

“He Who Is Not with Me Is Against Me”
(Matthew 12:30)

Introduction: A few week ago we were looking at the section of this chapter that deals with Christ’s defense against the charge that He cast out demons by Beelzebul. The reason we were looking at it was that we might establish the biblical fact that the Kingdom of God has already come. Jesus said, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong *man*? And then he will plunder his house” (vv. 25-29). The fact that Christ was casting out demons by the Spirit of God was His evidence that the devil was bound and now powerless to stop the progress of the kingdom of God, which had now come. The first part of the vision of king Nebuchadnezzar regarding the statue of several metals, with the feet of iron mixed with clay, was fulfilled, which states, “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever” (Dan. 2:44). This was not a kingdom which was to be set up in the future, which would destroy a revived Roman empire, as the Dispensationalists teach, but one which was set up at the first coming of Christ, which would put an end to the Roman empire of that day, and itself would eventually fill the earth. “But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (v. 35). And Christ is reigning now over this kingdom. The author to the Hebrews writes, “When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” And again, “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET” (1:3; 10:12-13). When Christ had offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of His people, He ascended into heaven to assume His rightful place as King and Sovereign of the universe, until all His enemies would be subdued under Him. He went forth into heaven to be crowned as King. Again, we read in Daniel 7:13-14, “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” Notice the cloud imagery here. Christ, when He ascended, was received by a cloud (Acts 1:9). And it was on a cloud that He was presented to the Father, in order to received the kingdom and dominion, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. This is why Jesus, on the basis of this kingly authority could say to His disciples, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:18-19).

But now that the kingdom has come, so has the warfare between the two kingdoms which now exist: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. And in this war, Jesus tells us here, there is no place for neutrality, not at

the inception of the kingdom, and not now some two-thousand years later. What this tells us is that

Each of us is in a war, where we are either fighting for Christ or for the devil.

I. First, Christ says, “He who is not with Me, is against Me.”

- A. The kingdom has come, the warfare has begun, you must chose which side you are on.
 - 1. Joshua said to the people of Israel before his death, “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:14-15).
 - a. Even in the typological kingdom, the warfare still existed.
 - b. Ever since the first redeemed man, the kingdom has existed in some form, the redemptive kingdom of God had been intruded into the kingdom of darkness in some sense.
 - 2. But now that the kingdom of God has been introduced in its reality into the world, the battle is even greater.
 - a. A choice still has to be made. It is not possible to remain uncommitted.
 - b. Jesus said, “He who is not with Me, *is against Me*.” That is, those who are not actively promoting Christ’s kingdom, are actually fighting against Him.
 - c. He said in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - d. And even more powerfully, He says in Revelation 3:15-16 to the church of Laodicea, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.”
 - e. Matthew Henry writes, “He that is not hearty *for* Christ, will be reckoned with as really *against* Him: he that is cold in the cause, is looked upon as an enemy. We must be entirely, faithfully, and immovably, on Christ’s side: it is the *right* side, and will at last be the *rising* side” (*Bethany* 2:107).
 - f. Christ must have all of you. He will not allow you to divide your affections between Him and anything else. You must be with Him with the fullness of your heart, or you will be reckoned against Him.
- B. But, as we saw this morning, Christ has not left us alone to fight in the battle. He has called a great host which no man can number. Collectively, they are the body of Christ.
 - 1. But where is this great host? If they are our companions in the battle, it is important for us to know who and where they are.
 - a. As we also saw this morning, this great host is spread throughout many different denominations. There is no denomination of the Christian church which has a monopoly on true saints.

- b. However, every church at her best is a mixture of wheat and tares. Not everyone within her doors is converted.
- c. But yet there are some churches which are purer than others. There are those which have more of the truth than others.
- d. So then how do we make a judgment on whether or not a person making a confession of Christ is one that we can rely on in this warfare?
 - (i) Does he need to be in the same church as we are? No. If the only persons who are true believers are found in our denomination or in one similar to it, then there are not many true Christians, especially when you consider that not all within these churches are converted.
 - (ii) Does he need to believe the same as you? No, not exactly as you do. There are certain essentials that must be believed, and there are other things which, although they are necessary for a Christian's well-being, are not necessary to his being a Christian.
 - (iii) What are the essentials? Certainly, for a person to have a believable profession of faith, he must believe in the true God and the true Christ. He must also have an understanding of his condition outside of Christ and of the true way of salvation.
 - (iv) This means that he must believe in the Triune God; the Christ who is both God and man; the virgin birth of Christ; the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Christ; his own fallen state as a sinner and his absolute need of a Savior; and his need of repentance and faith in the crucified and risen Lord in order to be saved. In order to have this, he must also believe that the Bible is the Word of God, for this information cannot be obtained anywhere else. And he must trust in Christ alone for his salvation and not in his works. "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them'" (Gal. 3:10). This does not mean that he will understand these teachings exhaustively, but he must believe enough of the truth and hold to it with all his heart, if he is converted.
 - (v) An interesting question arises here about Arminians who in their explanation of saving faith, actually turn it into a work. They believe either that man, in his fallen condition, has the ability to exercise saving faith in Christ, or that God grants to each person enough grace to do so. The thing that determines your salvation then is whether or not you will believe in Christ. In other words, faith is the one work that you must do to be saved.
 - (vi) Roman Catholics err in the same direction in believing that God's saving grace is communicated through the sacraments, and all that a person must do to be saved is to partake of the sacraments. Once you receive God's grace, you continue to grow in it by meriting more, or you can lose it all through sin and end up in hell. In the Protestant Arminian camp, many believe the same end in hell is possible if you do not persevere in the faith until you reach glory. In other words, your works not only bring you to Christ, but they also keep you in the grace of Christ.
 - (vii) The Biblical view, however, is that faith is not a work, but a gift which God sovereignly gives. It is the ability to look away from self and to look to Christ

alone for your salvation. And once God has bestowed it upon you, you cannot but trust in Christ and in Him alone to save you.

