

# Questioned

*Jesus has authority over all creation, including Satan.*

## Mark 3:20-30

**20** Jesus entered a **house**, **A** and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. **21** When his **family** **B** heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, “He’s **out of his mind.**” **C** **22** The **scribes who had come down** **D** from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by **Beelzebul,**” **E** and, “He **drives out demons** **F** by the ruler of the demons.”

**23** So he **summoned** **G** them and spoke to them in **parables:** **H** “How can Satan drive out Satan?”

**24** If a kingdom is **divided against itself,** **I** that kingdom cannot stand. **25** If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. **26** And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished. **27** But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the **strong man.** **J** Then he can plunder his house. **28** “**Truly** **K** I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. **29** But whoever

**blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** **L** never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — **30** because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

### Exploring Key Words

- A** This home was located in Capernaum, where Jesus had set up His home base during His ministry (Mark 1:29; 2:1).
- B** “Friends” (KJV); “Own people” (NASB; NKJV)
- C** “Beside himself” (KJV); “Lost his senses” (NASB)
- D** Probably an official delegation (Mark 7:1) who had come to evaluate Jesus and report back to their peers in Jerusalem.
- E** Greek form of the Hebrew word Baal-zebul (“lord of the flies”). The word is synonymous with Satan. Rather than honoring God, the leaders said Satan was working through Jesus.
- F** The leaders did not deny Jesus’s powers, only the source of His power.
- G** “Called them” (NIV; ESV; KJV). Jesus took the initiative in contradicting the false claims made by the religious leaders.
- H** An analogy or comparison that includes proverbial sayings, allegories, or narrative.
- I** Neither a kingdom nor a house can survive internal division. Strength is found in unity, not in working against itself.
- J** In this context, the strong man is Satan, so it took someone stronger than Satan to cast out Satan. This emphasized Jesus’s deity.
- K** Literally, “amen.” The phrase is found only in the Gospels and is only used by Jesus. It indicates a serious and solemn affirmation that validates the trustworthiness of His words.
- L** The one sin that is not forgiven is rejecting or denying God’s work. In this context, the scribes and Pharisees were attributing God’s work to Satan and were in danger of crossing the line into blasphemy.



### **Skeptics** (Mark 3:20-22)

- Jesus went to a house for a meal, but the crowds that gathered made it impossible for Him to eat. His family wanted to restrain Him, viewing Jesus as insane.
- The religious leaders portrayed Jesus as being demon possessed or performing miracles through demonic power.

### **Strong Man?** (Mark 3:23-27)

- Jesus addressed His family and the religious leaders using parables about a kingdom and a house being divided. Both situations would lead to disaster.
- Jesus noted that the house cannot be plundered until the strong man is bound by a stronger man. This indicated that His deity and that His miracles actually opposed the works of Satan, freeing people from the devil's power.

### **Warning** (Mark 3:28-30)

- Jesus issued a warning that all sins can be forgiven except for blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This sin is seen in the continued dismissal of Jesus's works or the attribution of those works to demonic sources.

### **Summary Statements**

*Jesus has authority over all creation, including Satan.*

- Believers should not be surprised when others are skeptical about Jesus.
- Believers can trust that Jesus has authority over all creation.
- Believers should be heartbroken when people reject Jesus.

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### **Memory Verse**

*Mark 3:24*

### **Key Doctrine**

*Salvation*

Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. (See Romans 5:8-10; Colossians 1:14.)

## ENGAGE

*To what authority do you answer in your daily life? What impact does that make on your life? (PSG, p. 28)*

- Ours is an age of self-proclaimed autonomy. Many assert that they are accountable only to themselves.
- In self-authority, the only guidance is one's own wisdom, and the only allegiance is one's own self-interest. Of course, when every person is their own authority, the result is relational chaos.

## EXPLORE

### 1. SKEPTICS (MARK 3:20-22)

*How would you encourage a new believer whose faith in Jesus was being challenged or mocked by his or her family? (PSG, p. 30)*

*Bonus: When have you been wrongly accused of something? How did you respond?*

- At times we see Jesus being swarmed by the masses in such a way that normal activities were hindered. On this occasion, Jesus and His companions couldn't even find time to eat. Large turnouts aren't bad, but submission to the authority of Christ is more important.
- The word *restrain* was sometimes used in the sense of "arrest" or "take by force." Jesus's own brothers believed He was unstable. If Jesus had allowed His family to restrain him, we wouldn't enjoy the salvation He provided.
- While His family's actions were likely rooted in good intentions, the same could not be said of the religious leaders. They slandered Jesus, alleging that He could only cast out demons because He Himself was possessed.

