

The Character of Jesus 22
Accusations by the Pharisees
Matthew 12:22 – 37, Mark 3:19 – 30, Luke 11:14 – 23

- Characteristic: Logic
 - Following the Matthew account except for a few background details.
 - Mark noted that Jesus, His disciples, and a lot of others were so packed into a house that there was not enough room to have a meal.
 - Mark also added that Jesus' family was concerned about Him, to the point of wanting to grab Him and bring Him home. Perhaps they were concerned that He had so outraged the Sanhedrin that He was putting Himself in danger (a figurative use of the word, crazy). Or, they thought He had gone a little nuts over this Kingdom of God stuff.
 - The initiating event:
 - (22) A man who was demon-possessed, blind, and mute was brought to Jesus for healing, which He did.
 - (23) The crowd began to speculate whether Jesus might be the Messiah.
 - (24) The Pharisees in the crowd countered by alleging that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub (apparently, a common term of that day for Satan).
 - Note that the Pharisees addressed only the demon-possession part. They were conveniently silent about the other two healings performed upon the same man.
 - Only the Pharisees objected because the Sadducees did not believe in spirits.
 - Jesus answered with logic rather than His ability to do miracles, probably because the source of His power was being challenged.
 - (25 – 26) Satan would not cast out his own. Satan already had possession of the man. He would not free him.
 - (27) Jewish exorcists existed in that day. Some are mentioned in Acts 19:13 – 17. Jesus did not address whether these exorcists were legitimate; His argument assumed that they were. Jesus challenged the Pharisees to show a difference between their exorcists and Himself.
 - (28) Jesus brought to their attention the prediction in Zechariah 13:1 – 2 that evil spirits would be banished at the time of the Messiah, so His power over them should indicate that the Kingdom of God was at hand.
 - (29) The fact that Jesus could cast out demons illustrated that He had power over Satan, not that He was in league with him.
 - Jesus' summary of the Pharisees' illogic:
 - (30 – 32) If you deny the evidence, there is no way back.
 - (33) Jesus challenged them to label the three-fold healing as bad.
 - (34 – 37) Making such ridiculous accusations illustrates that something is seriously wrong in their hearts.
- Applications of logic:
 - Jesus was pointed in this argument with the Pharisees. Apparently, kindness did not work with them. Tailor the message to the audience.
 - In what situations might we use logic to advance the gospel?

- Many claim to follow “science” rather than the Bible, not understanding science. We need to be prepared with true science, not statements of belief.
- Many have rejected the gospel because of the hypocrisy of some church folks. Is it logical to assume that all church folks are hypocrites?
- How do you determine what “good” or “right” is?
- Rejecting evidence makes it impossible to find God. Turning a blind eye to evidence which disproves supposedly “scientific” claims leads to self-deception.
- Holding contradictory beliefs (e.g., both Jesus and Mohammad) is self-destructive, not open-minded.