

Jesus the Exorcist

—God at War, Week 5—

(ESV)

I. Jesus' _____ as an Exorcist is Considered _____

Among scholars of the historical Jesus, it is widely agreed that one of the surest facts we can know about Jesus is his activity as a miracle-worker and exorcist. This is even accepted among non-Christian scholars, in that Jesus was at least widely-regarded by his contemporaries to have worked miracles and performed exorcisms.

- **An Evangelical New Testament scholar:** “It is also now generally recognized that Jesus was perceived by his contemporaries as an exorcist, and as a successful exorcist at that” (Craig Evans, “Exorcisms and the Kingdom” in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Bock and Webb, 152).
- **A Non-Christian New Testament scholar:** “There can be little doubt that...Jesus was widely thought to be able to cast them out, restoring a person to health...We can say that Jesus was widely recognized by people of his own time—who *did* believe that demons existed and could be exorcised—to have the powers to do just this. In fact, Jesus’ exorcisms are among the best-attested deeds of the Gospel traditions” (Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet*, 197).
- **Early controversies about Jesus did not deny that Jesus had power: rather, his enemies attributed his power to Satan.** See Mark 3:22// Luke 11:19-23; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.28, 68; *b. Sanhedrin* 43a.

II. Jesus' Exorcisms Compose a _____ of _____

- **4 Major Exorcisms**
 - The Demoniac in the Synagogue (Mark 1:21-28//Luke 4:31-37)
 - The Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20//Matt 8:28-34//Luke 8:26-39)
 - The Syrophenician Girl (Mark 7:24-30//Matt 15:21-28)
 - The Boy with a Demon (Mark 9:14-29//Matt 17:14-20//Luke 9:37-43)
- **4 Major Teachings and Incidents**
 - The Beelzebul Controversy: (Mark 3:22-27//Matt 12:22-30//Luke 11:14-23)
 - The Parable of the Strong Man (Luke 11:21 [Mark 3:27//Matt 12:29])
 - The Teaching on When a Spirit Leaves (Luke 11:24-26//Matt 12:43-45)
 - The Disciples’ Missions (Mark 6:7-13, 30//Matt 10:1-15//Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-20)
- **Other Related Passages**
 - Mary Magdalene and Other Women (Luke 8:2)

- A Blind and Mute Demoniac (Matt 12:22//Luke 11:14)
- A Mute Demoniac (Matt 9:32-34)
- “Go Tell That Fox” (Luke 13:32)
- Summary Reports (Mark 1:32-34//Matt 8:16-17//Luke 4:40-41; Mark 1:39//Matt 4:24; Mark 3:7-12//Matt 4:24-25//Luke 6:17-19; Acts 10:38)
- Jesus’ Temptation (Mark 1:12-13//Matt 4:1-11//Luke 4:1-13)
- Stilling the Storm, with exorcism language (Mark 4:35-41 [esp. 39]//Matt 8:18-27//Luke 8:22-25)
- The Strange Exorcists (Mark 9:38-41//Luke 9:49-50)
- False Disciples, with Exorcisms (Matt 7:21-23)

III. Jesus' Exorcisms _____ His _____

- Exorcisms we see in the ancient background materials often have ritualistic and magical elements: Josephus *Antiquities* 8.42-49; *Greek Magical Papyri* IV.1227-64; *Testament of Solomon* 5:1-10, Dead Sea Scrolls 11Q11 IV; 4Q560.
- By contrast, the simplicity and immediacy of Jesus’ Exorcisms were recognized as showcasing unique authority (Mark 1:27//Luke 4:26; Matt 8:16).
- Jesus’ exercise of this power, instead of appealing to a higher authority, displays a personal power greater than Satan (Mark 3:27//Matt 12:29//Luke 11:21).

IV. Jesus' Exorcisms _____ and _____ the _____

- In the Old Testament and in other ancient background material we see that the coming of the Kingdom of God was thought to involve defeating spiritual evil (Isa 24:21; Dan 10:13-14; compare 2:44-45; 7:18-27; *Jubilees* 23:29; *1 Enoch* 10:4-6; 55:4; *Testament of Moses* 10:1).
- We see this same logic in the implications Jesus sees in his exorcisms (Luke 11:19-20//Matt 12:27-28).
- We see the same logic in Jesus’ reply to John the Baptist, though focused on his healing ministry more generally (Matt 11:2-6//Luke 7:18-23; compare with Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1; 26:19).

The Bottom Line

_____ in _____ the _____

...by _____ that _____ evil was a _____ of _____.

...by _____ in the _____, the “_____ strong man.”

...by _____ confronted _____, but _____ that we share in _____ over _____.