

A strong man

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] We may now consider, as we shall be enabled, words you will find in the portion of scripture we read together.

The Gospel according to Luke chapter 11, and we shall read again at verse 21.

Luke chapter 11, reading at verse 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

And now in order to get something like a true conception or a right understanding of the spirit, passage, it has to be taken in connection both with what precedes it and what follows it.

[1 : 40] The immediate occasion for it was the accusation of the Pharisees that it was by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, Christ cast out of us.

This was their explanation of the miracles of healing which they saw with their own eyes.

They could not gain, say, that the devils were cast out, but they had their own explanation.

They thought that they had a satisfactory explanation too.

But Christ was in league with the chief of the devils. But Christ was in league with the chief of the devils. And that it was from the chief of the devils he received his power.

[3 : 08] And in that connection, he says to them, if a kingdom is divided against itself, it is brought to desolation.

If a house is divided against itself. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?

Why, the very thing is preposterous. So what they thought a reasonable explanation was no explanation at all.

It was contrary to the very nature of things that Satan should cast out Satan. That he should be divided against himself.

Well, if that is so. What is the real explanation?

[4 : 31] How are we to explain that Christ actually did cast out devils?

And that is what we have here. When a strong man armed, he breathed his palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger man he cometh upon him and overcometh him, he taken from him his armor wherein he trusted and he divides the spoil but again we have to take this in connection with what follows we are told that the evil spirit may go out of a man and that this same evil spirit seeketh rest and findeth none and then says I will return to my house whence I came out and coming he findeth it swept and garnished then he goeth and taketh unto him seven spirits four wicked and himself and they enter into that man and the last state of that man is worse than the first but see how these two are connected

Christ refers to the strong and the strong man he also refers to the unclean spirit and the connecting link is this he that is not with me is against me he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad now taking this parable of this strong man first notice that every word is chosen with the purpose of emphasizing the strength of the strong man the strong man armed and the word is the strong man fully armed keepeth his palace for his house the strong man and the word man is not it is the strong one when the strong one armed fully armed keepeth his palace his goods or his possessions are in peace now of course the context makes it abundantly clear who the strong one is and this is Christ's explanation of

Satan's relationship of Satan's relationship with man not that he is divided against himself not that his kingdom is in any danger of coming to an end but he is the strong one fully armed and the cases

of the other rather the the way in which this is expressed it means this the strong one fully armed is always on the lookout he continuously guards his own palace now it is quite easy to get a wrong view of the picture here who is he guarding the strong one or as he stands guard is he looking in or out perhaps if we take the illustration of a prison guard what does the prison guard what does he what does he watch he watches the in middle he watches the prisoners well that is not the idea here at all it is the strong one standing on guard against interference from without it is not that he is afraid that his goods or his possessions will rise up against him he certainly is not he is not afraid of that that's not why he is watching at all but he is watching lest there should be interference from without and that is precisely what the

[11 : 05] Savior says when a stronger than he cometh upon him certainly not within his palace but the attackers from without there is no possibility of his possessions rising up against him no if there is to be a release of the prisoners if there is to be a divide of the spoil the strong one must come from without now then who is the strong one it is Satan who is not divided against himself and there is nothing that I know of within the whole range of script of truth that lets forth more clearly and more emphatically man's condition in

Satan's power than the passage we are here discussing the completeness of Satan's power over man it is an awful thought it is an awful condition to contemplate that man in his fallen state is all together under the power of the evil one notice this is called his own palace when the strong one armed keepeth his own palace his goods are in peace no there is no doubt but that in scripture we are informed that in a certain sense man in a fallen condition is the property of the devil there is of course a sense and a very real sense in which man as a creature is

God's property God has propriety in us as well as sovereignty over us that is true and that cannot be changed but it is equally true and we do not have the scripture as view of the mother unless we take gold it is equally true that man in a certain sense a very real sense is the property of the devil hence we read ye are of youth fathers the devil and the lusts of you father he will do year of your father the devil how can it be said that man belongs to the devil well it can be said first in view of this he is a prisoner of war he belongs to the devil by right of conquest he overcame him he belongs to the devil by right of conquest he overcame him no he keeps him but he belongs to him in another sense he belongs man belongs to the devil in this sense that man has sold himself willingly to the devil and still does the same man is in bondage by his own choice he chose to be like this and he still chooses to be like this so much so that he is not aware of being in bondage at all he is a willing slave to corruption he is a willing slave to his master he is a willing slave to his own lust he wishes to be like this he is in peace that is to say there is absolutely nothing to indicate that he is dissatisfied with the service in which he is there is much of both to indicate that he may be dissatisfied with certain parts of it but taking it as a whole this is his life to serve divers lusts and pleasures and when he refuses one it is in order to choose another but all

within the range of his captivity and servitude he's in peace the only peace that he has but consider the strong one how is he strong well he's strong according to the scale of creation who knows how strong he is he is in the eminent sense the strong one he's called the god of this world the god of this age he's called the prince of the power of the age the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience the strong one but he is the strong one fully armed fully armed in order to keep that which he has won by conquest he has no intention of let he has no intention of setting the prisoners free he is armed now if we were to consider the strong man armed in relation to his goals if we were to consider how the devil is able to keep men in bondage to himself we must consider how he works in man but that is not

