

The Kingdom of Satan Versus the Kingdom of God

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If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Luke 11, where we are continuing on. We've made it through the first half of the chapter, [which], as we have learned, is about prayer, [specifically] about prayer that is focused around the kingdom of God. We are to pray that God's name would be hallowed [see Luke 11:2], that Christ's kingdom would come [see 11:2], [and] that our daily needs would be met so we could live for the glory of God and hallow His name and participate in that kingdom coming [see 11:3]. That is what we learned in that first half [of Luke 11]—all of those things about prayer. Now [as] we get to [Luke 11]:14 and following, there is a contrast between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God.

Satan surely is the master deceiver. I think this is apparent in that many today who call themselves Christians oftentimes never even think about the angelic conflict that is raging around them. If you were to come up to the average Christian, and say, "Are there demons? Is Satan real? Are there holy angels?" they would say "yes," but they [consider them to be] almost mythical, [as though they are] biblical fiction that we read about in the pages of Scripture. [People are] pretty curious [about angels and demons], but a lot of people in their day-to-day lives never even think about them. We don't think, "There's a war raging and I'm involved in this war."

One of the great blessings of the gospels is that [certain portions] describe for us in great detail what is happening in the spiritual realm. The reason that they do [so] is [that] God wants us to know what's true, what's real. Satan's lies and deceptions are exposed in the gospels so that we can see what's happening in this parallel universe, this spiritual realm that runs simultaneously with our physical realm.

I think we probably all know about two-way mirrors. There's a certain kind of glass that you can put a coating on, and when you stand on one side, it looks like a mirror, [but] it's a two-way mirror because if you go on the other side, you can see through it to what's happening on the reflective side. These [mirrors are often used] for security purposes. If you go to a store, you [may] see these big mirrors up on the ceiling. You [might] think, "Well, that's so I can see how this [looks]." No, there are people up there looking at you. [Also], in interrogation rooms and things like that they put those up so that they can observe suspects while they're being questioned.

That's kind of how it is [with the physical realm and the spiritual realm]. We live on the mirror side of the spiritual realm. When we look around [on our side of the mirror], we see other people, other things—the things of this world, the things that are physical. But demons and holy angels live on the other side of [the] mirror. [Not only] can [they] see everything on their side, they can see everything on our side [as well]. Unlike [with] the [two-way] mirror, [however, angels and demons] move and operate among us. We can't see them because they're in the spiritual realm and we are in the physical realm. But just because we can't see into the spiritual realm like Elijah's servant did that one day [when he] saw all the chariots of fire [see 2 Kings 6:17], that doesn't mean [the spiritual] realm doesn't exist. Most of us probably will never go to the South Pole, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It's there whether you see it or not.

God reveals these things [about the spiritual realm] in His Word so that, [when we] understand that there is this huge spiritual conflict going on, it will change our lives and cause us to live more determined to see Him glorified, [and] so that we don't waste our lives being sidetracked and deceived

into believing lies about why we are here and what is really going on. By faith, by looking into the pages of God's Word, we can see that every day we have holy angels ministering to us, and every day [we have] demons opposing us.

Let's say [that] just for one day (we probably couldn't handle this; it would probably scare us into unconsciousness) God said, "Tomorrow morning when you wake up, there [are] going to be some changes. I am going to allow you to see all the holy angels and demons operating all day long, for one day, until you go to bed." Think about that. What happens is [that] you wake up in the morning, and when you wake up, there's this guy, [or] what appears to be a man, [in your room]. A lot of times we have these ideas that all angels have wings, but really the Bible says cherubim and seraphim [have them], but most of the angels who appear in the Bible look like what? They look like men. I don't know what they look like. I know they have hair because James says [that] the demons believe [in God and] their hair stands on end, [and they shudder] when they think about God [see James 2:19]. That's all I know.

Anyway, [t]here [are] these creatures, they used to be holy angels, so they probably don't [have] horns, a tail, and red [skin, or carry] a pitchfork. They probably look very similar to us, but they're spiritual beings. There they are, right when you wake up, saying, "You don't need to read your Bible today. You don't need to pray. You're tired. Just sleep in a little bit more. Yeah, lay your head back down on your pillow. Sleep in a little bit more." You [think], "I'm getting up and I'm reading my Bible." As you get ready to pick up your Bible, all of a sudden a couple more [demons] appear, and say, "Oh, I wouldn't do that. You [have] to go get the oil in your car changed. You know what? You better check your e-mail. Why don't you go out and get the paper? Why don't you just look at the front page and then you can read your Bible and pray?" The whole time, you're [thinking], "No, I'm going to read my Bible now. I'm praying *now*."

