

# Pharisees Blaspheme Jesus Again

The Pharisees' campaign of hatred against Jesus was very serious. They were envious of Jesus Christ and Mark 15:10 tells us that eventually they succeeded in murdering Him on a wooden cross. One can imagine what they must have felt when they saw massive crowds listening to Him and following Him when He first became known. Later in John 5:18 the Pharisees were upset that Jesus claimed to be God. We can imagine their rejection of Christ and disdain for what they must have considered to be "stupid" crowds since they followed Him. In John 7:11 they wanted to capture Him, and John 7:25 reveals that the people knew the religious leaders wanted to murder Him. We do not know if the Pharisees seriously believed that Jesus did His miracles, wonders, and signs by demonic power or if that was just propaganda designed to influence the crowds. In the winter of A.D. 32, the gospel of Matthew tells us that they accused Jesus of using demonic power. Then in the spring of A.D. 32, they did it again. They will do it once more in our study which is Luke 11:14-23. The snowball of attacks is growing. The goal was to murder Jesus - to get rid of Him.

**JESUS ACCUSED OF USING DEMONIC POWER.** Luke 11:14 tells us that Jesus was casting out demons. The important fact was that Jesus was doing it again! The author Luke and the Holy Spirit do not say "again" but that was the truth. Jesus was doing it again and the religious leaders were boiling with jealousy.

Jesus had already cast demons out of people in Matthew 4:24, 8:16-17 and then again in 10:8. How many times had

He cast out demons? We do not know, but He must have cast out an extremely large number of demons since the Pharisees accused Him of doing it by the power of Satan. The picture the gospels paint is that Jesus was constantly casting them out. In Matthew 12:30-32 Jesus warned them that they had committed the unpardonable sin. But they ignored the warning.

In Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 1:21-28, and Luke 8:26-39 Jesus cast a legion of demons out of a man and they entered a

group of pigs, which ran into the sea of Galilee and drowned themselves. Unclean spirits possessed unclean pigs which promptly killed themselves. The unclean pigs hated the unclean spirits, which were demons. Next Jesus cast a demon out of a mute man in Matthew 9:32-34 and the Pharisees accused Him of using demonic power. That was the second accusation. Now it was clear that they did not fear Christ.

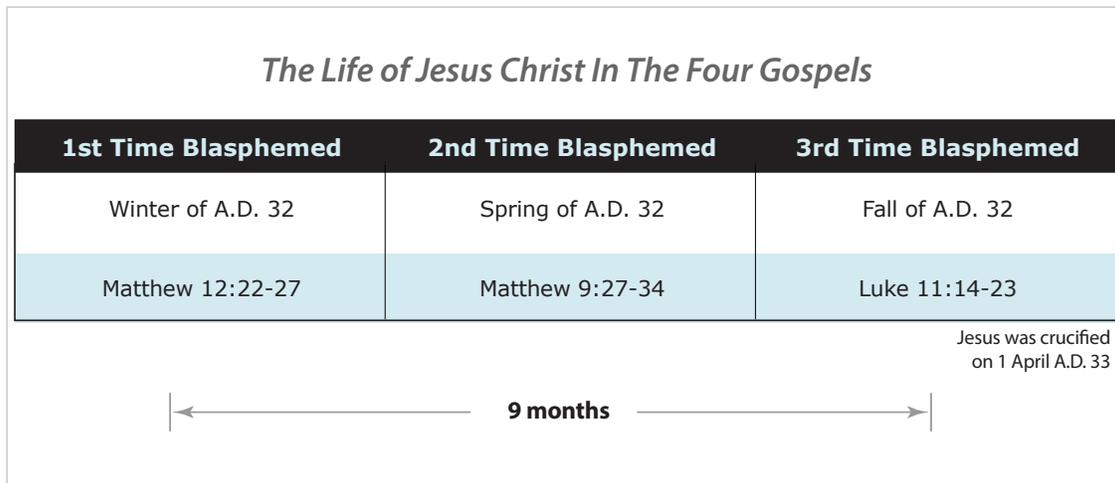
But Jesus ignored the Pharisees and continued casting

out demons. Mark 6:13 says that Jesus' twelve disciples were casting out many demons and healing the people. Later Jesus cast a demon out of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman from a distance (Mark 7:24-30). The third accusation of casting out demons by the power of Satan occurred in Luke



11:14-23, which is what our study is about.

