

A DIVIDED KINGDOM CANNOT STAND

(Matt. 12:24-25)

After quietly withdrawing from the hostile Pharisees who wanted to destroy Him, Jesus then healed all who came to Him (Mt. 12:15). Furthermore, He healed an especially difficult case – that is, a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. The people were amazed and questioningly asked, “This could not be the Son of David, could it?” (Mt. 12:22-23).

Into this context stepped the Pharisees with a depraved answer that resulted in Christ giving a reasoned and very strong response.

Matthew 12:24 (NKJV)

24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

When the Pharisees heard about Jesus healing this outstanding case of the demonized blind and mute man, their explanation was that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.

They did not deny the miraculous deliverance and healing of the man; they simply came up with a diabolical explanation. There was no denying the reality of the miracle – the only issue was: how did Jesus do it?

The Pharisees claimed that Jesus did it by the power of Satan, who is the ruler of the demons. Theologically, you have one of two choices in terms of supernatural activity. Either it is of God, or it is of Satan. These religious leaders were theologians, and they knew that, but out of hatred for Jesus they ascribed to Him power to cast out demons to the power of Satan.

The title “Beelzebub” (or in older manuscripts “Beelzebul”) is slightly altered in form from “**Baal-Zebub**,” which was a deity of the Philistines and literally means “**lord of the flies**” (cf. 2 Kg. 1:2-3, 6, 16).

The slightly altered form seems to have been done contemptuously because “**Beelzebub**” literally means “**lord of dung**”. So whether “**lord of the flies**” or “**lord of dung**,” it is clear that the Jews used this as a pejorative term in reference to Satan.

By the way, not ALL the Pharisees reasoned in this way. One notable exception was Nicodemus, who came to visit Jesus by way of night.

John 3:2 (NKJV)

2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, **we know that You are a teacher come from God**; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Now that is logical reasoning – logical spiritual reasoning. Everything about the NATURE of Christ’s miracles was an indicator that this power was from God. For one thing, Jesus went about constantly “doing good,” which is totally out of character for Satan (cf. Acts 10:38).

Matthew 12:25 (NKJV)

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Evidently these Pharisees were accusing Jesus of functioning by the power of Satan behind the scenes but in His presence were too yellow to say it in front of Him. However, he knew their thoughts, which is the domain of God. The thoughts of a person relate to the heart and God alone perfectly knows the hearts of people.

Jeremiah 17:9–10 (NKJV)

9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?

10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

Only God ultimately knows the thoughts of people (cf. 1 Cor. 2:11). This once again becomes evidence that Jesus was not merely human – but rather the God-man (cf. Jn. 2:24-25).

And knowing their thoughts Jesus proceeds to show how illogical and irrational is the premise that he was casting out demons by the power of the devil.

Whatever the realm, whether it be kingdom, city, or house – whatever realm is divided against itself cannot stand. This is one of Satan’s oldest and most successful strategies. He wants to get people all divided up and fighting over whatever which enables him to bring down the home, the city, or the kingdom. Wherever it takes place – internal division wreaks havoc!

Division defines our land these days. Whether it be Race issues, Politics, or Morals, we are a very divided society. And from my perspective what threatens the reality of these UNITED STATES more than any other thing is the constant attack on and the erosion of the Judeo-Christian ethic that our country was founded upon.

“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” - **John Adams**

The breakdown of the family, the full blown secularization of the educational system, the corruption of the courts, and the undoing of societal mores all fundamentally relate to the continuing breakdown of the core values related to a Judeo-Christian ethic. And when that gets so far, the entire country is in jeopardy. And today the UNITED STATES as we have long known it is in jeopardy because of this very thing.

The Bible says the last days of the Church Age will be perilous times and the reason for the peril is that they will be days steeped in apostasy as seen in 2 Timothy 3-4. Apostasy denotes a departure from the faith.

I don't know that I would ever say we were a “Christian nation” per se, but we were a nation based on basic Judeo-Christian ethics – which is saying a lot. That is disappearing now, and the result is increasing division and disorder. We now live in a post-Christian era.

But all is not lost! We need to keep the proper focus which is that the world as a system has NEVER been salvageable. What Christ is doing is taking out of the world a people for Himself. He is not going to save the world – He is taking people out of the world – and those people taken out of the world's system are called the Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 15:14). This is what it's all about for us as God's people. Christ is building His Church and He has promised, “***I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.***” (Mt. 16:18).

No matter how divided and chaotic society becomes (and surely the worst of last days perilous times is yet to come), but no matter what, Christ is still building His Church. Although so much of the Church is apostatizing there is still a faithful remnant – there is still a representative TRUE Church.

And what unites us as a true and faithful Church is that we are UNITED in the TRUTH of Jesus Christ. As Christians when we say, “united we stand” we are talking about the gospel truth of Christ. This is our distinctive. All the other things the world fights about and will go down fightin, fussin, and feudin over are of little consequence. What ultimately matters to us is GOSPEL TRUTH and living in light of eternity. This is our hill to die on!