

<sup>23</sup> So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. <sup>27</sup> In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

One could argue from a psychological perspective that one might be able to oppose oneself, but he could not conclude that such a conflicted person was in any way not dysfunctional. Likewise, it is not impossible for a person to drive himself from a particular place, but it is impossible to then conclude that that person is still in that original place. To be in charge of, or take over a place one needs to be a presence there (if not physically, then by representation). Jesus is pointing out that what they are witnessing is not due to schizophrenia, but to a battle between two antagonists. There is the strong man (the powers and principalities of the world) and there is the invader (the rightful king). The king needs first to defeat and cast out the incumbent despot before he can take over the kingdom.

As a child I used to watch cartoons on Saturday morning television. Often when one of the characters faced a dilemma, two figures would appear, one on either shoulder. One shoulder sported an angel and the other a devil. These two figures would argue and try to convince the character to act according to their way. One figure or the other would have to banish its antagonist in order to get the character to do as it directed. Such a scene entertains and resonates with the viewer because we are so often conflicted in our choices. When we talk about conversion in the church, we are talking about allowing God's Holy Spirit to bind up our selfish desires so that God's will might take over our lives. We are the house in which God, the Holy Spirit, desires to dwell (1 Corinthians 6:19). But we must open the door and let him in so that he can drive out the incumbent.

**Come Holy Spirit and invade my life so that I might be your proper temple.  
Drive out all sinful desires and replace them with your gracious and  
merciful will, that I might do such godly works as may best demonstrate  
and announce your presence in the world. Amen.**