

The Devil Made Me Do It!

From 1970 to 1974 a comic named Flip Wilson had one of the most popular shows on TV. He was the first black performer to host of his own variety hour. He played a collection of characters,: Geraldine Jones; Reverend LeRoy of the Church of What's Happening Now; Danny Danger, private detective; and Herbie, the Good Time Ice Cream Man.

Now there are a number of people here this morning that are too young to remember Wilson's show. But for those who remember it, I have a question. When you hear the name Flip Wilson, what expression of his comes to mind?

"The Devil made me do it!" Flip Wilson had the whole nation saying, "The Devil made me do it!" You saw it on T-shirts and bumper stickers everywhere.

Unfortunately, I think a lot of people actually believed it was true. At least it seemed like a good to avoid taking responsibility for their actions.

Of course, when you read the Bible you find that "The Devil made me do it!" doesn't hold up as a good excuse for our failures. The devil can't make us do anything. He's not all powerful and we have a will.

What we can say from the Bible is that Satan is real, powerful, determined, and dangerous.

1Pe 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Satan's goal is our destruction, but he can't make us do anything. We must be willing to cooperate for him to influence us.

During Jesus' three year ministry on earth He met up with Satan on a number of occasions. As we've seen in past studies it seems like there was a dramatic increase in overt Satanic activity at the first coming of Christ.

In our passage for today we're going to see some of that overt Satanic activity, but we're also going to see some less obvious, but just as real, actions of Satan.

Turn to Luke 11:14 PG 1006

As we begin, we're going to see that while Satan's oppression is powerful, Jesus Christ is more powerful. **Read vs14**

The act of casting out demons was not all that unusual in the Jewish world of Jesus day. Even the followers of the Jewish leaders had the ability to cast out demons. That becomes an important issue in what happens after this. **(Read 19)**

There was one kind of demon against which Judaism's methodology was powerless, and that was the kind of demon who caused the controlled person to be dumb or mute. The Jewish belief was to cast out a demon you had to first get the evil spirit to say his name.

Then you used that name as part of the exorcism process.

Obviously, if a person couldn't speak, there was no way of establishing communication with this kind of demon. So, within the framework of Judaism, it was impossible to cast out a mute demon. According to Rabbinical teaching, the only one who would be able to cast a demon out of a mute person would be the Messiah.

This would be one of the distinguishing marks of anyone who claimed to be Israel's promised Messiah.

By this time in Luke, it's been approximately 3 years since Jesus started preaching and teaching. He's used every opportunity to demonstrate who He really is.

I believe if you went over to the Village of Waugh Chapel this after noon and took a survey on Satan you'd find a real variety of opinions. You'd get every thing from Satan is a myth, to Satan is a guy in a red suit with a pitch fork.

Let me just say that the Bible presents Satan as a person. He was created by God as an angel. He rebelled, taking a third of the angels with him. Satan is the archenemy of God and therefore he hates you and me because we're creations of God.

In fact, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, he hates you with a double hatred. Jesus said Satan has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy. He's the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning.

Satan is powerful and Satan is committed. But Satan is not all powerful, all knowing, or omnipresent. He has none of the divine attributes of God.

Jesus Christ came into the world to meet Satan head on and defeat him.

Hebrew 2:14 Jesus came...*that He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil*

1John 3:8 ...*the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

Satan tempted man to sin, which brought God's judgment. Jesus Christ suffered the punishment for sin and took God's judgment on the cross.

Colossians 2 gives this explanation: *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

In His cross and resurrection Jesus not only dealt with our sins, but He showed His triumph over Satan and His demons.

- I. *While Satan's oppression is powerful, Jesus Christ is more powerful.*
- II. *Satan doesn't oppose himself* **Read 15**

Did you ever try to talk to someone about Jesus Christ, and what He has done for them on the cross and been challenged with something like this: *Let God show me some miracle or show Himself to me. I only believe what I can see. I refuse to believe without seeing.*

First of all that's not true. They believe in all kinds of things they can't see. We all take a lot of things in life by faith.