- (viii) Now even though the Arminian or Roman Catholic turns faith into a work, it is still possible for some of them to be saved. This is only because some people are inconsistent with themselves. If you ask them how they are saved, they may give you an answer that sounds like a works centered salvation. It may even be such. But if in their heart of hearts they are really trusting in Christ and Christ alone to save them, and not in their own works, then they are converted.
 - (ix) I am not saying that all in these denominations are trusting in Christ, any more than all who are in our denomination, who believe in God's sovereignty are. But if they are, then they are saved, even if their ideas of salvation are erroneous. This is what we might call a blessed inconsistency.
- e. And it is along these same lines that we must determine whether or not a whole denomination is on the Lord's side.
- (i) Are they preaching the biblical Gospel? Then they are a true church of God.
 - (ii) Are they in error in any of the fundamentals of the faith? Then they are not a true church.
 - (iii) We must admit, that if a so-called church does not preach the truth about Christ and His salvation, they cannot be a true church. If they get the Gospel wrong, they themselves cannot be saved, much less lead anyone else to salvation.
 - (iv) Such is the case with Roman Catholics, who teach outright that we are saved by our works; or with the Jehovah's Witnesses, who deny the triunity of God, the deity of Christ, and promote a works centered salvation; or with the Mormons, who deny the Trinity and believe in an innumerable host of gods, all of whom were once ordinary men, who also deny the virgin birth of Christ, and who promote a works centered salvation; or with the United Pentecostal Churches, which deny the Trinity, and believe that there is only one person in the godhead, namely, Jesus.
 - (v) We must separate from these communions, for to link hands with them is to link hands with a synagogue of Satan, for he is the father of all soul-damning lies.
 - (vi) Does this mean that there are no Christians in any of these churches? Not necessarily, for as we already have seen, people can be inconsistent with themselves. But it does mean that if they are saved, it is *in spite of that church's teaching and not because of it*.
 - (vii) With regard to the churches which are preaching the true Gospel, with these we may link hands. Jesus, besides what He tells us in Matthew, also said, "He who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40). In the case of those who are not so far off, and who are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, we may count them as brethren and as fellow soldiers in the battle.
 - (viii) But with regard to joining hands with them to work together on a particular matter, the Word of God must always dictate whether or not we ought to be involved in such things, and if the way we are approaching it is the right way. Otherwise, we must decline, and purpose to do it in the way in which we know will honor Christ.
 - (ix) One example is the way the churches of Modesto are linking hands to seek God

to bring revival to this city. The thing that they want is good. But the way they are going about it is bad. It is not according to the words of King Jesus, and it is man-centered.

- (x) These differences which exist among us are the reasons why there are differing denominations today, as we saw this morning. And as long as these differences exist, there must still be separate communions of Christians in the world.
- (xi) But this doesn't mean that we shouldn't count them as brethren, if they meet the qualifications already given. The apostle John apparently thought that everyone who was faithful in his day should be in the same group with himself. And so he approached Jesus and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not hinder *him*; for he who is not against you is for you'" (Luke 9:49-50).

II. But Jesus also makes a second statement in our text this evening, much like the first. In this warfare against the devil and his kingdom, Jesus says, "He who does not gather with Me scatters."

- A. Christ, we mustn't forget, came to gather together His children (John 11:52).
 - 1. As we saw last week, Christ came to gather those whom the Father had given to Him as the reward for His humiliation and sufferings. That was His mission: to seek and to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10).
 - 2. And where are these children being gathered from? Obviously, from the kingdom of darkness.
 - a. Christ had bound the strong man to plunder his house.
 - b. But what was it that He was taking away from him? It was those for whom He was going to lay down His life.
- B. But Christ also expects us to gather with Him.
 - 1. Christ's ministry only lasted about three years. In that amount of time, he couldn't possibly have gathered together all that the Father had given Him. For one thing, the vast majority of them were not even born yet.
 - 2. Therefore, Christ issued the Great Commission, giving to His disciples of all ages the charge of going into the world and gathering together His children.
 - 3. That Commission is given to us as His disciples, and Christ says to us this evening that if we do not gather with Him, we scatter.
 - a. Now notice please what Christ does not say here. He does not say if we fight against Him, we scatter. But if we do not gather with Him, we scatter.
 - b. In other words, it is not enough that we keep from hindering the gathering; we must also be actively involved in the gathering. Otherwise, we are seen by Christ to actually be scattering.
 - c. Perhaps this is because a Christian who says that he believes in the truth of Scripture, who does nothing to try and reach the lost, only gives the impression to the world that these things are really not that important, and therefore gives the world another reason to count the kingdom as unimportant.
 - d. What is there that makes you cool off in your zeal for the Lord more than seeing

professing Christians with no desire to serve Christ?

- e. It certainly must have the same effect on unbelievers, and it must also give them a reason to cool off as well.
- f. Therefore, if we are not to scatter, we must gather. We must pray that God will use us and others in this great warfare. We must seek the opportunities which seem to be increasingly precious and few. We must buy them up, redeem them for the honor of Christ and for the salvation of the lost. We must die to ourselves and our own comforts that we might live for this holy purpose.
- g. The day of judgment will reveal how successful we have been. But for right now, no matter how we might think things are progressing, we must strive to attain the goal that Christ has called us to. We must seek by all righteous means possible to bring His lost sheep home. It is a high honor which Christ has conferred upon us. It is one that He has equipped us for by His Spirit to accomplish. But most importantly, it is one that He expects from us. Let us be diligent then in bringing His work to its completion. Amen.