



Part 14: Satan Confronted
Matthew 12:22-37

I. Excavating the Gospel

The gospel is the good news that God has kept His promises to Israel to rescue and renew His groaning creation from Satan, sin, and death through King Jesus (his life, death, resurrection, and ascension). Life in God's beautiful kingdom is available now and forever to all who entrust themselves to King Jesus and follow him as Lord.

Modern secularism rejects both Satan and sin as outdated and dangerous concepts.

“Secularism is exorcism in reverse. We say ‘God come out in the name of humanity.’” – Jon Tyson

But there are many well educated people today who are acknowledging that our modern, secular explanations for what is wrong with us, and the world are not as easily explained by a lack of education or family of origin issues or mental health pharmacology...

We are wise to acknowledge that our modern, secular humanism is simply an alternative view of reality that is based on faith just as much as any religious worldview. The better question is which worldview best explains what we see and experience in life?

“One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe – a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death, disease, and sin...Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees...this is a universe at war.” – C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The Bible gives clear witness to: we live in one world with two realms – a material realm (we quantify with our 5 senses) and a spiritual realm (that intersects with our material realm).

A casual reader of the New Testament will discover that a spiritual battle is simply assumed. It's a normal part of this life lived out in the clash of kingdoms (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 10:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7; 1 John 3:8; 5:19; Rev. 12:17).

II. Jesus Offers Us a True Understanding of Reality

Jesus has begun to experience some fierce opposition from the religious leaders, who want to kill him (Matt. 12:14).

Note: If you begin to seek to follow Jesus wholeheartedly as Lord of your life, you will experience some level of opposition even from professing Christians.

A. Jesus believed in Satan.

“If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?” Matthew 12:26

The Bible clearly teaches us that there is a kingdom of darkness ruled by a personal presence of evil known by many names: **Satan** = the adversary (Job 1:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:18); **the Devil**= slanderer (Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8); **the prince of this world** (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19); **the tempter** (1 Thessalonians 3:5); **the accuser of the brethren** (Revelation 12:10).

We are taught by Jesus' instruction and example to learn Satan's schemes against us (2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 6:11), to resist and fight against Satan and his demons (Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9), and we are given authority by Jesus to overcome the evil one (Matthew 28:18-21; Luke 9:1; 10:17-19).

B. Jesus' gospel includes rescuing people from Satan's kingdom.

“But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.” Matthew 12:28-29

“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.”

1 John 5:19-20

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”

1 John 3:8b

“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Acts 26:17-18

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14

This reality should motivate us in a few ways. First, we should always give thanks that Jesus has rescued us from an enemy who was too powerful for us. Second, we should pray for discernment and power to resist Satan’s schemes against us. Third, we should see unbelievers as blind captives who need to be rescued by King Jesus and pray accordingly.

C. King Jesus calls for our ultimate allegiance.

“He who is not for me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”

Matthew 12:30

Jesus leaves no middle room in our response to him. He calls us to give him the ultimate allegiance he deserves.

One way to understand faith in the New Testament is swearing allegiance to Jesus as King and Lord.

“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”

Matthew 12:31

“This verse is a solemn warning against persistent, deliberate rejection of the Spirit’s call to salvation in Christ. Human unresponsiveness inevitably leads to a state of moral insensibility and to a confusion of moral issues wherein evil is embraced as though it were good...In such a frame of mind repentance is not possible to the hardened heart because the recognition of sin is no longer possible, and God’s offer of mercy is in effect peremptorily refused.” – Ralph Martin, “Blasphemy of the Spirit,” *IBD*, 1:201 (quoted by Wilkins, 449)

“This sin can be committed today only by unbelievers who reject the ministry of the Holy Spirit leading them to salvation. ‘It is a matter of great importance pastorally that we can say with absolute confidence to anyone who is overwhelmed by the fear that he has committed this sin, that

the fact that he is so troubled is itself a sure proof that he has not committed it.” – Michael Wilkins, quoting C.E.B. Cranfield

III. Salvation’s Champion is the Warrior King

“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” Colossians 3:13-15

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.” Revelation 5:12

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.” Romans 16:20

Resources:

1. Sermon – Stand – Taking Spiritual Warfare Seriously (10-23-2022).
2. God’s Armor ([greenwoodcc.com/resources/ God’s armor](http://greenwoodcc.com/resources/God's%20armor)).
3. Biblical worldview (greenwoodcc.com/resources/worldviews).
4. Prayer ([greenwoodcc.com/resources/praying Gods Way & Word](http://greenwoodcc.com/resources/praying%20Gods%20Way%20&%20Word)).
5. A way to pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, I bring myself and (mention by name) under your authority and the power of your shed blood on the cross. I ask you and our Father to protect us by the power of your Name. I ask you to assign your holy angels to defend us and minister to us. I ask you to give me discernment to recognize Satan’s schemes in our lives and to resist him in the power of the Holy Spirit. I ask you to deliver us from the evil one.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you respond to the fact that Jesus and the Apostles believed in Satan and his kingdom of darkness? What do you think Jesus means when he calls Satan the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19)?
2. Have you had conversations with others about the reality of Satan and evil? What has been your experience?
3. How does this passage in Matthew 12 challenge or inform your thinking about Jesus and his gospel? Does this help to understand

Doug's definition of the gospel (see notes).

4. What do you think of the aspect of biblical faith in Jesus that is swearing our allegiance to him as King and Lord?
5. How might the reality of Satan affect the way you think and live? How does it affect the way you see Jesus, yourself, and those who have not yet professed faith in Jesus?
6. Is there any response Jesus may be calling you to make?