But second of all, lots of people saw in Jesus' day but they rejected Him anyway. Sometimes people believe what they want to believe no matter how much evidence they're confronted with.

Jesus casts out a demon and a mute man speaks. The multitudes marveled but others doubted. In fact, they said this Jesus of Nazareth casts out demons by Beelzebub.

Beelzebub or your Bible may say Beelzebub comes from the Hebrew word *Baal*,

"lord." Baal was an early Canaanite god that you often read about in the OT.

Bul is the Hebrew word for "house, high place, temple. So Beelzebub means "god of the high place."

The Jews did some interesting things with names. For instance, during the period of time between the old and new testaments there was a Roman general named Antiochus Epiphanies.

His name was Antiochus, but he called himself Epiphanes which means "the illustrious one" or "the exalted one." Obviously he didn't have a problem with self-image.

The Jews hated Antiochus Epiphanies for the horrible things he did to them so they called him Antiochus Epimanes which means "mad man." Obviously they did that behind his back or they'd be slaughtered by his soldiers.

It seems, the Jews may have purposely corrupted Beelzebub -- as a sign of their disgust -- into the word into Beelzebub, meaning "Lord of the flies" or "god of filth." By Jesus' day, *Beelzebul* or *Beelzebub* had become the popular name for Satan, the prince of demons.

So what happens here? Jesus casts out a demon and some who saw it said He's empowered by Satan, the prince of demons. Talk about gross blasphemy gross blasphemy and slander!

Who are the "some" who said these things? As it turns out they're Pharisees. Matthew 12 gives us Matthew's account of the same events, and he names the "some" as Pharisees.

These guys are part of the religious elite in Israel. These are men with the background and training in the Bible. But this Galilean, itinerant preacher named Jesus doesn't fit their mold. They have their ideas about how Judaism should operate and Jesus doesn't fit.

But now they have a problem. An obvious miracle has been done by Jesus. On top of that it was a miracle that only Israel's long awaited Messiah should be able to do.

Today if you go to many of our denominational seminaries you'll hear professors

dispose of miracles by saying that later authors just added these miracles to Luke's account.

In 1985 Robert Funk convened the Jesus Seminar. This is a bunch of so-called scholars who convene every so often to discuss and then vote on what passages in the NT they actually think are authentic and which are not. Talk about arrogance!

But see, these Pharisees didn't have the luxury of 2000 years to shield them from the event. They couldn't deny that it happened. They had to find another way of discrediting this Jesus they saw as a growing threat to their authority, so they said His power came from Satan.

Read 16 Others from this group of leaders had another idea. They were saying in effect, "If you're really working for God prove it by giving us a sign from heaven, not just a miracle on earth."

How do you respond to accusations like these? Remember there was a crowd watching.

In His answer, Jesus lays out some significant truths about Satan that are important for us to hear and know.

Read 17 & 18

Man looks on the outward appearance, God knows the heart. Jesus knew not only what they said, but why they said it. He knew their secret reasons and wicked purposes.

Jesus starts with an argument from logic. Why would Satan fight against himself and divide his own kingdom? It doesn't even make sense. If this guy was demon possessed then Satan isn't going to cast out the demon. That would be self defeating on his part.

Now catch something here. Regardless of the assumption of the critics of the Bible Satan is real and he has a kingdom. Jesus Christ the Son of God knew it was true. He believed it without question.

I don't know where you stand but I stand with Jesus, not with some arrogant seminary professor who comes to conclusions 2000 years after the fact.

John 12:31 calls Satan *the ruler of this world...*
II Corinthians 4:4 says he's the *god of this age*
In Ephesians 2:2 he's *the prince of the power of the air*
In Ephesians 6:12 he's *the ruler of the darkness of this age*

The Bible tells us about the works of Satan:
He's the author of sin and tempts us to sin
He lays snares for us
He snatches the Word of God out of hearts
He blinds minds
He harasses believers and accuses them before God
He sows tares among God's people
He resists God's servants
He hinders God's people

He's a foe with an agenda and he's certainly not going to oppose himself.