As you [drive] to work, you see these beings inside of cars, talking to people, following people along, speaking into their ear[s], or however

they tempt us—the Bible doesn't say. They're dealing with people, and as you approach your work, you walk by this little café and [t]here's five of them clustered around this one guy who's being talked to by another guy. As you approach, you see this one guy sharing the gospel with the other guy, and these five [demons] are [saying], "Oh, don't believe that. That is ridiculous. People don't rise from the dead." They're arguing to try and keep that [person]. All day long you witness that.

Do you think that would change your life? It [had] better. [Do] you know what? The reason these things [about angels and demons] appear in the Word of God is so it will change your life, and it [had] better [do so]. God lets us see these things in the pages of Scripture so that we know [they're] true, so that we know [they're] happening, [and] so we don't fritter away our [lives] on things that have no eternal purpose. I think every time you were tempted if you had that special day of vision you would think, "OK, how many [demons] are there [around me]?" I think you'd be throwing a lot of ink bottles against the wall, like Martin Luther [did].

In our text this morning, [Luke] describes a very interesting event. He has just talked about prayer [as] a kingdom-focused thing, and now he's going to contrast the kingdom of God with the kingdom of Satan. He's going to let us into an event that happened in Jesus' life. We'll only cover half the text, but we're going to look at [Luke 11:]14–20, so follow along as I read.

And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by

Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

From Luke 11:14–20 I want to point out to you four truths about the kingdom of God in relation to the kingdom of Satan so you can understand what’s real, so you can understand what’s happening, [and] so you can make sense of the world we live in, especially [of] the responses that people have when you share the gospel with them. Sometimes you share the gospel with people, and you just look at them, [thinking], “Could you be that dense? What’s wrong with you?” Then you think, “Well, that’s how *I* used to be.” Why is that? Well, we’re going to find out.

The first [truth] we want to see in our text is: Your Savior is Lord over demons. Remember, Jesus has just finished talking about prayer, and [Luke 11:]14 [says]: “He was casting out a demon.” We’ve seen this before. I’m not going to go into this—we spent [six] Sundays on demons and angels. You can go back and listen to them on the Website.¹ But, just to remind you what demon possession is: Demon possession is when one or more demons enter into an unbeliever and take total control of that unbeliever from within. Because demons enter into people when they possess them, that’s why the texts that talk about them being exorcised, or cast out, always talk about “and the demon came out of” or “the demon entered into” in the case of being possessed.

Here [in Luke 11:14], it just says, “And He,” that is, Jesus, “was casting out a demon.” Having authority to cast out demons is a unique thing. A

¹Available at:

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060212>

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060219>

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060326>

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060402>

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060423>

<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2006/20060507>

lot of people today want to say, “I have authority to cast out demons.” No, you don’t. Not in the way you probably think. When you look through all the letters to the churches in the New Testament, do you know how much instruction there is on casting out demons? Zero. There is not even a mention made of demon possession in any of the letters to the churches. Why is that? We’ve talked about this before in great detail, but this is the basic reason: When someone is an unbeliever, when someone is held captive by Satan to do his will [see 2 Timothy 2:26], God has given the Church something which is the power of God—and we know that is the gospel bomb, the power of God for all who believe [see Romans 3:22]—and so, if you want to go toe-to-toe with the kingdom of darkness, you do it with the power of God. That power is able to then transfer someone from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, to rescue [him] from Satan’s domain so that [he is] adopted and become[s a] born-again [child] of God.

We have looked at that. Jesus, in His ministry, gave authority to His apostles and to the seventy [see Luke 10:1–17] for a period of time, for a specific purpose. We talked about this when we talked about sign gifts, [noting] that the reason sign gifts are sign gifts is because they’re signs—they point to something. In this case, Jesus is doing miracles as He’s going around so that the miracles will point to Him as the Messiah, as the King, as the long-awaited son of David. That’s the purpose of the sign.

Look at the middle of [Luke 11:]14: “[the demon] was mute,” or literally, “the demon caused the man who was possessed to be mute.” Look at the middle of verse 14 again: “When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke.” We’ve seen this before. A lot of times when demons entered into somebody, they caused what appeared to be medical issues. Somebody had seizures or [exhibited] destructive behavior. In this case, the man was unable to speak. Those [maladies or behaviors] were not really medical issues, they were actually demonic issues caused by the demon. So once the demon is cast out, the person is healed. Notice that [the text says that the demon] had gone out, which means [it] was within [the man].

