**A House Divided Against Itself Will Not Stand – The Logical Failure of Error**

*Matthew 12:22-30*

**Introduction**

1. We are to be guarded against error by maturing in Christ (**Ephesians 4:14**).
2. The tools God has given us to grow with, and fight with, always prevail against error (**2 Corinthians 10:3-6** – i.e. unable to overcome the truth, the word of God).
3. Truth is the most powerful weapon we wield, and we need to have faith in God’s word as we use it to combat the onslaught of error.
4. No matter the ploys of Satan in promoting error, it will utterly fail against the truth, because as error is in contradiction to the truth it fails in its logic concerning spiritual matters.
5. A powerful example of the failing tactics of Satan in promoting false views is seen in Jesus’ encounter with the Pharisees after casting out a demon – **Matthew 12:22-30**
6. Jesus Refutes the Accusation of Casting Out Demons by Beelzebub
7. The Miracle, and the Crowd’s Initial Thought **(vv. 22-23)**
   1. Irrefutable miracle – notable to the crowd, and not questioned in the slightest.
   2. Logical reasoning – is this the Messiah?
8. The Pharisees’ Accusation Raised Against Jesus to Dissuade the Crowd **(v. 24)**
   1. The Pharisees were enemies of Jesus now presented with a dilemma:
      1. Miracle undoubtedly occurred.
      2. The crowd is legitimately considering the idea that this may be the Messiah.
      3. They aren’t going to accept the evidence of the miracle.
   2. Their two choices according to J.W. McGarvey:
      1. “There are only two possible methods of evading the logical force of a miracle: one is to deny the reality of the miracle; and the other, to refer the effect to some other cause than the power of God. The Pharisees, being unable to deny the reality of the miracle, and knowing that demons are under the command of Satan, resorted to their only alternative by affirming that the power was satanic…It derived great plausibility from the consideration, that as there were at least two powers by which demons might be cast out, and as both were invisible, it might appear impossible to decide whether it was the power of God or the power of Satan.” (McGarvey, Matthew, pg. 107)
      2. However, there was something unseen which the Pharisees did not think about which was on Jesus’ side – the logic of truth.
         1. “An explanation by which they thought they had both refuted the argument drawn from his miracle, and turned the force of the miracle against him, has only furnished him with an occasion to show the absurdity of their explanation and their logical inconsistency in propounding it; to prove, more clearly than ever, that he acted by divine authority; and to demonstrate the fact that he was making successful warfare against the dominion of Satan.” (McGarvey, Matthew, pg. 109)
9. Jesus’ Fourfold Response to Dismantle Their Logic **(vv. 25-29)**
   1. Divided kingdoms/houses fail to stand, and according to the Pharisees Satan is working against himself **(vv. 25-26).**
      1. Accusation meant Jesus is working with Satan.
      2. But Jesus casting out a demon is counterproductive to Satan’s efforts.
      3. How will this further Satan’s efforts? They will fail.
   2. If your accusation is true, it must be possible for your own as well **(v. 27).**
      1. If you are supposing a possibility that I am acting with the power of Satan to cast out demons, you must accept the possibility that your own exorcists are using the same power.
      2. How would you prove otherwise?
   3. The only alternative is that I act by the Spirit, and what I preach to you is true **(v. 28).**
      1. Since neither of the above is true, it must be that the power comes from God.
      2. Such confirms my authority, and shows the arrival of the kingdom, and my place in it.
   4. The casting out of the demon proves that I have subdued Satan and am demolishing his kingdom **(v. 29).**
      1. If I undue what Satan has done, it only proves my power over him, and furthermore my efforts against him.
      2. I’m not working with him, but against him.
10. Jesus’ Following Ultimatum **(v. 30)**
    1. There are only two ways anyone can react to the miracles performed by Jesus.
       1. Accept that Jesus is who He claims to be and follow Him – work with Him in faithfulness.
       2. Refuse Jesus in spite of the evidence and choose the only alternative – siding yourself with Satan.
11. The Logical Failure of Error
12. There is a general, obvious, yet profound and powerful lesson we can learn from Jesus’ encounter with the Pharisees. Truth is truth no matter who stands against it as challenger, and what their level of cunning may be. The rules of logic cannot be suspended, and error fails every time.
    1. This is encouraging for fulfilling our duties to defend the truth – **Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15**
    2. This helps with our own convictions and strength of faith. It is possible to know the truth, and we can be confident in it.
13. The Logic of Faith and its Standard
    1. Faith is a process of reason – **Acts 26:24-25; Hebrews 11:1, 3**
       1. I.e. it is not an alternative to rational thought which allows anything to go.
    2. Faith is based on a standard – **Romans 10:17**
       1. The word of God is a logical standard.
       2. Those who are honest are persuaded by the facts and believe.
    3. With that being said, faith requires a logical approach to God’s word:
       1. The standard is infallibly settled – **Psalm 119:89, 160**
          1. Settled – cannot be changed.
          2. Entirety – necessitates harmony – non-contradictory.
       2. The standard must be handled correctly – **2 Timothy 2:15** – ***“rightly dividing”*** (NKJV); ***“accurately handling”*** (NASB).
          1. Implies inaccurate handling **– 2 Peter 3:16**
       3. Such takes effort by revisiting the standard to determine the validity of any doctrine **– Acts 17:11**
       4. Honest effort in truth seeking will expose error as being inconsistent with scripture – **1 John 4:1-3**
          1. When any inconsistency is found which cannot be logically reconciled to the text it is error.
          2. **Romans 3:4** – let God be true.
14. Applications
    1. Concerning Salvation and Baptism
       1. “We are saved by faith only, not baptism?”
          1. Only – and no one or nothing more besides; solely or exclusively (New Oxford American Dictionary)
          2. Grace? – **Ephesians 2:8** (“We are saved by grace alone through faith alone?”)
          3. Jesus’ Blood? – **Ephesians 1:7**
          4. Longsuffering of the Lord? – **2 Peter 3:15**
          5. Repentance? – **2 Corinthians 7:10**
          6. Confession? – **Romans 10:9**
          7. **NOTE: something that proves too much (we aren’t saved by all these things) proves nothing at all.**
          8. Baptism? – **1 Peter 3:21**
             1. Calling on the name of the Lord? – **Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13**
             2. Baptism – calling on the name of the Lord? – **Acts 22:16**
       2. “Baptism is the outward sign of an inward grace?”
          1. I.e. baptism is a way to show what has already been done at the point of faith – salvation of the soul.
          2. Believe, saved, baptized – denominationalism.
          3. Word of God – **Mark 16:16** – believed, baptized, saved.
          4. Does baptism show that one’s sins have been forgiven, or are one’s sins forgiven at the point of baptism?
             1. **Acts 2:38** – “for the remission of sins”
             2. “for” – because of? – **Matthew 26:28** – because of, or in order to [receive]?
             3. **Romans 6:3-6** – accessed death of Jesus in baptism, new life after baptism, man of sin “done away with” in baptism.
       3. “To say ‘baptism saves’ is to suggest we earn our salvation?”
          1. Did Israel earn their salvation from the Egyptians? – **Hebrews 11:29; Psalm 78:13; 136:11-15**
          2. Did Israel earn their victory over Jericho? – **Hebrews 11:30; Joshua 6:2** (march around city once a day for 7 days and 7 times on the last day)
          3. Did Naaman cure his leprosy by his merit? – **2 Kings 5:10, 14** (after he refused, suggesting other rivers)
          4. Did the blind man cure himself by his merit? – **John 9:7, 11** (gave Jesus credit)
          5. Do we earn our salvation by our own merit in baptism? – **Colossians 2:12** (faith in the working of God – HE raises us)
    2. Concerning Premillennialism
       1. Premillennialism is the belief that we live in the period before the kingdom of God where Christ reins – the literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth. He will come back to earth, set up His kingdom, and reign 1,000 years.
       2. Key components to premillennialism that fail logically in the scope of scripture (not an exhaustive list of premillennialism doctrine):
          1. The kingdom of prophecy is to be established on earth, but has not yet been established.
             1. If the kingdom is physical:

Was Jesus lying? – **Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36**

Was Jesus emphasizing the wrong things? – **Matthew 6:10-21**

How will a kingdom be established on earth when He comes again if the earth is to be destroyed? – **2 Peter 3:10**

* + - * 1. If the kingdom hasn’t been established:

How is Christ sitting on a throne? – **Acts 2:30-36**

**(v. 30)** – promise to seat Christ on throne (by HS)

**(v. 33)** – promise received by being seated on throne.

Is Christ not yet High Priest? – **Acts 2:34-35; Psalm 110; Zechariah 6:12-13**

Christ is both High Priest and King.

He is made High Priest within the same fulfillment of being made King.

Not King = not high priest.

No offering presented for sin? – **Hebrews 9:24-26**

Are these people alive today? – **Mark 9:1**

What kingdom were these brethren a part of? – **Colossians 1:13**

* + - 1. Jesus came to earth to establish His kingdom on earth but His will was thwarted by the Jews who rejected Him.
         1. God says He is omnipotent :

**Genesis 17:1** – Called Himself “Almighty” – *el Shaddai* – “most powerful, Almighty” (Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon)

To give confidence to His following promise.

**(vv. 2-8)** – make of him a great nation.

**(v. 1)** – Abram is 99.

* + - * 1. Did Job have the wrong impression? – **Job 42:2**
        2. Was **Psalm 2** a failed prophecy?

The prophecy was blocked from being fulfilled if Jesus came to establish a kingdom but couldn’t.

What about God’s boast of knowing future events? – **cf. Isaiah 41:21-24** (God showing impotence of idols)

Does that match the content of the Psalm?

If the Psalm is true, then Jesus’ mission was accomplished. (**cf. Acts 4:25-28**)

If there is no physical kingdom, it must be spiritual.

* + - * 1. If God failed the first time, what makes us think He will succeed the second time?
      1. Jesus established the church to fill the gap in God’s plan.
         1. Can God truly be glorified by an afterthought? – **Ephesians 3:20-21**

How can an institution born from God’s failure bring Him glory?

* + - * 1. Rather, Jesus’ intention was to build a spiritual kingdom – the church – **Matthew 16:17-19**

**Conclusion**

1. All error, by definition, is contradictory to the truth.
2. However, though such thought goes without saying and is fundamental, it is truly empowering for those who have accepted the truth and seek to grow in it.
3. Error stands no chance against the truth, and those who are of it – no more than the accusation levied by the Pharisees against Jesus.
4. The truth will always prevail against error, because error inherently fails the test of logic, and honest hearts will notice. (**cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5**)