The second part of Jesus answer pointed to their self-incrimination. **Read 19**

By what power were Jewish exorcists casting out demons? We don't know much about Jewish exorcism except that it must not have been very successful considering all the people who flocked to Jesus for deliverance. what we do know was, it was practiced.

CH Lenski writes: "Something is viciously wrong with men who ascribe the identical effect to absolutely opposite causes. Their own associates will be their judges."

Read vs 20 Jesus is saying, "If you're wrong, and it's God, not Beelzebub, that's empowering me, then the kingdom of God has come to you and you are too blind to see it." If it's the finger of God and you don't see it there's a major spiritual problem in your life.

The finger of God is a weighty image. It was the finger of God that wrote the 10 commandments on the tablets of stone for Moses. It was the finger of God that wrote a message of judgment on Belshazzar's wall in the Book of Daniel. This is powerful!!

Then Jesus uses a third argument: **Read 21 & 22**

Their accusation was actually an admission of Jesus' power. He couldn't defeat Satan

unless He was stronger than Satan. Satan is a strong man. He's got territory. He's got the things he's taken and he jealously guards it all.

But Jesus invaded Satan's territory, destroyed his armor, and his weapons, and claimed his spoils! Eph 4:8 says Jesus "led captivity captive." Luke 4:18 says He came" to set the prisoners free."

Satan may be permitted limited authority in this age but he's still a defeated foe.

I. While Satan's oppression is powerful, Jesus Christ is more powerful

II. Satan doesn't oppose himself

III. Those who don't gather with Jesus, scatter

Read vs 23 it's impossible to be neutral in this spiritual war because neutrality means standing against Christ. The biblical challenge is that there are two opposing spiritual forces at work in the world, and we have to choose between them.

Satan is scattering and destroying, but Jesus Christ is gathering and building. We need to make a choice. In fact if we choose to make no choice we're really choosing against Him.

There's a lot of people who say, "I'm not against God or the Bible, I just don't know for sure what's true. I'm an agnostic."

There are some people who say they don't know but they're open to find out. I believe God honors that openness. He says in Jeremiah 29:13 *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

God isn't hiding. He's a God of revelation and He wants people to know Him.

The problem comes when people use terms like "agnostic" to hide behind. For some people, it's a convenient way of avoiding confronting spiritual issues.

The word *agnostic* has a fascinating genesis. One hundred and forty years ago the word agnostic didn't exist.

The biologist, Thomas Huxley, who was such a proponent of Charles Darwin that he's was nicknamed "Darwin's bulldog," coined the word *agnostic*.

Huxley joined the Metaphysical Society in England which met to discuss all kinds of philosophical and religious issues. It seems that Huxley had a problem. He was uneasy about being the only member who didn't have clear convictions on the existence of God.

Huxley solved his problem by taking the Greek word *gnosis* which means "knowledge" and adding an "a" in front of it. An a in front of a word in Greek means "without." So an "agnostic" is a person "without knowledge."

Huxley writes: "I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our society, to show that I too had a tail, like other foxes."

Huxley's term fits like a glove in our postmodern age. It sounds so intellectual, but in reality it can just be a way of avoiding the real issues. As John Blanchard writes,

"Agnosticism is not the avoidance of option; it is an option. Not making a decision is a decision, an act of faith, a commitment to being uncommitted."

Or, as Jesus puts it, *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters."*

When mighty forces are arrayed against each other, individuals have to take sides or they'll be crushed in the battle. Leon Morris in his commentary on Luke writes: "There can be no neutrality about this. When a man sees what the kingdom means he must be either for it or against it. Anyone who does not side with Christ in the battle against evil is against him. If anyone does not gather with Christ he scatters."

Where are you today? Are you trying to stay neutral? Are you trying to avoid making a decision? Jesus says some sobering words here. He says, "You are against me!"

Read 24-26

Jesus illustrated the danger of neutrality by telling this story. Jesus is more powerful than Satan but we aren't. We aren't able, in and of ourselves, to resist Satan. The guy who is possessed by a demon can be re-possessed. The only power that can keep the demons out of a human being is the power of the One who is able to deliver that person in the first place.

