

Luke 11:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

Analysis

But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. This verse records the ultimate blasphemy: attributing Jesus' works to Satan. The name "Beelzebub" (Βεελζεβούλ, Beelzeboul) derives from the Philistine deity Baal-zebub ("lord of flies," 2 Kings 1:2) but had become a Jewish title for Satan as "lord of the dwelling" or prince of demons. Calling him "chief of the devils" (ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων, archonti tōn daimoniōn) acknowledges a hierarchical demonic kingdom.

The accusation is strategically wicked: unable to deny the miracle's reality, Jesus' opponents reinterpret its source. This foreshadows Matthew 12:31-32's warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—persistently attributing God's redemptive work to Satan crosses into unforgivable territory. The charge also reveals the Pharisees' spiritual blindness: they so thoroughly rejected Jesus that they preferred to believe God's Messiah was Satan's agent rather than acknowledge His divine authority. This demonstrates how religious tradition and pride can harden hearts against truth.

Historical Context

The Beelzebub accusation appears in all three Synoptic Gospels, indicating its prominence in Jewish opposition to Jesus. Attributing miraculous power to demons rather than God protected the Pharisees' authority—if Jesus operated by God's power, their rejection of Him was rebellion against God. By claiming demonic

collusion, they could dismiss His works while maintaining their own religious credentials. This accusation would later be used against Christians (see Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho), showing how entrenched this polemic became.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the Pharisees' willingness to attribute obvious good (healing) to Satan reveal about the depths of spiritual blindness?
2. How does this accusation illustrate the danger of religious systems that prioritize institutional authority over truth?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christianity be tempted to dismiss genuine moves of God because they don't fit our theological frameworks?

Interlinear Text

τινὲς	δὲ	ἐξ	αὐτῶν	εἰπον	Ἐν	Βεελζεβοὺλ	ἄρχοντι
some	But	of	them	said	through	Beelzebub	the chief
G5100	G1161	G1537	G846	G2036	G1722	G954	G758

τῶν	δαιμόνια·	ἐκβάλλει	τὰ	δαιμόνια·
G3588	devils	He casteth out	G3588	devils
	G1140	G1544		G1140

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:34 (Evil): But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.