

Jesus: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Mark 3:20-35

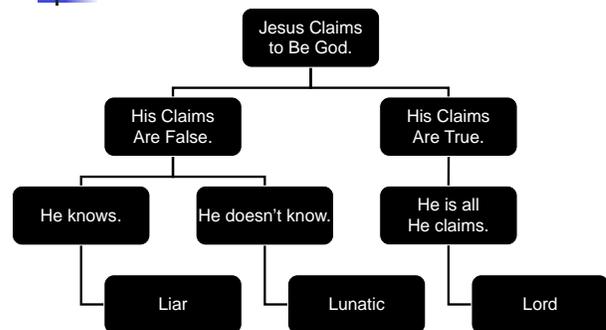
The Long Day

- The healing of a demon possessed man.
- Teaching in a home in Capernaum.
- The accusation by the Pharisees that He is in league with Satan.
- Teaching all the parables of Matthew 13, and explaining several privately to His disciples.
- A trip across the Sea of Galilee during which He falls asleep.
- A storm comes up, and He calms the storm.
- He and the disciples arrive on the other side, He heals the demoniacs in the area of the Gerasenes, including the one called Legion, the demons go into the pigs, which rush into the sea and drown.

Mark's Technique

- 20-21 – Jesus' family leaves to come to Capernaum.
- 22-30 – the Pharisees attack Jesus.
- 31-35 – Jesus' family arrives at the house where He's teaching.

Three Basic Alternatives



I. A Deluded Lunatic (20-21)

- **20** – “And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.”
- **21a** – “When His own people heard of this.”
 - “His own people” refers to Jesus' immediate family, especially His four brothers.
- **21b** – “they went out to take custody of Him, for they were saying, ‘He has lost His senses.’”

II. A Demonic Liar (22-30)

- **A. False Accusations (22)**
 - **22** - “The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”
 - Cf. [Matt. 12:22-23](#)
 - **1)** “He is possessed by Beelzebul.”
 - (a) An intentional corruption of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron whose name meant “lord of the flies” to “lord of the dung.”
 - (b) “Lord of the dwelling” – i.e. the dwelling of evil spirits; cf. “the strong man’s house”
 - **2)** “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”
 - [Matt. 27:18](#) - “[Pilate] knew that because of envy they had handed Him over.”
 - Cf. what the demons themselves said: [Mark 1:24](#) – [the demons were] saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”
 - Their view in summary: “Jesus is a demonic liar.”

II. A Demonic Liar (22-30)

- **B. Jesus' Refutation (23-27)**
 - 1) He identifies the illogical conclusion (23-26).
 - 23 – "And He called them to Himself."
 - 23 – "and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"
 - Two hypothetical illustrations...
 - 24 – If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."
 - 25 – If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.
 - Jesus' conclusion...
 - 26 – "If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"

II. A Demonic Liar (22-30)

- **B. Jesus' Refutation (23-27)**
 - 1) He identifies the illogical conclusion (23-26).
 - 2) He condemns the double standard (Matt. 12:27).
 - Matt. 12:27 - "If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges."
 - 3) He presents the only reasonable conclusion (27).
 - 27 - "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house."
 - The strong man – Satan.
 - The house – Satan's kingdom.
 - The property or goods – his human victims
 - Jesus' point is this...
 - If you want to take what belongs to such a man, you first have to overpower the strong man.

II. A Demonic Liar (22-30)

- **A. False Accusations (22)**
- **B. Jesus' Refutation (23-27)**
- **C. A Solemn Warning (28-30)**
 - 28-30 – "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;" 29 "but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin "--" 30 "because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

The Unpardonable Sin?

- 1) The extent of grace (28)
 - 28 - "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter."

The Unpardonable Sin

- 2) The unpardonable sin (29-30)
 - a) What is it?
 - A sin that bears eternal guilt.
 - It's not ordinary blasphemy.
 - Cf. 3:28 – all blasphemies.
 - Cf. Matt. 12:32a – "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him."
 - Cf. Paul, who blasphemed Christ (1 Tim. 1:13).
 - Matt. 12:32b – but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come."
 - 30 – says that Jesus spoke this "because they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit.'"

The Unpardonable Sin

- What components have to be present for the unpardonable sin?
 - (i) A manifest, undeniable act of the Spirit.
 - (ii) An intentional, conscious act of attributing to Satan what you know to be a work of God.
 - Cf. Nicodemus
 - John 3:1-2 - "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;" 2 "this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher: for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."



The Unpardonable Sin

- a) What is it?
- b) Can it be committed today?
 - (i) A manifest, undeniable act of the Spirit.
 - (ii) An intentional, conscious act of attributing to Satan what you know to be a work of God.
- c) “How can I know if I’ve committed it?”
 - Ryle: “Those who are troubled with fears that they might have sinned the unpardonable sin, are the very people who have not sinned it.”



Implications

- 1) If Jesus was not delusional, and if Jesus is not God, then the Pharisees were right.
 - A common attack against Jesus from the Jews.
 - Talmud, Sanhedrin 43a: “Yeshu of Nazareth was hanged on the day of preparation for the Passover because he practiced sorcery and led the people astray.”
 - Talmud, Sanhedrin 107b: “a master has said, ‘Yeshu the Nazarene practiced magic and led Israel astray.’”
 - Justin Martyr: “they [the Jews] dared to say that he was a magician and seducer of the people.”
 - Origen in Against Celsus: “He...laid it to the Savior’s charge that he had been enabled to perform the fancied miraculous feats by sorcery.”
 - Tertullian in Against Marcion: the Jews took Jesus “to be a magician with miraculous signs and a rival in teaching.”
 - Jesus explanation: [John 8:41-59](#)
 - In the context of the same accusation “you have a demon” (52), Jesus answers...
 - 1) Actions reveal who is really connected to the devil. (41-44)
 - 2) Even His enemies can’t convict Him of a single sin. (45-47)



Philip Schaff

- Philip Schaff in *The Person of Christ*: “the hypothesis of imposture is so revolting to moral as well as to common sense, that its mere statement is its condemnation. How in the name of logic, common sense, and experience, could an impostor—that is, a deceitful, selfish, depraved man—have invented and consistently maintained from beginning to end, the purest and noblest character known in history with the most perfect air of truth and reality? How could he have conceived and successfully carried out a plan of unparalleled beneficence, moral magnitude, and sublimity, and sacrificed his own life for it, in the face of the strongest prejudices of his people and ages?”
- Schaff: “It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus.”



Implications

- 2) We see again that clear, incontrovertible miracles are never sufficient to cause a dead heart to believe.
- 3) As Jesus followers, we too will be called liars and deceivers who are really after some other agenda.
 - [Matt. 10:24-36](#)