

1. – The Open Defamation of Jesus
2. – The Clear Explanation of Jesus

III. The Subtle Separation from the LORD Jesus

30. **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.**

*Note – There is no neutral ground. Being “undecided” is a decision.

*Note – Someone may say, now preacher, I don’t know about that!! – I do. This is not something that is debatable, it is informative. This is not a theological opinion from an overweight, white-headed preacher; it is the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who will judge all men at the last day.

- If you are NOT working to Gather, you are working to Scatter.

Christ, the Lord of life and glory,
Speaks, and all obey His voice,
Lame men walk, the deaf find hearing.
And the dumb in songs rejoice.

Blind men by the wayside begging.
Felt His touch and lo! they see:

Blest, divine. Emancipator,
Thou (*and thou alone*) canst set the nations free!
- Elwood Haines Stokes -

August 27th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Striving with the Maker: The Ruin of Resistance
Sermon #6 Title: No Neutral Ground
Sermon #6 Text: (Matthew 12:24-30)

Somebody asked me one time, what would happen if someone cast a demon out of a loved one; and they never told him thank you, or did anything for him in return? – I said that’s easy – they’ll just get repossessed.

Well we aren’t far from our Lord teaching us about the workings of the demonic realm in our chapter. We are trying to get everything we can out of Matthew 12; because there is no greater danger that anyone can get themselves into, than the danger of fighting against the LORD Himself.

- Resisting the Lord comes to nothing but Ruin!
- Striving with the Maker, will do nothing but destroy your life and grieve His heart.

Sometimes we outline the “truths” or “principles” that we find in the text. Sometimes, we just outline the text itself. This morning we are going to just outline this particular text.

In the preceding verses, the LORD Jesus has just freed a man from the devil’s stronghold.

- Satan had done to a man physically, what sin has done to a lost man spiritually; and when Jesus showed up, some mighty powerful things happened.

- the demons in this man fell to the ground and openly said where all could hear – “Thou Art the Son of God.” – (they said what the Pharisees would not.)
- then Jesus banished those fallen angels, and gave this man his sight, his sound, and his voice.
- And then the people watching stood in great amazement, at a crossroads for every one of them.

On one side of the moment stood the LORD Himself, with His disciples, and those that had already come to faith in Him. They stood there, having healed many, taught many, and openly identified Himself with a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah. – It was this side that would say, Jesus is the Son of God.

- Furthermore on this side, you have “fallen angels;” – demons – that everyone around could testify to the reality of the moment... - those fallen angels, in the very presence of Jesus Himself, could not but speak the truth “Thou Art the Son of God.”

- But on the other side.
- A certain group of religious leaders, Jewish Theologians, and Sanhedrin authorities, who had come to do everything they could, to say Jesus was not the Messiah.

Some may say, “Boy, I’m glad I wasn’t in that crowd that day! – Friend there may be some of you still there!

- You are going to find out today, from Jesus Himself, that there is no such thing as neutral ground.

Know – now know this – Satan sails a sinking ship yes, but his whole crew is united bailing for dear life.

- Then He asks the next question: - **“By whom do your children cast them out?”**
- The Lord does not comment on the validity of Jewish exorcism. – He does point to their very own “rabbis” who claim to cast out demons, (who by the way – had never opened blind eyes, and never gave hearing to the deaf – ever) – and says, - Who is behind your powers?
- If they had said “God” – then why were there no miraculous deliverances.
- If they had said “Satan” they would have condemned themselves.

If Jesus healed by the devil – then why couldn’t the Jews heal with God? – Now you have a merciful devil and a powerless God.

C. The Light of Divine Truth – **“...if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”**

*Note – Here’s the point. It should be obvious what this means. If in fact, I have cast out devils, which are obviously cast out; and they obviously are not cast out by satan; and they are obviously cast out by the Spirit of God – Then...

- what a wonderful “if ... then...” statement.

-“if I have . . . then The Messiah is come to you!” –

*Note – Jesus said “don’t make it harder than it is!” - I have shown you Who I am, I have told you Who I am, and it should be very clear for you to see.

Some might say – Satan knows how to play possum. Paul said that he has ministers that masquerade as angels of light. It would be no stretch for Satan to set up a side show in order to lead people straight to a false prophet.

- But here – Jesus is addressing their “thoughts!” – They really are intending to say that Satan is actually casting out demons here.

J.W. McGarvey rightly points out that in the big picture Jesus is not saying that Satan couldn’t divide his own kingdom; but that Satan wouldn’t divide his own kingdom. – He is just as shrewd as he is evil.

*Note – Now with that being said, Jesus asks some very logical questions:

- It that’s true then how is it that Satan’s kingdom continues to stand? – Why hasn’t it fallen down yet?

- “Well, it will!” – that’s good news, but if that’s the case, how then will the prophecies of Daniel come true? How then will the prophecies of Isaiah come true? What about the things that are promised to the Satan in Ezekiel?

The Pharisees could not say they believed the prophecies, AND that Satan would fall on his own; and they had already admitted that it hadn’t fallen yet.

Friend, if Satan’s realm will fall all by itself, then for us... There would be no call to “resist the devil and he will flee from you” there would be not call to watch out for the “roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”

One will either believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God, the Savior of the World, the Lord of all Creation, and the King of All Kings; or one will not.

Now the people had openly showed their puzzlement. The Pharisees say that He is not; the Evidence says He is; and He sure does fit the promises of scripture!

- Regardless of the tone in which it was spoken, it was said out loud – **“Is not this the Son of David?”** and the Pharisees could NOT let that question stand in the air.

*Note – The first thing we see from the Pharisees is the open defamation of our LORD.

I. The Open Defamation of the LORD Jesus

24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*

A. Their Compulsory Behavior – “...when the Pharisees heard it, they said...”

1.) They could not, and would not let this question stand in the air. *(I can almost hear it like a bitter bark coming from frustrated old men wound up tighter than snare drum; and almost see the spit that jumps from their mouth as they speak)*

2.) Note this – the word or phrase “This fellow”

*Note – M.S. Mills in his book the “Life of Christ” points out that the original writing doesn’t have the word “fellow.” – it just says “**This...**” – They didn’t even give Him the dignity of calling Him a man, a rabbi, a teacher, or a preacher, -

Matthew tells us that they just looked at Jesus and said – “This...does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub”

*Note – Their disdain for Jesus appears to becoming dehumanizing. – They could not control their impulsive anger and hatred for Christ.

But one thing that becomes clear that you and I can see is some of their elementary beliefs.

What does their accusation against Jesus tell us?

B. Their Elementary Beliefs

1.) There is a real demonic kingdom

- a.) devils – plural
- b.) they possess people, they are ever working behind the scenes in the world we cannot see.

*Note – This is a good time to say this here. Neither you, nor I can see behind the veil of mystery between this Seen world, and the Unseen world. – But we can read behind it.

(Preacher, how do you know, 1 – there is an unseen world? And 2; - if there is how in the world can you know what’s in it? – Friend, I can’t see it, but I can read it. – And furthermore, like the wind I can often see the result of it.)

- It was the “Evil winds of the unseen world” that had kept this man in the dark his whole life.

- It is the “evil spirits of the unseen world” that keep flaming the fires of sin, and moving in the minds of sinners to come up with insanity couched in normalcy.

A. The Law of Divided Efforts – “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” – vs 25

*Note – that is not just true in the material world, that is true in all things unseen.

*Note – Jesus explains this truth from the largest to the smallest and back again.

1.) Kingdom – City – House

2.) The premise is this. – Two sides cannot be working against each other and stand.

You cannot build while your partner tears down. You cannot go forward, if your people are pulling backward. You cannot fight an enemy, if you are fighting your friend. –

*Note – This is true in nations, kingdoms, marriages, churches, families etc. – That should at the least be obvious to all sensible people.

- This church works FOR the gospel; it will not stand if half of it were to work AGAINST the gospel. – these are natural laws that apply in the seen and the unseen.

B. The Ruin of Defective Logic

1.) “How shall then his kingdom stand?”

2.) “By whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.”

*Note -First of all lets deal with an accusation they aren’t making, that others could do.

