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# The Jesus Identity

## Studies in Mark's Gospel

### Introduction

In our last study we saw Jesus involved in significant conflict with the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law, the bearers of religious power. Along with the priests, they controlled temple life and 'orthodox' worship in Israel. So it is clear that the arrival of the Kingdom of God challenges and overrides 'religion'. In this passage we see that the Kingdom also directly confronts Satan, the being that heads up all evil.

Many people dislike and avoid conflict. Do you see a problem with Jesus' provocation of conflict in his ministry?

### Starter:

What evidence is there that Satan (a personal being who heads up all evil) is real and in active opposition to God and his purposes in this world?

What do you find hard to accept about this evidence?

### Read Mark 3:7-35

How do each of the following respond to Jesus in this passage?

	Passage	Response
The Crowd	Mk 3:7-10, 20	
Evil Spirits	Mk 3:11-12	
Jesus' mother and brothers	Mk 3:21, 31-32	
The Teachers of the Law	Mk 3:22-30	

### Going Deeper

The word "apostle" literally means "sent one" -- a person on a mission. The word "disciple" means follower. They seek to learn from their leader so as to become like them in some way.

1 Mk 3:13-19 What was distinctive about the position of the apostles? What was the message they were appointed to proclaim? What enabled them to cast out demons?

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2 What evidence is there in the passage that the series of conflicts was spiritual in nature? .....

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- 3 **Mk 3:22-30** 'Beelzebub' is not a name we are familiar with. From the evidence in the passage, who is this Beelzebub? What would it mean for Jesus to be possessed by Beelzebub?  
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- 4 According to Jesus in v 23-26, what it would mean if he was casting out demons by the power of Satan?  
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- 5 What do you think Jesus means when he speaks of plundering a strong man's house in v.27?  
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- 6 How might v 27 serve as a key to understanding Jesus own ministry up to now, and the ministry he has just given the apostles?  
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- 7 **Mk 3.28–30.** In what way are the Teachers of the Law blaspheming the Holy Spirit in this passage?  
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 On the evidence of this passage, how does a person blaspheme “against the Holy Spirit”? Why is it an eternal sin, for which people cannot be forgiven?  
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- 8 **Mk 3:31-34.** Whom does Jesus consider to be his true family? How is this group different to his 'mother and brothers' at this time?<sup>1</sup>  
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- 9 This passage has shown that Satan will seek to subvert the work and growth of the Kingdom of God in any way he can. How might we experience such attempts at subversion or distraction today? What ought we do in response?  
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Are verses 28-29 contradictory?  
 What is it to 'blaspheme' something?  
 What is the difference between “the sins and blasphemies men utter” and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

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<sup>1</sup> Further reading of the bible reveals that Jesus' mother Mary and at least one of his brothers, James, later became genuine believers in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God.