Just imagine you're there at this time. Let's say you grew up in, I don't know, Sunnyvale, Israel, or whatever, some little Podunk town in Israel that's nothing more than a wide spot in the road with a few little village houses on either side, a little farmland, and a blacksmith—your basic little stuff. In your village is the town mute man. Everybody knows the guy. The only thing he does is say, "Mmmr, mmmmr." He's mute; he can't speak. He's never been able to speak. He's kind of scary, too. He's hunched, and dirty, [with] matted hair maybe, and tattered clothes. You avoid him because he gets into a rage and he's almost animal-like. Everybody has learned to navigate around him. People leave him things to eat, and he lives in bushes in who knows where. He's just the mute man of town.

So, here you are in your little town, and here comes Jesus with His disciples. We've learned [that] at this time Jesus has [a] large entourage. A lot of times when Jesus talks about His disciples, [He's] not just talking about His Twelve. Luke makes it clear that [Jesus] had a large number of both men and women who were His disciples, [people who were] believing in Him, following Him, ministering to Him, [to] the disciples, and to other people [to whom] Jesus ministered. He has this huge ministry task force. Jesus is rolling into town, He [has] His Twelve with Him, [and] behind that [there is] this large group of disciples, [and] behind that [there is] a crowd of maybe 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, 10,000 people. They're following Him around en masse. He was very fun to watch. He did a lot of miracles, a lot of exciting things, so people would just follow Him.

As [Jesus] is walking into town, all the people know that He's coming because it's hard to miss. Messengers are saying, "Hey, everybody, this Jesus man, the miracle worker is coming." So everybody is crowding around to see what's going to happen. As Jesus enters into this town, let's say this mute guy comes out. Jesus fixes His gaze upon the guy, the guy looks Jesus in the face, all of a sudden their eyes meet, and there's a look of terror on the mute man['s face]. Jesus says, "Come out of him." [Then] the guy falls on his knees and starts praising God. What would you do if you were there? That would be a "wow."

Look at the end of [Luke 11:]14: “And the crowds were amazed.” That’s [how you would feel], too. Wow! It was incredible. There was no ritual, holy water, no huge, long prayers. Jesus doesn’t call upon, “Oh, Father in heaven, Lord and creator of heaven and earth. . .” He [just] says, “Come out of him,” [and the man is] healed. The people were amazed. What is interesting is [that] this sign, then, in huge, bold letters, said, “This is the Messiah! This man wields the power of God!” That’s why Jesus did this miracle, [as] He did many other miracles. [The people] knew that no man had power over demons—that only God could command a demon. Therefore, the [conclusion] is obvious: Jesus wielded the power of God. Bingo. That’s the whole point. Don’t just be impressed by what happened, be impressed by what you learned from what happened.

The lesson to learn here is that Jesus is Lord, even over Satan and demons. Why is that important to you? Well, it’s important to you, especially as a believer, to realize that even though all of these fallen angels are all about us, deceiving us, and working against us and God, you don’t have to worry because “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” [see 1 John 4:4]. The Scriptures say [that] the evil one will not touch you [see 1 John 5:18]. The Scriptures say that you are overwhelmingly a conqueror through Him who loved you [see Romans 8:37], that you have everything you need for life and godliness [see 2 Peter 1:3], [and] that if you stand firm in your faith, Satan will flee [see James 4:7]. We have all these promises, all these resources from God, so you don’t need to worry about that. So, It’s good to know that Jesus is Lord, even over demons.

[The second truth] we learn from the text [in Luke 11:14–20] is that sin-loving hearts refuse to acknowledge the King. Look at [Luke 11:]15: “But some of them said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.’” What is all of this about? Well, by this time in Jesus’ ministry, as we’ve already learned, Jesus has gotten a lot of enemies, especially among the religious leaders. Jesus didn’t take Dale Carnegie’s class on how to win friends and influence people. When it came to the religious leaders, He just said, “Well, you’re just a hypocrite. You’re a blind guide of the blind [see

Matthew 15:14]. You're poor, wretched, blind, and naked [see Revelation 3:17]. You nullify the Word of God for your traditions [see Mark 7:9, 13], you devour widows' houses [see Matthew 12:40, 23:14; Luke 20:47]." He said a lot of really painful things. And [as a result], at this time they hate Him.

