

## Questions for Matthew 12:22-37

For Tres Stone

1. Why did the Pharisees say Jesus was casting out the devils through Beelzebub? Was this pure jealousy or was there a line of reasoning behind it? (Verses 22-24)

Tres: "First the pharisees were probably frustrated that the multitudes declared " could this be the son of David". As true as it is the pharisees were trying to sway the multitude in the other direction. So, the pharisees say "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." As Jesus often had to, He quickly pointed out the error of their ways in verses 25- 27. I gather that the pharisees truly thought that Jesus was an impostor so, as usual they jump to an aggravated verbal attack. All commentators that I have read about these verses basically agree. There are parallel verses in Mr 3:22; and Lu 11:15"

Loren Gorrell: "There was reason behind it. Verse 23 - the multitudes said "Could this be the Son of David". Some were becoming convinced He was the Messiah (Isa 35:5 - Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.) Since the Pharisees could not deny the miracles they began to call into question the source from which Jesus obtained the power. They said His power was not from God but Satan to try to discredit Jesus."

Dennis Nilson: "The Pharisees had already accused Jesus of being in league with the ruler of the demons. Back in chapter 9 they said, 'He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.' By saying that, they were trying to discredit Him by using an emotional argument. They were against Him for basically 4 reasons, 1. He (JESUS) bypassed their religious authority. 2. He weakened their control over the people. 3. He challenged their self-made system of rules. 4. He exposed their hypocrisy. While they were busy trying to bring Him down,..the people were seeing the sick and afflicted made well and whole and lives being changed through this man Jesus. In my estimation there was no valid line of reasoning behind it. Jesus easily exposed the foolishness of their argument (vs 25 & 26)"

Austin Maddox: "It seems interesting to me that they keep going back to this argument, that Jesus is somehow in league with the devil because he casts out devils. It seems that up till this point in time, that Jesus had not addressed this claim that they had been making for some time. Why would they keep making this claim if there was no power or logic behind it? They continue to make this

argument for a very long time after this encounter as well. You look over at John 9 when Jesus heals the blind man on the Sabbath and the answer is clear.

John 9:16, "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."

Their reasoning was that God doesn't support or approve of people that are in sin. This is correct of course. As such, they determine that whatever power Jesus is using to do these miracles cannot be from God, because God would never approve of such a person to perform miracles under His name. Thus if he is not of God, he must be of some other power. They chose to say that he was in fact, working against God and thus was using the power of the devil himself. The only problem with this line of reasoning is the fact that Jesus wasn't sinning! This goes back to earlier in the chapter and their questioning and plotting against him because of the miracles that he performed on the sabbath. Jesus shows that he was not sinning and in fact, used the scriptures to prove why that was the case. Thus, jealousy, anger, and maliciousness coupled with a line of reasoning resting on a false premise caused them to make this claim."

For Loren Gorrell

2. How did Jesus prove that their reasoning was completely faulty?  
(Verses 25-29)

Loren: "Jesus pointed out it was illogical for Satan to give Him the power to cast out demons. That would only weaken Satan's power. Jesus used a metaphor of how dissension within a kingdom, city, or even a family weakens and eventually destroys those associations. Satan would not knowingly cause dissension within his realm.

Then Jesus points out some of their own number claimed to be exorcist. The Pharisees were trapped within their reasoning. They either had to admit their students were charlatans, or say they could only cast out demons by God's power. If they admitted it was God that gave power to cast out demons, they would have to admit what the crowds were saying, that Jesus is the Messiah."

Bill Smith: "First, by pointing out that a kingdom divided against itself would not stand. If Satan were casting out his own, he'd be tearing down his own kingdom.

Second, how insightful of Jesus to turn the tables on those Pharisees, asking them in vs 27 by who's power their sons were casting out demons? With a simple command from Jesus miracles were being performed and the Pharisees knew it. The Pharisees it would seem had to know that Jesus was from God."