**JESUS WAS CASTING OUT DEMONS.** Luke 11:14 tells us that once again Jesus is casting out demons. All of the



accusations made by the Jewish religious leaders did not stop Christ from helping people in order to avoid being slandered by these supposedly spiritual men. There are many Christians today who would have ceased casting out demons in order to avoid slanderous accusations, but not Jesus. Even if He had stopped, they would have looked for or created another slanderous comment. Critics rarely stop criticizing when it is proven that they are wrong. They just simply move on to another criticism. That was true for Christ and is true for Christians today! They hated Jesus and they hate Christians (John 7:7)!

Verse 14 says,

And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. Luke 11:14 (NASB)

This verse describes this demon as a “mute” demon. Then we are told that as a result the man was “mute.” This reveals that when certain demons possess a person, they can cause abnormal conditions to occur. This demon caused the man to be unable to speak and so the demon was described as a “mute demon.” After Jesus cast out the demon, the man was able to speak. Other demons caused people to be blind and mute (Matthew 12:22), to be mentally unstable (Mark 5:15) and to have convulsions (Luke 9:42), for example.

**CROWDS WONDER ABOUT JESUS’ POWER.** Next we are told that “some of them” in the crowd said that Jesus was using demonic power to cast out demons.

But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.” Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. Luke 11:15-16 (NASB)

They accused Christ of casting out demons by Beelzebul. The word Beelzebul means “Lord of dung” or “Lord of filth”<sup>1</sup> It refers to the ancient god Baal. This god was worshiped by many ancient Middle Eastern peoples, including the Canaanites. The Hebrew for this god is Baalzebul. The word first occurs in 2 Kings 1:2 and this variation on the word Beelzebul means “Lord of the flies.”<sup>2</sup> Beelzebul occurs seven times in the New Testament, and only in the New Testament (Matthew 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 18, 19). 1 Kings 18 describes a contest between the priests of Baal and the prophet Elijah. The priests of Baal were humiliated on that occasion. Baal worship was evil and occultic.

In the Ugaritic epic material Baal is pictured as descending into the netherworld, the domain of the god Mot. That descent was evidently part of a cycle intended to coincide with the cycle of seasons. In order to bring Baal up from the realm of Mot and thus insure initiation of the fertile rainy season, the Canaanites engaged in orgiastic worship that included human sacrifice as well as sexual rites (Jer 7:31; 19:4–6). Sacred prostitutes evidently participated in the autumnal religious ritual. The worship of Baal

1. Merrill C. Tenny. Beelzebul. The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. Zondervan Publishing. 1977. p. 505.

2. Ibid.

was strongly condemned in the OT (Jgs 2:12–14; 3:7, 8; Jer 19).<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, when the religious leaders accused Jesus of using the powers of Baal to perform signs, wonders and miracles, they were accusing him of using occultic powers. They accused Him of being in league with the very enemy that He was defeating.

Sadly, the crowd was influenced by the religious leaders. Satan had so effectively used the religious leaders to influence the people that now some of the people were accusing Him of using demonic power. Once again, we see the people are so easily manipulated when Satan is the power behind a leader. As a result some of the people demanded that Jesus show them a sign from heaven. Such demands occur today. People seek a show - a wonder or a miracle! Some people have mockingly challenged God to show Himself in the sky to prove that He exists. If He did, Exodus 33:20 reminds us that the observer would die because the verse says that no one can see God and remain alive. The mocker would not be around to tell anyone the truth. God wants us to believe in Him.

The Greek word that is translated as “test” is *peirazo*. This verb is a present participle which means that some were repeatedly testing Him. This leaves us with the picture of a mob repeatedly mocking Him. They were trying to trap Him into something that would be embarrassing. Most likely, they did not believe He could do what they were asking. These people were not seekers but doubters looking for an opportunity to criticize Jesus more. Maybe they were mockers seeking a thrill - a special display of some “magic.” If He didn’t do what was asked, then they could have enjoyed the fun of mocking Him. They were not seekers but rejectors.

**JESUS KNEW THEIR THOUGHTS.** The next verse tells us that Jesus knew their thoughts.

[But He knew their thoughts and said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?” Luke 11:17-18a \(NASB\)](#)

His reply is insightful and brilliant. What else would we expect from God? Imagine a nation trying to defeat another nation in a war and, yet, fighting within itself. How would such a nation win? Matthew 4:24-25 reveals that Jesus healed people of every type of disease, pain, demon, epilepsy, paralysis and other ailments experienced by men, women and children. The passage also states that Jesus healed people from all over the land of Palestine: Jerusalem, Judea, Galilee, beyond the Jordan and the Decapolis. That is an extremely large area. Then Matthew continues to record countless miracles that were performed by Jesus and His disciples (Matthew 8:16; 9:35; 10:8; 12:22; 14:14; 15:30). How could a nation or an empire, such as Satan’s, win with so many internal conflicts? Jesus did not just cast out a few demons or heal a few people. The gospels paint a picture of the annihilation of every sickness and demonic oppression.

Therefore, when Jesus said that a kingdom at war within itself cannot stand, He was referring to the complete annihilation of demonic oppression within the region. How could the demonic realm survive? The answer was - it couldn’t.

**HOW DO YOUR SONS CAST OUT DEMONS?** Jesus’ next comment was logical and challenging.

[For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. Luke 11:18b-19 \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus wanted them to think. How did their sons cast out demons? Matthew 12:27 records the same statement. Now this statement has only one answer. The viewpoint of the religious leaders was that their sons did not use demonic power - only Jesus did! They did not want to admit that Jesus cast out demons by the power of God - just their sons!

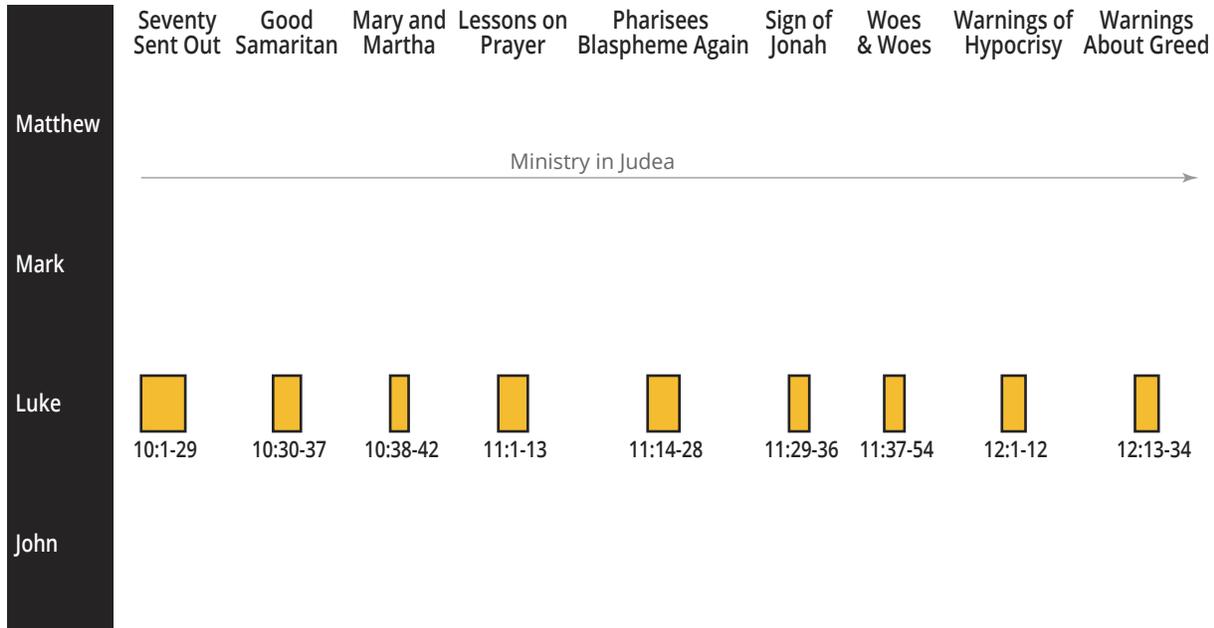
Jewish records tell us that the Jews did attempt to cast out demons. They used ritual, but the gospels tell us that Jesus only spoke a word (Matthew 8:16). In the book of Tobit we are told that Tobias, a Jew, created smoke by burning the heart and the liver of a fish in order to expel the demon named Asmodeus.<sup>4</sup> The Jewish Midrash refers to sprinkling

3. Howard F. Vos, “Baal,” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 239.

4. Emil Schurer. A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ. Hendrickson Publishing. 1995. Second Division. Book III, p. 38

# Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Judea - Late A.D. 32



a demon with purified water in order to expel a demon.<sup>5</sup> The early church father Origen states the Jews exorcised demons.

It is certain, however, that the Jews trace their genealogy back to the three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the names of these individuals possess such efficacy, when united with the name of God, that not only do those belonging to the nation employ in their prayers to God, and in the exorcising of demons, the words, "God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob," but so also do almost all those who occupy themselves with incantations and magical rites.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the phrases, the God of Israel, and the God of the Hebrews, and the God who drowned in the Red Sea the king of Egypt and the Egyptians, are formulæ frequently employed against demons and certain wicked powers.<sup>7</sup>

According to Origen, they did it by using the sacred name of God and referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the Jews were apparently not that successful according to the Graece Magicae Papyri, which records that some Jewish priests were using Jesus' name to cast out demons.<sup>8</sup> Acts 19:11-16 gives us an example of Jewish exorcists trying to cast out demons using Jesus' name. But they failed in their attempt and the demon attacked them.

*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." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 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. Acts 19:13-16 (NASB)*

5. Bemidbar Rabbah 19:8.

6. Origen. Against Celsus. Book 4, Chapter 33.

7. Ibid., Book 4, Chapter 34.

8. F. F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts, Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1988, p. 368.

This practice was later rebuked by some Jewish rabbis.<sup>9</sup> Why did they try to use Jesus' name? The answer is that they observed others using Jesus' name to cast out demons and it worked! It worked better than their incantations and rituals.

One can imagine that the Pharisees struggled when they saw Jesus casting out demons successfully every time, but that was not true of their sons. What was worse is that the crowds were amazed. Consequently, the religious leaders had a choice. Either Jesus' method was by divine power or by demonic power. They chose the latter method. They claimed that He used Satanic power. They were blind and they hated Him!

**FINGER OF GOD.** The truth was that God was performing these miracles, signs and wonders. Jesus was God in human flesh and His miracles, signs and wonders screamed loudly that He was God (John 10:37). Then Jesus gave them a warning,

*But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Luke 11:20 (NASB)*

The expression "finger of God" appears only four times in the Bible. It appears for the first time in Exodus 8:19.

*Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Exodus 8:19 (NASB)*

The expression also occurs in Exodus 31:18 and Deuteronomy 9:10. In these two passages, the expression refers to God writing on the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. But Exodus 8:19 is significant and helpful in understanding the significance of Jesus' comment.

The comment in Exodus 8:19 was made by the occultic Egyptian magicians. These magicians saw Moses bring gnats upon the land of Egypt. They were experienced in the occultic arts and when they saw Moses do this, they knew that God had performed this miracle. Moses was not performing

magic tricks. They exclaimed, "This is the finger of God!" Jesus used the same expression, "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The message? This was of God.

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME UPON YOU.** What did Jesus mean by the statement, "The kingdom of God has come upon you!"

*... the kingdom of God has come upon you. Luke 11:20 (NASB)*

The answer is that the king was in their midst and He was offering the kingdom of God to them. Earlier in His ministry, He declared that the kingdom of God was at hand.

*... Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:14b-15 (NASB)*

Matthew 13 records what is commonly called the parables of the kingdom. Jesus came offering the kingdom to the Jews (Matthew 15:24) but He was rejected early in His ministry when He was accused of using demonic power (Matthew 12:14-29) and then He went to the Gentiles (Matthew 12:46-50). He was the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, but when they rejected Him the kingdom was delayed until Jesus' second coming (Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:6-8).

This change of events can be seen in the prophecy of Micah 5:2. The prophecy is a promise that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and be the ruler of Israel. Yes, Jesus was born in Bethlehem but He is not ruling as king in Israel yet. That event has been delayed. Instead, He died for our sins as promised in the Isaiah 53 prophecy.

**THE STRONG MAN IS DEFEATED.** Then Jesus made a stunning statement.

*When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. 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. Luke 11:21-22 (NASB)*

9. K. Preisendanz, Papyri Graecae Magicae, I (Leipzig, 1928), Pap. Bibl. Nat. Suppl. gr. 574, lines 3018-19; Tos. Hullin 2.22-23; Tj Shabbat 14.4.14d and Adodah Zarah 2.2.40d0d-41a; TB Adodah Zarah 27b, cited in footnote 32 of F.F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, p. 368.

The Greek text has the definite article before “strong man.” That is, this is “the strong man” and he is fully armed. The Greek verb that is translated as “armed” is in a perfect passive participle. This means that the strong man is, has been, and continues to be fully armed. He is protecting his home and valuables. In our time, this man would have guns, knives, and other lethal weapons. He is prepared for everything and anything. The root Greek word that is translated as “undisturbed” is *eirene* and it actually means “peace.” That is, the strong man is so well armed with weapons that he is at peace. Peace is a great thing in the midst of danger.

I knew a Christian man who when he attended church carried a concealed gun. He had a permit. The man was at peace because of the presence of his gun which allowed him to defend himself and others. Then Jesus refers to a stronger man. This stronger man attacks the first strong man and overpowers him. The Greek word that is translated as “attacks” is *eperchomai* and it has the sense of a sudden attack. The Greek that is translated as “overpowers” is *nikao*. This word has the sense of victory. Therefore, Jesus is telling us that the second strong man is stronger than the first man. The second strong man wins in a decisive attack. The first strong man is Satan, but the stronger man is Jesus Christ! Jesus is saying that He is stronger than Satan. That is why He was able to cast out demons. Some day He will do more than cast out demons, He will crush Satan. Romans 16:20 says,

**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Romans 16:20 (NASB)**



Sarcophagus Fragments With Helmet and Sword

Used by permission - BiblePlaces.com

At His second coming, Jesus will defeat him and put him in the abyss for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). At the end of the thousand years, or the millennial kingdom, Satan will be sent to the Lake of Fire and live there for eternity.

Did the religious leaders understand Jesus’ message? Who was and is stronger than Satan? There is only one who is stronger than Satan. God is the only one who is stronger. Jesus was declaring that He is God.

This illustration of the strong man reveals that when Christ cast out demons they did not come back, because He was guarding the house. But when the Jewish sons cast out demons, the demons returned. Next, the illustration in the study will reveal that when Jesus cast out demons it included

that person responding in faith to Jesus Christ. The demon returned because the man was only morally clean and the Holy Spirit was not living within.

**HE WHO IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME.** Then Jesus said,

**He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather**

**with Me, scatters. Luke 11:23 (NASB)**

The translation of the Greek text is accurate in the New American Standard Bible (NASB). However, it is important to note that the Greek tense of both “is” and “gather” are present participles. Jesus was simply saying that either we are actively supporting Him and helping Him gather, or we working against Him. On one occasion a man told me that he wasn’t opposed to Jesus and he wasn’t supportive of Jesus. He was just neutral. He claimed that he did not take a position. The man did not understand that there is no middle position with Jesus Christ. You cannot chose to be

for, against, or in the middle with Jesus. Jesus says that we are either for Him or we are against Him.

This is an important truth to understand. All religions do not lead us to God. Jesus said in John 14:6-7 that He is *the* truth. There are no other truths!

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” John 14:6-7 (NASB)

There are no other truths about God, about you or our spiritual condition. There are no other paths to spiritual life or spirituality. There are not other ways to gain eternal life. Now either we believe that *or* we have rejected Jesus, the God of the universe.

If we do not believe Him, then we have rejected Him. That is extremely serious and it will result in an eternity in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15). In Acts 4:12 we are told that there is no other name by which we can be saved. Allah, Buddah, Vishnu, Izanagi, Apollo, Shiva or any other

so-called gods are not real gods who can save us. Only the true God, Jesus Christ, can give us salvation from our sins.

If you are for Him, then you will submit to Him and do His will, or you are working against Him. We either help Jesus evangelize the world by making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20) or we are scattering. Some years ago a man taught that Jesus never called us to preach the gospel, or good news, about Jesus Christ. But that is not the message of Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:6-8 and Romans 10:9-17. In fact, Jesus sent seventy disciples to spread the good news of the kingdom

(Luke 10:1-16). It is the will of God that we share the good news.

Also, we must accurately teach the Bible or we are scattering because He said that He came to fulfill the Law and not abolish it.

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. Matthew 5:17 (NASB)

If we do not teach what He taught, then we are working against Him and not with Him. Those who carelessly teach the Word of God are not with Jesus. The Greek present participles reveal that it is not the person who occasionally misses the message of a passage of scripture, but it is the person who habitually misses the message. In John 18:37 Jesus said

that He came to give us truth.

Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” John 18:37 (NASB)



Gathering Sheaves In The Field Near Jerusalem

Used by permission BiblePlaces.com

Therefore, if we are careless and not accurate in our teaching, we are working against Jesus - we are scattering. This is such a serious problem that teachers are warned to be accurate when they teach (2 Timothy 2:15; James 3:1). James 3:1 warns teachers that they will be judged.

One of the marks of a Christian is that they submit to Jesus as both their Savior and Lord. Notice 1 Corinthians 12:3 states that a Christian will call Jesus Lord.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit

of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3 (NASB)

The Jewish leaders were working against Jesus. They were not for Him. They were scattering error and consequently, the people. When they accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of the devil, they were scattering truth and the people.

**CONCLUSION.** If you are a Christian, ask yourself “Am I obedient to Jesus Christ or am I working against Him?” What a joy it is to serve Jesus Christ with eagerness and be a part of the thrill of seeing the kingdom of heaven expanding. We plant, water, and God gives the increase. 1 Corinthians 15:58 gives us a wonderful promise that when our labor is in the Lord, our labor is profitable.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)

In Matthew 6:20-21 we are told that our goal must be to store up treasure in heaven. When we are working for God and not against Him, we store up treasure for the future.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:20-21 (NASB)

Just imagine working hard and giving Christ all of your effort and knowing that your labor has value, purpose and a future reward. It will not disappear when you physically die. It is wonderful to know that we are part of Christ’s team and it is going to win in the end. Let’s commit ourselves to serving Jesus Christ from the depth of our hearts.