What's interesting is that Jesus has done, at this point in His ministry, so many miracles around Israel that it is irrefutable that [He] is doing miracles. You remember what happened when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and he said, "We know that You are from God because no man could do the miracles that You do unless" what? "God is with Him" [see John 3:2]. They were driven, they were compelled, to come to that conclusion. But there were some who couldn't handle that conclusion, who could not stomach that conclusion. Why? [It is] because Jesus was going around saying, "You leaders are hypocrites [see Matthew 15:7, 22:18, 23:15, etc.]. You leaders are children of Satan [see John 8:44]. You leaders aren't righteous. You leaders need [to be] saved. I am the Messiah."

They could not stomach that. While they could see that miracles were taking place, they could not stomach the teaching of Jesus. They were looking at their lives, and [saying], "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. *We* have the truth. We're the ones who are doing what's right. Our doctrine is the right doctrine. So, [if] Jesus is attacking us, Jesus is teaching different[ly] than [we are], Jesus isn't supporting us, then Jesus must be the bad guy. But the question is, how is He doing the miracles?" Somebody, probably with a demonic-inspired thought, [said], "Hey, He must be doing it by the power of Satan. Satan can command demons." Oh, brilliant deduction. Now these religious leaders have come to the conclusion that Jesus is doing miracles by the power of Satan, so they're following Him all around the country, kind of as a religious Gestapo to try and put doubt on Jesus, to make people not trust Jesus. They're really working for Satan, [but] they think they're working for God. Isn't that twisted? That is so twisted. They are so deluded, and so blind, just like Jesus said. So they follow Jesus around, and every time Jesus does a miracle, they're there to oppose Him. We see it all the way

through the gospels, don't we? [They were] opposing Him, planting doubt in the minds of the people so they won't trust Him, so they won't follow Him, so they won't believe in Him. Satan has those same kinds of people today.

The [religious leaders in our text] are basically traveling rock-throwers, and when Jesus goes to a town, they're there, and [then a] man steps forward out of the crowd, and says, with scoffing disdain, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the leader of the demons" [see Luke 11:15]. Now, Beelzebel is interesting. Baal is the Caananite Hebrew deity. Beelzebul seems to have a suffix added on to it [that] is either "flies" or "dung heap." So, they're really saying [that] Jesus does [the miracle] by the lord of the dung heap. It's a serious accusation. It is what is called the "unpardonable sin." When you were around during Jesus' time, and Jesus [did] a miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit, and you attribute[d] that miracle to Satan, Jesus said, "It's over for you. You can sin against Me, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Your eternal damnation is settled by that belief" [see Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10]. It's a major, major thing.

They don't want to acknowledge Jesus because in doing so they would have to condemn themselves. If Jesus is Lord, they know they aren't living for Him, they know they aren't aligned with Him, they know they're trying to attack Him and discredit Him, so they just can't stomach it. It's just like the people you witness to, you know? You go out to lunch with somebody, and you start talking about the Lord, and what happens? [The person responds], "Oh, well, I could never. . . . Christians are just hypocrites. You know, I've been to church before. You don't know this. . . and I believe that, and what about the natives in Africa? There are so many translations and transliterations." I mean, come on. You know. You've seen it. They're just arguing against the cause of Jesus as Lord. They just can't handle it.

Look at [Luke 11:]16. Not only were they accusing Him of doing things by the power of Satan, there was another group there: "Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven." The word "test" here could be translated "tempted," [and] it actually works both ways. They are either

testing Him, saying, “Give us something bigger and better, some other sign from heaven,” as if the one wasn’t good enough, or they are tempting Him in that they were trying to get Jesus to do miracles for the wrong reason—to entertain people, to amuse people, to kind of just be a show for them. The whole purpose of the miracles is so they would look at Him, and say, “Well, who is this guy?” Instead, they’re just looking for more miracles. This is nothing more than changing the subject. [They are basically saying], “Don’t bother me with the implications of the miracle, about what it tells us about Jesus and who He is and what He’s doing. Give us something bigger and better.”

Have you ever had that happen when you’re sharing the gospel with somebody? You’re sharing the gospel with him, you’re starting to tell him about Jesus, and all of a sudden he’s talking about his car [or] about some project at work. It’s like he doesn’t even hear you. He runs away. He wants to change the subject, “Well, yeah, mmm hmmm, that’s fine. Um. . . .” He wants to talk about something else. That’s what [the people in Luke 11:15–16] are doing—they’re playing mental dodge ball. Jesus has just done this incredible miracle, He has displayed the power of God in front of them, and now somebody has stood up, and said [that] He’s doing it by Satan, [and] this other one [stands] up, and [says], “Let’s see something bigger and better.” What about the sign? What is it pointing to? What does it tell us? They don’t want to talk about that, so they pretend that really they don’t hear Jesus, they don’t really care about the implications of what He’s doing, they just want something bigger and better. This is to fall in love with the sign rather than [that to which] the sign points. I can just see you going down to Disneyland, and everybody is camping by the Disneyland sign. “Oh, it’s great here by the sign.” No, it’s great in the park. The park is where all the fun is—you don’t camp at the sign.

Notice [that] the second group, [in Luke 11:16], acknowledges the sign. They do acknowledge the sign, they just don’t want to face the reality of it, [which is] that Jesus is Lord, that He is the Christ, that He is the Son of God, that He is doing miracles by the power of God. Jesus, at this time, was

presenting Himself as the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of Israel, and He did it through miracles. Now, the question [you] need to ask [y]ourselves [is]: Are you going to accuse Jesus of being a worker of Satan? Are you going to try and play mental dodge ball with Jesus? When you read these things in the Scriptures, when you hear about them in the Word of God, are you going to say, “Wow, Jesus is Lord,” and submit to Jesus because He is Lord, or just kind of relegate the Scriptures to myth or play mental dodge ball?

[The people in Luke 11] have attributed to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit, they have committed the unpardonable sin, and now Jesus is concerned. He’s concerned because [He] knows that because of that doubt, that lie that has been planted in the minds of the people, a lot of people are going to start wondering, “I wonder if Jesus [really] is of Satan.” Jesus knows that as they go there and believe that, they [will] have committed the unpardonable sin and they will be damned for eternity. So Jesus now goes in to refute their argument, and He does it in two stages.

This brings us to our third [truth]: Your enemy is not at war with himself. Look at [Luke 11:]17. It says, “But He,” Jesus, “knew their thoughts.” Stop there. If you’re married, and you’ve been married for a long time, you get to know your spouse pretty well. You can think, “My wife is probably thinking this,” but you don’t know her thoughts. You may be pretty good at guessing her thoughts, but you don’t *know* them. But God [does] know our thoughts. God knows everything we think. That’s kind of scary, isn’t it? That is scary. Luke wants us to come to the obvious conclusion [that since] Jesus can read people’s minds, therefore Jesus is God. He is Lord. [Jesus was] not only able to command demons, but [He] knew what [the people] were thinking.

Look at the middle of [Luke 11:]17: Jesus “said to them,” Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.” This is kind of an easy little illustration. Isn’t it true that you can’t go to war with somebody else if you’re fighting among yourselves? I read an interesting little anecdote in R. Kent Hughes’ commentary on Luke, [in

which he talks] about the 1986 L.A. peace march, where all of these people were assembled together and they were all going to march from L.A. to Barstow to oppose war. The problem [was that] they all began to argue with one another; they got in[to] fistfights with one another; they were struggling to see who would be leader, and how the march would go, and how they would do it, and where they would stop. Pretty soon the whole march fell apart because they were warring among themselves. Everybody knows that that's the case: You can't be fighting among yourselves and then wage a war. It's ridiculous.

Look at [Luke 11:]18. Jesus brought them this cute, little, simple illustration, [and] they're all [saying], "Yeah, that's true. Kingdoms can't fight against themselves and then wage war." He [then] says in verse 18: "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?" The implied answer is: It can't. [He goes on], "For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul." What could they say? The answer is clear. The only argument they've used against Him wielding the power of God, of being who He says He [is], was this excuse that He was doing miracles by the power of Satan, and so Jesus very simply just removed that excuse from them. Now what are they going to do? The other people are just hiding mentally, [saying], "Show us another miracle." They didn't even offer an excuse. Of course Satan wouldn't empower his workers to undo what he's trying to do. That would be stupid.

But Jesus, desiring to make them face the truth, isn't through with them yet. He now is going to take their face[s] and push [them] in the truth because He wants all of them—He wants all of us—to be without excuse. [Truth four]: Your Savior brings with Him the kingdom of God. Look at [Luke 11:]19. Jesus says: "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?" That was a good question. That was a brilliant question because the Jewish leaders of the time, [and] the Jews [in general] believed implicitly in demons and angels. We read from Colossians [that] they even fell into angel worship [see Colossians 2:18]. They believed in them implicitly, and some of the sons of the Jewish leaders were

professional exorcists, going around with great pomp and circumstance attempting to cast out demons.

Jesus' question is simple. The implied answer is simple. [He's saying], "OK, I want to know this: Who helps your sons cast out demons?" He knows what they're going to say. They aren't going to say, "Well, uh, Satan?" No, they're going to say, "Our sons cast them out by God, obviously." That's exactly the point that Jesus wants to be made. They are forced to acknowledge that demons come out by the power of God, and [that He had] just cast out the demon. Notice what He says [in Luke 11:]19: "So they," your sons who are exorcists, "will be your judges" because even they can tell you that demons come out only by the power of God.

Look at [Luke 11:]20: "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God." Now, if you look [at this verse], pretty much all the modern translations have this. I'm not quite sure why, but where it says: "But if I cast out demons," that "if" there is what is called a first-class conditional. It [would be] better translated [as] "*since* I cast out demons by the finger of God." He has just argued, very clearly and forcefully, that He couldn't be empowered by Satan because Satan doesn't war against Himself [and] that the only way demons can be cast out is the same way their sons do it—by the power of God. Now He's saying, "Since I cast out demons by the finger of God," [giving] it a whole different emphasis there. The expression "finger of God" is a synonym for the work of God. In the Old Testament there was something that was written by the finger of God. Do you remember what that was? The Ten Commandments, right? [They were written] on those tablets of stone by the finger of God [see Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10]. There's another place that talks about the finger of God, and I think it's what Jesus had in mind here in this text. It's in Exodus 8:18–19, when Moses is doing the plagues. [For] one of the plagues, he took some dust, and threw it up in the air, and [do] you remember what happened to that dust? It turned into biting flies or gnats. Then they just multiplied, swarmed, and covered all of Egypt as one of the plagues [see Exodus 8:16–17]. When this plague

happen[ed], the magicians [were] trying to copy the things of God, but this is what Moses writes in Exodus 8:18–19:

The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Think about that. Moses performed miracles by the power of God; Jesus performed miracles by the power of God. Moses was a messenger of God; so was Jesus. Moses spoke the Word of God; so did Jesus. What’s interesting [is that] it was clear that Moses had done [the] miracle [in Exodus] by the finger of God, and it was clear that Jesus had done [the] miracle [in Luke 11] by the finger of God, and it was clear that pharaoh, who was a leader of Egypt, hardened his heart against the truth, and it was clear that [the religious leaders in Luke 11] were doing the same. The parallels are pretty striking. Jesus is pressing their face[s] into this correct conclusion [about] his miracle.

Look at the end of [Luke 11:]20: “The kingdom of God has come upon you.” Bingo. [Jesus is saying to the religious leaders], “That is what’s happening right now in your face.” We talked about the kingdom a while ago, [about how we are to] pray that [the] “kingdom come,” and we learned about the universal kingdom, [which means] that God is ruling His whole universe and He does this ruling all things. There’s this universal rule of God that’s called His universal kingdom. That has always been happening because God has always been sovereign to rule over His creation. We also talked about another kingdom, the kingdom that Jesus tells us to pray for, and that is the kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of God, or His kingdom here on earth. We saw that [there] were synonyms [for this kingdom] in several passages. What did we learn there? [We learned] that [the kingdom to which He refers] is that thousand-year reign of Christ upon the earth.

That is when Jesus comes back in glory to set up His kingdom, where He will rule and reign in righteousness. That is that future kingdom.

So the question is: What's happening here [in Luke 11:20]? Well, obviously, it couldn't be the universal kingdom [because] that [has] already happened. Obviously it's not the future kingdom because otherwise that would have happened, and it didn't. So what's going on? Remember when we talked about what [the] necessary [components are] for a kingdom? We talked about several little, necessary ingredients of a kingdom. [First], if you're going to have a kingdom, you [have] to have a king. Second, that king has to have power and authority. Third, he has to have an area, a territory, a sphere of dominion. Finally, he needs to have subjects. [If] you get all those ingredients together, you [have] yourself a king.

Well, what's interesting is [that] we have all those ingredients here. We have Jesus, the king, exercising authority and power over His creation, and He [has] His subjects. What He's saying [in Luke 11:20] is: "Guys, the kingdom of God is standing before you, in your midst." That's pretty radical. Luke phrases this whole text to drive that point home, to make a contrast between what is going on in the minds of the children of Satan and what's going on in reality, in the mind of God. [The religious leaders are] making excuses not to believe, and [Luke is] saying [that] Jesus wields the power of God, