelief that will not surrender

to the claims of Christ despite the evidence. The evidence was clear. Lives were changed and miracles did happen; yet some persons still refused to believe, and they hardened themselves in that unbelief. They searched out other answers for the miraculous power of Christ. They sought to attribute His power to anything that would keep them from having to confess Christ and surrender their own lives and possessions to Him. □

II. *Mathew 12:25–26 A Divided Allegiance Destroys*

The first argument is that a divided allegiance destroys. This is a universal truth. Division leads to separation and ruin. A divided kingdom, city or house cannot stand. It fights and destroys itself. Satan is not going to empower anyone to deliver people from evil — not time after time as Jesus was doing. Satan would destroy his kingdom and rule over lives. Jesus was arguing that it was an absolute impossibility that He had come from anywhere other than from God Himself. “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor 6:14-15).

Christ was saying that His works and power had to be of God. They could not possibly be of Satan nor of any source other than God Himself. Three things show this.

1. His works were too numerous (John 21:25).
2. His works were too supernatural — too immense and beyond any known human power — to be explained by any source other than the power of God Himself.
3. His works were too good, too virtuous, and too effective in delivering men to be from any source other than God.

Heb 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Christ did not come to build up the kingdom of darkness and of Satan. The only dealings He had with Satan were twofold.

1. Christ broke the power and fear of Satan over lives. (See *Evil Spirits*, Mat 8:28-34.)

John 12:31 “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

2. Christ destroyed the works of Satan as the arch rebel against God. (See *Satan*, Rev 12:9)

Thought 1. Note the strong lesson on division. No body of people can survive division. A divided people cannot stand. Too many people within churches have ignored the lesson: “If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Gal 5:15; see 1 Cor 1:10f).

III. *Mathew 12:27–28 Denying Jesus is Inconsistent and Illogical*

The second argument is that denying Jesus is inconsistent and illogical.

1. Why are His claims and His works denied while the claims and works of others are accepted? There were those who “cast out demons” in Jesus’ day; there were exorcists who practiced the casting out of demons.
 - a. There were those who cast out demons in Christ’s name, yet they did not follow Him (Mark 9:38).
 - b. There were Jewish exorcists who travelled about using the name of Jesus in a magical way (Acts 19:13f).
 - c. There were exorcists who were unfaithful to Christ (Mat 7:22).

Jesus was saying that to deny Him was inconsistent and illogical. The *good works* of other men were acknowledged, yet His *good works* were denied and attributed to evil. His works were the greatest works ever performed for men, and they far outnumbered the works of any other man (John 21:25). How could His power and His works be of *evil* and the works of others be of *good*? His works were bound to be of God. If His works were the *good works* of God, then His claim to be the Messiah was bound to be true, for God would not give His power to a liar and a deceiver.

There is only one logical and consistent conclusion: His works are of the Spirit of God. This points to a critical fact: His claim is true. He is the Messiah, and the kingdom of God has come to men (see *The Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat 19:23-24). Any other position is illogical and inconsistent.

2. Christ’s works are a sign of His Messiahship. His works are a sign that God’s Spirit rests upon Him and that God’s kingdom has come to man.

Thought 1. Christ pulls no punches in this argument. He is very clear and pointed: all unbelievers are inconsistent and illogical in their unbelief.

If we ascribe good works to others, saying that they are blessed by God, why do we not do the same with Christ, especially when He did so many great works with such phenomenal power? Why do we not say that He is of God and blessed as no other person is blessed by God? Some do profess such. Why then do so many say His claim to be the Saviour is not true?

Christ is saying that such a position is illogical and inconsistent, for God could not bless a liar and a deceiver — especially with such supernatural and phenomenal power.

John 5:36-38 *"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me."*

John 9:4 *"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."*

John 10:24-25 *Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me."*

John 10:37-38 *"Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."*

John 14:9-11 *"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."*

John. 15:24 *"If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father."*

IV. Mathew 12:29 Jesus Christ Came to Destroy Satan

The third argument is that a strong man has to be bound before his property can be taken. Satan is the strong man; Christ is the invader who enters Satan's house to free those imprisoned by Satan. Note: Christ is arguing that He is far from being in alliance with Satan; He is actually in opposition to him. He is entering the "evil house" or domain (territory) of Satan and taking his (human) goods. He is turning men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God so that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18). God "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness" (Col 1:13).

When did Christ invade Satan's house and bind him?

1. Satan was bound somewhat during Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. For the first time in history, Satan confronted Someone whom he could not lead away from God. After the wilderness experience, Satan was set back, His power shaken. The Man Christ Jesus had withstood the heaviest barrage of temptation ever launched. Satan was bound to sense the impending *binding* that was to come.

1 John 3:8 *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

2. Satan was bound even more as He confronted Jesus throughout His life with temptation after temptation (Mat 16:23). Jesus stood fast, resisted and overcame the temptations, conquering and binding Satan more and more each time.

John 8:46-47 “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?”

John 14:28 “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me.”

Heb 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

Heb 7:26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

3. Satan was bound dramatically after Jesus' Garden of Gethsemane experience. Jesus was tempted to take another route other than the cross, yet He obeyed God perfectly (see *Cup*, Mat 26:39; note, Mark 14:41-42).

Heb 12:3-4 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

4. Satan was bound in a completed sense at the cross. Christ had secured *perfect righteousness* — He had never sinned (2 Cor 5:21; see notes Mat 5:17-18; *Christ Fulfills the Law*, Rom 8:3). Therefore He was the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man. As the Ideal Man, His righteousness and death could stand for and embrace all men who would place their lives into His keeping. Satan's house of evil and sin was broken, completely broken.

John 14:30 “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me.”

2 Cor 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

5. Satan shall be bound climatically and forever at the end of time. Both the earth and the heavens shall be made anew and established forever in perfection — established without Satan and his “evil house” carrying on their evil work. (See 2 Pet 3:3-18.)

2 Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.

Rev 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur; where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

V. **Mathew 12:30** *Neutrality is Impossible Before Christ*

The fourth argument is that neutrality is impossible. A person is either with Christ or against Christ. This could be a picture of a shepherd or a farmer. Each is involved in

gathering — the one gathering sheep and the other gathering the harvest. Each also can become guilty of scattering — the one scattering the sheep and the other scattering the harvest.

Christ says two things.

1. A person stands with Him, believing and trusting Him, or else a person stands against Him in unbelief and distrust.
2. A person works with Him in gathering others or else works against Him by scattering others (see note, Mat 12:22-24).

Note two significant facts.

1. Neutrality is impossible. There are only two sides: with Christ or against Christ.
2. Refraining from evil is not enough. A person must gather with Christ. A person must constantly be doing good. If we do not gather, we scatter.

Mark 9:40 *“For whoever is not against us is for us.”*

Luke 11:23 *“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.”*

Luke 16:13 *“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

Deu 30:15 *See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.*

Deu 30:19 *This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. ■*

MATHEW 12:31–32 THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Words are extremely important, in fact, so important that they determine a man's destiny (Mat 12:37). Our words either bless God or curse God; bless men or curse men (Jas 3:9). The tongue is said to be “a world of evil,” a “fire,” and “a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (Jas 3:6, 8). Christ said, “What goes into a man's mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’” (Mat 15:11). There is a terrible responsibility placed upon man for the words he speaks.

Mathew 12: 31–32 Words of Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

Blasphemous words against the Holy Spirit are unforgiven. The warning is unmistakable. Note these facts.

1. It is a *tongue-sin* that is unpardonable. This fact alone points to the seriousness of all *tongue-sins* (see outline, Jas 3:1-12).

2. Note why Christ gave the warning. He warns...

- to strike fear in the hearts of those who border on committing the unpardonable sin (Mat 12:23- 24; see 23:13).
- to stir a reverence and repentance toward God (Mat 12:33, 37).

3. The one sin for which there is no forgiveness is not a sin against Christ but a sin against the Holy Spirit (Mat 12:31-32). Why? There is one simple reason given in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the Person who works in the heart of man; it is He who convicts “the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment...” (John 16:8-11). There is a single word that is very descriptive of His work: *conviction*. A man sees, feels or hears about God's goodness and love and of his own need to surrender to God. The Spirit takes those evidences, using them as convictions. He convicts a man's heart to believe. A man may go on and on...

- insisting on his own way
- refusing to acknowledge God and surrender his life to God
- choosing to be blind to what he sees, feels and hears (the convictions of the Spirit)

Such a man eventually becomes so hardened that he cannot recognize God's truth and goodness. He reaches such a point of hardness that he no longer sees God or feels God or hears God. This man has blasphemed God's Spirit and counted His convictions as worthless. He has abused, reviled, neglected, ignored, and hardened his heart to the promptings of God's Spirit permanently. He has blasphemed God's Spirit and such blasphemy is unforgivable, Christ says.

4. Note what the unpardonable sin is. In the simplest and clearest of terms, it is *stubborn rejection, stiff-necked refusal, obstinate unbelief*. Such results in a dead spirit and apparently a *rooted malice* (Mat 12:23-24; see 23:13. See *Beelzebub, Satan*, Mat 12:24).

When the Spirit convicts a man to turn to God, and that man...

- rejects and rejects, his rejection becomes stubborn
- refuses and refuses, his refusal becomes stiff-necked
- disbelieves and disbelieves, his unbelief becomes obstinate

That man deadens his spirit against the convictions of the Spirit and develops a rooted malice against God. He insists on his own way too long and refuses to surrender to God while his heart is still soft enough to be touched.

What a warning to creatures of conditioning and habit — a warning against conditioning ourselves to reject and reject God. And what a call to stir a reverence and repentance toward God! How much we need to surrender to God while our hearts are soft enough to be touched!

5. In trying to determine just who it is that commits the unpardonable sin, two things are known.

=> The blood of Christ cleanses from every sin. There is not a single sin that cannot be forgiven — except obstinate unbelief against the convictions of the Holy Spirit (Mat 12:31-32).

=> There is no hope for salvation except through Christ and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, to reject or blaspheme the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is to deprive a person of salvation through Christ. Of course, a man who is concerned about having committed the unpardonable sin has not. His very concern shows that he can still come to Christ.

Thought 1. This is the glorious grace of God: all manner of sin (any sin, every sin, even blasphemy — even a word spoken against Christ) will be forgiven. This shows the humiliation that both Christ and the Father are willing to bear through the denial and cursing of men. God forgives all manner of sin. There is not a single sin that God will not forgive, no matter how terrible and how often repeated. Paul, the old Saul of Tarsus who was a blasphemer and murderer of early believers, was forgiven by God and greatly used by God (Acts 9:1; see 8:1).

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Psa 108:4 *For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.*

Isa 1:18 *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

Isa 43:25 *“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”*

Isa 44:22 *“I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”*

Isa 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

6. The terrible result is unmistakable. All sin is forgiven — EXCEPT ONE. Blasphemy against the Spirit of God is not forgiven. It is not forgiven in this world nor in the next world. In this world, there will be no peace of conscience, no sense of forgiveness, no absolution. In the next world, a man will stand guilty before God.

Mark 3:29 *“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”* (See Heb 6:6; 10:26; 12:17)

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”*

John 8:24 *“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

Heb 3:12 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

Isa 63:10 *Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them. ■*