I take it that is not at least primarily the lesson of the pineapple at all it is how he is armed against anyone coming to deprive him of his prey from without how is this how can it be said that he is armed what is his arm or in this respect in other words what can the devil use and use as an argument with God himself that his goods should be left in peace that he should not be deprived of his foyer well first and foremost he can use this one and it is a strong one this is indeed a strong weapon in the devil's armory he can use the argument of guilt guilt why does he hold his prayer he has he has his prayer with that through conquest how does he hold it he holds it on the ground of guilt this is what makes man's condition as he is of himself so absolutely helpless and hopeless this is what seals his doom in as far as it is sealed under the power of the strong one armed man is guilty he is given over by the righteous judgment of

[22 : 59] God he is given over to this condition so that the devil can use this argument even the righteous judgment of God and this of course is the narrow this is the very marrow of the devil's position in relation to man he has him not only by man's own choice not only by the conquest but by the attempt on overcoming him in combat but he has him as given over by the righteous judgment of God is that given in relation to man but there is also alienation of affection man is a identity with God he doesn't want to be brought into God's presence he doesn't want to be released from the slavery of sin he is far away but then further more there is this other weapon which the adversary can and does use there is man sin fullness he is not fit for communion with God he is not fit for anything but the slavery in which he is by nature that's the only thing he's fit for he's a child of what corrupt unfit for communion with the eternal no in this and by this the strong one keeps his possession he keeps his palace and his goods are in peace and here they will remain and thus they will remain unless there is a stronger than he have you ever noticed this that according to the synoptic gospels that is the first three

Matthew Mark and Luke Christ's victory over the adversary is the first thing we are told of he met the adversary and he met him and overcame him before he performed any miracle the prelude the necessary prelude to his casting out devils was that he should meet the devil in person and overcome him and the outcome of that encounter was this that

Christ said to him get thee behind me he was not to go before him anymore the commandment is get thee behind me and that commandment he had to obey but that was the beginning of the phrase he overcame him therefore he could cast out devils he could cast out the one whom he had overcome but the battle wasn't decided the war wasn't decided then it was going on for we read he departed from him for a season the temp that departed from us but he returned again and again and again he returned to continue the war he returned and this is a very important part of Christ's life of humiliation mission that again and again and again he was assaulted by the devil but there had to be a decisive party and of that we read he spoiled principalities and powers making a show of them openly triumphing over them in the cross someone put it he routed the forces of darkness single handed and death in dying slow he routed them but there is something more and his strength in setting the prisoners free has to be related not only and not timely to his overcoming the adversary there is something that is unspeakably more unspeakably higher than that what is this he was strong he was strong to earn pardon for the guilty we said that guilt was a strong weapon in the devil's armor and what could counter it how could this be met only by a free and a full pardon on the part of

[30 : 57] Christ where did he earn that where did this weapon come from that he wields and wields with all mightiness against the adversary where he got it where he bare their sins in his own body on the tree only he who was strong to bear sin and make an end of it of it a strong enough to come upon and overcome the strong one armed keeping his palace and his goods in peace he was strong to bear sin and to bear it away to make an end of it by the sacrifice of himself he is the stronger and not only so but he was strong to live when he is cast out cast out truly as he says himself forsaken this is that he might bring those who were alienated that he might bring them back to God he lives in in the desert when he is forsaken he still lives he is strong to live where none never lived before him

God's forsaken of the creature always meant death when God forsook his son he didn't die he lived in death that which meant death to all others he overcame and conquered and he could use the words why has thou forsaken me he is still living when he is forsaken he was the only one who ever did that the only one strong enough to do that when Adam was forsaken he never said why has thou forsaken me why he died immediately he was forsaken he couldn't say why has thou forsaken he was already dead dead spiritually but

Christ lived in the desertion he lived when forsaken why because as the father had life in himself so he gave the son to have life in himself why that he might give eternal love to as many as were given him he was strong then to live when forsaken that is to bring those who were alienated back to God we further mention that man was polluted but this one is pure and he is pure when he is bearing sin oh that how wonderful that is we are to overlook all these great and glorious mysteries of the day he bore sin and yet he was sinless that sounds commonplace but it is far from it he is the only one who was sinless and yet made sin those who may release us from their bondage have no holiness no but he has it and he has it even when he has taken their sin away and this is a certain aspect of

Christ's relation to his church and that is permeated with comfort for sinners lost sinners what is that it is this that when sin is imputed to Christ although he is himself sinless who is harmless undefined yet when sin is imputed to him he bears the punishment the curse of sin unmitigated is poured out upon him though he is himself sinless and what's the colder part of that it is this that when Christ's holiness is imputed to us it doesn't matter how sinful he is God deals with him according to the righteousness that is imputed to him doesn't matter how sinful you are if

Christ's righteousness is imputed God be fair to righteousness why because Christ in all his holiness was made sin when sin was imputed to his personal holiness did not stand for a moment against the outpouring of the bias of divine indignation and your personal sin it doesn't matter what it is if Christ Christ is imputed to your personal sin will never stand against God's blessing upon your person and upon your service in the spirit that is of course the essence of justification that is the justification of the ungodly which is the only justification known to the scripture the justification of the ungodly they had no holiness but he is made unto them of God their sanctification their holiness here he is then and it is this art that he comes to deprive the strong one of his goods the devil uses the weapon of gift to keep his goods his possessions his palace in peace the devil says how can [39 : 01] God how can he exercise his power to set free the prisoner to the prisoner they are handed over how can it be and Christ is the stronger one who can answer that question has been decided their guilt indeed is that which handed them over to the adversary but that guilt is taken away and I am come with a fool and a free pardon so that the argument about guilt has no more force your weapon strong but mine stronger I bore their sins in my own body on the tree their guilt is taken away and I demand their release yes but they are alienated by wicked works they are enmity in their mind to go yes they are true but the stronger replies

I have purchased for them a new heart I have purchased for them the spirit which can create a new heart within them which can incline them towards God and that which they were enmity against before the national mind is enmity against God yes but I will pour out the love of God in their heart through the Holy Ghost given unto them yes but they are unfit unfit for God's essence who they are but again the weapon to me that one is this they are to be renewed after my image in righteousness and true holiness according to the promise

I will write my law on their heart and in their mind and their sins and their unrighteousness will I remember no more as stronger than he cometh and taketh from him his armor want to say taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted it is no more of any value it has no more any validity the armor is taken from him he cannot use it and don't you see the other five have the result of that what is this he can never overtake them again those who are set free are set free at the same time as the adversary is deprived of his armor that is he can never overcome them again to bring them into that position of savory uncertainty see how different from what follows when the evil spirit goes out of a man he still has his armor he comes back to take possession when he goes out but in this case he doesn't go out he is cast and deprived of his arm that is to say this is a never lasting transaction it is not something fancy and something temporary this is for eternity he sets the prisoners free and sets them free in such a way that they cannot go back where they were it is impossible that they should because in setting them free he deprived the strong one of his arm he has no more that he can do with them oh he will harass them oh yes he will do all he can yes against them yes but he can never bring them back to his servitude again guilt has been taken care of alienation has been removed they have been renewed in the spirit of their mind hence they are indeed set free set free with the glorious liberty of the sons of

God a strong man the strong one keepeth his parents his goods are in peace but when a stronger than he cometh this is salvation salvation by practice and salvation by power a stronger than he cometh and overcomes and this is the hope for the lost that there is a stronger than he and the only hope there is a stronger than the strong one there is one who can depy him of his arm there is the leader of the Lord's host there is the captain of salvation and it is he who said before in the sure word of the gospel do we need to possess that liberty do we need to be emancipated why there is but one who can do it the stronger than the strong one how strong you see well under the old dispensation

God spoke like this to his people he is strong that saveeth he is strong that saveeth how strong the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms arms that are full of power hands that are great in man a white hand that is exceeding exalted in height and this is he God in our nature Emmanuel God with us God with us yes but there's more what more there can be than God

with us it is this

[47 : 42] God honors God with us yea and God honors and if God be honors who can be against us if he be for us the stronger than he to set us at liberty to clothe us with his righteousness to say to us show yourselves and to the vision of God it is his word of command and that word has to be obeyed what blessed emancipation what blessed liberty what blessed freedom and no wonder though the church should sing not of her freedom only and not chiefly of her freedom but sing of the might of the right hand which has set her free blessed be says good

John but blessed cross it is blessed saffler yes that's all but blessed father be blessed be the one who was put to shame for me blessed be he who saffler liberty blessed be his name forever more God