Austin Maddox: “He proves it 2 ways. He proves through logical reasoning, saying that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Satan is not so inept that he would cast out himself, that he would purposefully engage in friendly fire just to make another supposed disciple of his look good! How shall his kingdom stand? How could he ever fight against the forces of good if he keeps casting himself out over and over again?

The second argument is that of experience. They had in that time, people who were so called “exorcists” McGarvey cites: “The second argument. The sons of the Pharisees were not their children, but their disciples ([2 Kings 2:3](#); [Acts 19:13,14](#)). Josephus mentions these exorcists (Ant. 8:2,5 and Wars 7:6,3), and there is abundant mention of them in later rabbinical books. Our Lord's reference to them was merely for the purpose of presenting an argumentum ad hominem, and in no way implies that they exercised any "real" power over the demons; nor could they have done so in any marked degree, else the similar work of Christ would not have created such an astonishment. The argument therefore is this, I have already shown you that it is against "reason" that Satan cast out Satan; I now show you that it is against "experience". The only instances of dispossession which you can cite are those of your own disciples.” The question then, of course, has to be, if you are saying that I cast out demons through the power of the devil, then who do your children cast them out? If we are actually doing the same work, we can't be working for opposing forces.”

For Mahlon Miller

3. How did Jesus bind “the strong man”, the devil? What should this tell us about Satan? (Verses 29-30)

Mahlon: “How did Jesus bind “ the strong man” the devil? Jesus bound Satan by providing a way for mankind to be saved. When Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected He showed that he had conquered death. And thus provided a way for mankind to have salvation and remission from our sins. Satan loves sin, and uses many tactics to cause us to sin. Sin drives a wedge between us and God.

What should this tell us about Satan?

Several things come to mind. First, Satan is very deceptive and dangerous to our spiritual well being. Satan has already lost, but is still trying to pull us down with him. Second, Satan can be beaten, Jesus defeated Him and so can we. We need to be confident that we can be successful if we stay close to Jesus.

Loren Gorrell: “Smith comments that one way Jesus bound the devil was choosing not to sin. Satan cannot act against us if we exercise self control and do not feed our sinful desires ( James 1:14-15).

1Cor 10:13 – God will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond our ability to resist. We are not explicitly told how God limits Satan but we see examples in scripture of it happening.

Luke 22:31 – Peter is allowed to be sifted by Satan – in this instance part of the limited is done by Jesus praying for Peter’s faith

Job 1:12 – God verbally commands Satan

also see great battles in the spiritual realm Daniel 10:20-21, Jude 9, Rev. 12:7-9”

Bart Shaw: “The New Testament speaks of Christ’s victory over Satan and of our salvation in three tenses: past, present and future. Christ defeated Satan on Calvary, is defeating Satan through the Church, and will finally defeat Satan when on the last day Satan is cast into the lake of fire reserved for the devil and his angels. Revelation 20:10

What does this tell us? Well, its good news. Our enemy, the accuser of the brethren, the twisted serpent Leviathan, is already defeated and is helpless against the might power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have only to obey Christ through the gospel and become a Christian faithful to death. Then Satan has no power over us, praise be God."

For Landon Shaw

4. What is the “unpardonable sin and can the “unpardonable sin” be committed today or was this an isolated occasion? (Verses 31-32)

Landon Shaw: “The unpardonable sin is when you attribute the divine power of the Son of Man to a diabolical source which is a direct reputation of God’s spirit at work in him. Obviously the unpardonable sin is not words, thoughts, or deeds done in ignorance. Jesus shows us this when he says “Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men.” Rather, it comes from a hardened form of opposition that attributes God works to Satan and denial of his power. And it can still be committed today. People still set their hearts against God and don’t acknowledge his power.”

Dennis Nilson: “The Pharisees had blasphemed against the Spirit by attributing the power by which Christ did miracles to satan (12:24). The unforgivable sin was and is the deliberate refusal to acknowledge God's power in Christ. It indicates a deliberate and irreversible hardness of heart. People who have turned their back on God and rejected His Son and His holy Word,..really need to worry because Jesus says they 'can't be forgiven'-not because their sin is any worse than any other,..but because they will never ask nor seek forgiveness. These folks have rejected God's Spirit and cut themselves off from

the only source OF forgiveness. And consequently have no hope of a relationship with their Maker.:

Loren Gorrell: "Verse 31 begins with "Therefore". So the cause lies in the preceding verses. The Pharisees were unwilling to admit what the people were recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah. They saw proof to that by the miracles of Jesus. The Pharisees would on Pentecost have the opportunity to also hear the apostles speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14). Those who would not heed the gospel message of the Holy Spirit would remain unforgiven. The unpardonable sin is not obeying the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

Today the Holy Spirit is who delivers that soul saving knowledge (Hebrews 4:12). Scripture is given through the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:21). So, if we refuse to heed the teaching of scripture we blaspheme the Spirit and will not be forgiven."

Bill Smith: "1) That the unpardonable sin is the rejection of the Holy Spirit's testimony regarding Jesus. In Jesus's time that would have been the rejection of the miracles as proof positive that Jesus was who He claimed to be.  
2) Yes, the unpardonable sin can be committed today and it occurs when one rejects the Holy Spirit's call, through the Word, the Gospel of Jesus the Christ. I read from a writer that, "To reject Jesus from a distance or with little information is bad; to reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit about Jesus is fatal."

Austin Maddox: "There has been a great amount of fear about this particular sin, because it is the only one in the Bible that if it is committed cannot be forgiven. What is this sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit? Does that only mean when one attributes his work to the devil? If that is the case, then this is a very specific sin that primarily applied to that specific situation. However, if you look at the entirety of the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' statement stills stands true. It is not just miracles that are under consideration, but also all the things that were revealed through Him, including and especially the holy scriptures! This would then be a sin that can very much be committed today, because there are many people that have spoken evil, that have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, through rejection of the word of God. In this state, when one denies what the Holy Spirit has done, is in a place that he can never be forgiven. We are expected to have faith because of the evidence that the Holy Spirit has provided. When we deny that, there is nothing that can ever be done for us, and thus we can never be forgiven. Is salvation possible? Yes. If we look at the rest of the scripture, you will notice that the invitation still stands to whosoever will, even people such as Paul who flatly denied the Lord Jesus until his conversion. It seems to me that

this is a sin that no forgiveness will ever be given to the individual who makes such a proclamation and never repents of his sin.”

Bart Shaw: “These Jews were not simply making an ignorant mistake. They were deliberate, dug-in enemies of truth. They would hang on to their sinful disposition till the end, and that rebellion would follow them into eternity, hence, an “eternal sin.” It can be committed by people today — The “unpardonable sin” is a wicked mindset that sets like concrete around ones conscience, preventing the incalcitrant sinner from humbling themselves and obeying the truth, eventually passing from life to where an “eternal judgment” (Heb. 6:2) is pronounced. There is no post-mortem plan of salvation (Heb. 9:27).”

For Levi Shaw

5. Why do verses 33-35 perfectly explain the point that Jesus was making to the Pharisees? (Verses 33-35)

Levi: “Why would me, being evil do good works? Why would I bear such good fruit, but be working for demons? Jesus is trying to point out how far of a jump of logic the pharisees are taking, just to keep thinking what they want to think.”

Austin Maddox: “They claim that they were upholding that which is good, they are the prognosticators of the truth, and yet, in their despicable actions that they did, they completely erase any semblance of good! Jesus is telling them that they are not speaking good things, they are speaking evil things. They are deceiving against Jesus and their statements, while they might sound good to the masses are self-defeating arguments and Jesus exposes them here.”

Bill Smith: “Vs 33 Jesus uses the natural world to make his point. A tree is known by its fruit. A good tree good fruit, a bad tree bad fruit. The application Jesus is pushing them to acknowledge is that His works are good and therefore He is good.

Vs 34 is another approach to this same conclusion. Those that are evil speak evil and from the heart comes the words to the mouth. If the words from your mouth are evil the conclusion then is that you are evil.

Vs 35 seems to tie together the person, the heart, and the treasure. The verse describes and good man, with a good heart, brings forth good things. BUT the opposite is also true.”

Bart Shaw: “As Mike Criswell points out: “The Root determines the Fruit.” Jesus is speaking to them about how to prepare to enter the approaching kingdom of God, the church. His point is that the tree decides the fruit, not the other way around. The hypocrites in front of Jesus were as incapable of producing righteous speech as a bad tree being capable of bearing good fruit. They had

set their hearts in merciless opposition to Jesus, regardless of what miracle He might perform or mighty deed He would work. They had a sinful disposition, a rotten root, which unless they dug it up and destroyed it, would never bring forth good and pure deeds before God. If they maintained their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, they would be eternally lost.”

For Bart Shaw

6. What constitutes “idle words”? How important is our speech to our salvation? (Verses 36-37)

Bart Shaw: “The word Jesus uses translated “IDLE” is in the original Greek  $\alpha\rho\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  argos . It means the absence of work (an-ergon). It means ‘inactive’, ‘idle’, ‘sluggish’. It is used eight times in the New Testament and is never used in the sense of slanderous or pernicious words. Instead it means words that are spoken irresponsibly, casually or thoughtlessly.

Jesus is not talking about words that are intentionally wicked and malevolent, but rather simply impetuous and absent minded words of the sort that might be spoken over lunch with a co-worker or to a passing companion of the moment. These are the kind of words that are said without concern for the well-being of others. Gossip and rumor mongering might fit into this category. Thus the meaning that Jesus is conveying here is that from the time that a person reaches the age of accountability until the last word is said before death, EVERY word must be accounted for by the human soul. If this is the case, Jesus teaches, then how can the Pharisees who had just blasted Jesus with a malicious, venomous, and hostile accusation expect to escape judgment? They were guilty beyond any measure, by any standard, and if even careless words will be judged by God, how much more so their words which were aimed like a cruise missile at Jesus Christ, the Son of God. How important then are our words? verse 37 By our words shall we be justified. Or by our words shall we be condemned.

The mouth can either confess Christ as Lord or reject God with cursing. It is our choice.”

Levi Shaw: “Words said without care, not taking into consideration how these words would impact others. Speech is a big part of how we are known around the school or the workplace. A loose-lipped brigand is not going to make anyone interested in whatever religion you are practicing.”

Austin Maddox: “Words are considered idle when they are carelessly or thoughtless spoken. At the same time, these are words that truly come from within an honest place in our hearts and reveal the most about us when we do not have our guard up. There is the possibility that Jesus is using this phrase to say that if we will be judged on the idle words that we speak, if the Lord knows

and keeps track of even the smallest words that escape our lips that may have never meant to say, how much more the purposeful premeditated lies of the Pharisees? More than this, the idle words that we shall speak, we are going to have to give an account for on judgement day. There will be no saying that we didn't really mean them, or that they were misunderstood. Our thoughts, intentions and words will be judged, and our salvation is at stake for those words that we let slip without realizing the harm that they cause. In the same way that we can be justified by the words that we speak, such as confession of Jesus as the Son of God, so too, can we be condemned by the words that we speak."

Bill Smith: "1) Adam Clarke said that the sense of the ancient Greek word used of an "idle word" is a word that does nothing. It neither ministers grace nor instruction to them who hear it." A word that does nothing. To think the mankind will have to give account for every idle word, let that soak in for a minute and think about the things you might have said recently. Pretty sobering to consider. Another point of view expressed by H. Leo Boles is that "idle words" in Jesus day meant, malicious, wicked, injurious, slanderous words.

2) Matt. 15: 18-19 tells readers that the things which proceed from the mouth come from the heart and that is what defiles a person. Rest assured that our speech will be judged by mankind, our brethren, and God"