- They are not saying, Satan is putting on a show here, they are actually insisting that Satan really is casting out demons; not merely pretending to.

hold the truth in unrighteousness.” – To hold the truth in unrighteousness is to know its true and refuse to admit it; just because you don’t want it to be.

II. The Clear Explanation by the LORD Jesus

25. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:**

26. **And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?**

27. **And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.**

28. **But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**

29. **Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.**

*Note – We have to note here that the Lord gives one of the longest and most explanatory answers that we find in the gospels. There would be at least two results from Him doing so:

#1 – For the benefit of the Hearers. The dynamics of the spiritual world have a strong degree of mystery to human eyes and ears. I don’t know if you know this or not, but some people are easily fooled. If there was anyone there who needed not to get confused, this would have done it.

#2 – For the Rebuttal of the Accusers; and in doing so the people were hearing Jesus say at best, these Pharisees are dead wrong; and at worst these Pharisees are patent liars. – Which He would say plainly later in His ministry to their faces.

Now all of that being said, we can see clearly that the Pharisees, even in all of their hatred for Jesus did not, and could not deny the reality of the demonic kingdom.

2.) There is a real demonic king – “Beelzebub”

*Note -This tells you that not only do they believe in the demonic kingdom, but they believed that it was in fact a kingdom, with a king! – One with authority.

- They believed that Beelzebub obviously had authority to order these other demons to leave.

(they obviously believed that this demonic kingdom is organized into a rank-and-file sort of system; with a single minded will at the very top of it.)

Now though these Pharisees that were as wicked as they were, the Jews in general were right about the demonic system in the world.

- This is where the Apostle Paul spells out for us, that the same demonic system that has always been, still is, and will be, until the LORD Himself puts an end to it.

Ephesians 6:12 – **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”**

- That is one belief that Paul did not change when he got saved, he came to understand it with even more clarity than he had when he was a Pharisee.

3.) They must go to any length necessary to keep people from believing Jesus and believing in Jesus.

C. Their Blasphemy – “*This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.*”

“Beelzebub” – There is a bit of a mystery here. Beelzebub was a pagan god, mentioned only one other time in the Bible, and that’s in 2nd Kings.

(In 2nd Kings 1:2 – Ahaziah the king of Samaria had taken a fall and became sick, and he sent one of his messengers to “**inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this disease?**”)

The mystery for scholars, is how this once mentioned pagan god of the Old Testament came to be a Front-Page name for satan himself in the New Testament.

- The Name Beelzebub means – “Lord of the flies”

How is that? – Well, this is what happens when someone rejects the God of the Bible.

According to some historians, certain ancient civilizations believed that life came from rotting death. It’s no secret that when an animal dies, or man or a woman, for that matter, left alone that the body will decay, and rot, and flies will come and deposit their eggs; and then from that carcass, larvae comes forth, and then come more flies. –

They believed life came from this rotting death; and they called this god – “Beelzebub” – or “Baalzebub.”

Obviously there can hardly be anything more blasphemous to the God of all creation. – Your God didn’t make us; we came from rotting meat! – that was their god.

- as Dr. Rogers stated, you can almost hear the flies in the name, Beelzebub.

- Now notice what the Pharisees believed about this Beelzebub – they call him the “prince of devils.” – An allusion to Satan himself.

“Beelzebub” would be the most repulsive, and disgusting name of satan the Pharisees could use.

*Note – They would go to any lengths to defame the name of Jesus Christ in the ears of those who might hear the gospel and believe it.

But now here is the greatest crime of all. They were not doing this in total ignorance. By this time in His ministry, many of the Pharisees knew that Jesus was the Son of God, and Messiah in the flesh; and they did not WANT Him to be.

- They knew He was true; and did all they could to Refuse to admit it; keep others from believing it.

If you will remember in John 3:2; when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he declared to Jesus, “**Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles thou doest, except God be with him.**”

- Now friend the degree of that knowledge may be in question, but Nicodemus tells us that from their meetings behind closed doors; “we” know that are come from God.

There is hardly anything more demonic – than to know the Bible to be true, to know that Jesus is who He says He is, and fight it like a caged animal, just because you don’t WANT it to be true.

Romans 1:18 – “**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who**