*How do the attitudes of Jesus's family and the religious leaders compare to attitudes about Jesus today? (PSG, p. 31)*

### 2. STRONG MAN? (MARK 3:23-27)

*What are some ways in which Satan takes people captive? How does Jesus break those strongholds? (PSG, p. 32)*

- Jesus responded to the religious leaders' accusations through parables. Jesus used parables to confront and expose those who heard them (Mark 4:12). After they were confronted, they would either progress by repentance or regress in unbelief.
- To attribute His power to Satan was illogical. If the devil worked against himself, it would guarantee his failure because a house divided cannot stand.

*Bonus: What arguments do people raise against the authority of Jesus? How can believers respond to those arguments?*

- Jesus emphasized that driving out demons is a matter of strength. Satan is strong, but Jesus is stronger. Because Jesus has authority over all things, including Satan, our victory in Him is certain.

*How does the authority of Jesus bring peace and disruption at the same time? (PSG, p. 33)*

### 3. WARNING (MARK 3:28-30)

*Bonus: What convinced you of Jesus's forgiveness? What has shaken that confidence over the years?*

- Even in the context of an "unforgivable sin," Jesus emphasized His offer of forgiveness. Jesus has the authority to forgive sin, and He promises to do just that for those who believe Him and accept His gift.
- Still, Jesus emphasized that one sin was the exception: blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy involves slandering the works of God. Jesus's critics had accused Him of doing miracles in the power of the devil rather than the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The sin against which Jesus warned was not a single act but a continued refusal to identify Jesus as the Messiah and attributing His works to Satan.
- Believers who have trusted Christ as Savior should not use the "unpardonable sin" to create self-doubt. Rather, it should motivate us to be stronger witnesses for Christ.

*How would you counsel someone who feared they were no longer a candidate to receive God's forgiveness? (PSG, p. 35)*

## CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss whether you are submitted to the authority of Jesus.

*How does a group or an organization determine what authority it acknowledges? If a change is needed, how does a community find a new authority to follow? (PSG, p. 36)*

Encourage individuals to review the lesson passage and all the areas over which Jesus exercises authority.

*In which of these areas (your mind, your body, your understanding of nature, and your mission in life) does Jesus now exercise authority? In which of them did you once recognize His authority but no longer are doing so? (PSG, p. 36)*



### For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.



### BIBLE SKILL (P. 35, PSG)

Use a Bible dictionary to gain deeper insight into a key word.

Look up the word *blasphemy* in a Bible dictionary to discover its meaning and usage. Write a summary of your findings. Based on your findings and Mark 3:28-30, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit a one-time act or a disposition? Explain.

Lead the group to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 35). Invite three or four volunteers to read Mark 3:28-29 in different translations. Then, direct another volunteer to read the definition of “blasphemy” from a Bible dictionary. Discuss the questions listed in the activity. Provide an index card or paper for the group to record their responses.

### OBJECT LESSON: MAP OF ISRAEL

Secure a map of the Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Show the map and briefly review the events in 2 Chronicles 10 that led to Israel’s split. Ask: *What eventually happened to the kingdom after it divided?* (Both kingdoms were defeated by foreign armies and were taken into exile.) *Thinking about what happened to Israel, why did Jesus say a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand?*



### THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Jesus questioned why Satan would drive out Satan (Mark 3:23). He then answered His own question: Satan would never do that because it would weaken him. The very idea was illogical.

The truth is, Satan wants to build a kingdom, but he can’t advance that agenda by fighting against himself. While Satan wants to sow chaos among others, he does not want to do anything that threatens his work or surrenders an inch of ground to God. And that’s exactly what he would be doing if he voluntarily worked with Jesus to exorcise a demon.

Meanwhile, Jesus was (and is) all about tearing down the strongholds of Satan. That’s why He freed people from demonic oppression and possession. He wasn’t an ally of Satan. He was actively working as an enemy of evil.

The scribes denied Jesus’s truth and showed their intentional blindness by repeatedly saying His work was rooted in Satan (Matt. 10:25; Luke 11:15,18-19). In reality, Jesus came to stop the “strong man” as only He could do.

Beelzebul (or Beelzebub, KJV) is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Baal-zebul, meaning “lord of the flies.” The officials couldn’t deny Jesus’s works, so they accused Him of being possessed by Satan. In response, Jesus warned them about the unpardonable sin.

In reality, the unpardonable sin is not so much about denying Jesus’s miracles as it is about rejecting His works as coming from God. The leaders couldn’t imagine Jesus being equal to God, so they assumed He was channeling Satan. That kind of stubborn refusal to acknowledge God has always been a dangerous path to walk.