Jesus was continuing this warning those who would attempt to remain neutral, who

would not come to receive Him as their Messiah, that neutrality toward Messiah is hospitality toward the hostile forces of Satan.

It's no blessing for people to be exorcised, rid of demon-possession, if they don't have the person of God dwelling in them. Just like man is unable to rid himself of a demonic inhabitant, neither is he able to keep an exorcised demon from returning. What's He saying? Jesus must not only be believed in as a historical figure. He must also be received into our lives by faith, or Satan can return with even greater force.

With all due respect to Alcoholics and Narcotics anonymous, I see a potential danger with the 12 step philosophy. And let me tell you what it is. I've watched people stop drinking or taking drugs through these programs. That is commendable and I applaud that.

But they're taught to say, "I am an alcoholic " or "I am a drug addict" even after years of staying sober. With some people, they transfer their dependence from a substance to the program. They become dependent on meetings. They go to meetings 2, 3, even 4 times a week. Not just to being others in, but because they need it for themselves.

I was drug dependent for years. I was in and out of mental hospitals. The psychiatrists, everybody gave up on me. I'd try to clean up my act and within no time 7 other demons were at my door step.

Finally, God brought me out of that. Not that I didn't need to grow in God's grace and get away from my old drug buddies for a while. But Christ filled my life instead of the demons. I am not a drug addict. I'm a new creature in Christ. I need to stay close to him, but, I'm not who I used to be.

Neutrality about the person of Jesus Christ is no virtue, it is a vice. It invites Satanic involvement, and it leads to a latter state that is worse than the first.

Are those who attribute Jesus' power to Satan His enemies, they are. That makes sense to us. We understand that. But remember, so are those who think they can remain neutral about Him. Those who are not for Him are against Him.

- I. While Satan's oppression is powerful, Jesus Christ is more powerful*
- II. Satan doesn't oppose himself*
- III. Those who don't gather with Jesus, scatter*
- IV. Freedom from Satan is only possible through obedience to God's word.*

Read vs 27

There is a woman in the crowd who is enthralled with this young rabbi. I would assume that she was old enough to be his mother.

Couldn't you just imagine this precious, godly Jewish woman: Such a wonderful teacher! Such a spiritual man, he is!

Wouldn't she be proud if Jesus were HER son! She calls out, "Blessed is the mother who bore you and nursed you." Everyone hears her words. A ripple of comment moves across the crowd. Some smile, some frown. They wonder how will Jesus reply?

Read vs 28

You would expect Jesus to pause and say something kind about his mother Mary. She WAS blessed by God. Her cousin Elizabeth said to Mary, "Blessed are you among women..."

Instead Jesus says the unexpected. He gives a very pointed and almost sharp answer.

On another occasion Jesus has made nearly the same point: **Look back at Luke 8:19-21 Read**

Jesus wasn't putting His earthly family down. But here's where the real blessings come in. Was Mary blessed to be Jesus' mother? No question about it!

But, there's an even greater blessing available. Hear the word of God and keep it.

Satan's oppression is powerful, Jesus Christ is more powerful. He's our deliverer. He's our deliverer, and He's our Savior. He said, *He that believes on me has everlasting life.*

Here's where real deliverance comes from. In Jesus Christ is salvation and freedom and life. As we believe in Him our lives are cleansed. As we obey God's Word we're filled with the strength we need to stay in the midst of God's blessing.

Do you want victory over Satan and his deceptions? Then don't really focus on Satan at all. Be aware of him, but focus on Jesus Christ instead. Fill your life with God's truth and then obey what you know.

Flip Wilson used to say "The Devil made me do it" and people across our country quoted him and said, "Sounds good to me."

The Devil is real but the Devil's defeated. He can't make you do anything. But he can sure influence you. Who do you belong to today?

Are you for Jesus, or against Him? Maybe you thought you were just staying neutral. Remember, there's no such thing as spiritual neutrality. Jesus Christ defeated him who had the power of death at the cross. He died for our sins and rose again.

Trust Him today. Don't oppose Him and what He wants to do in your life. Follow out the Biblical command: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..."*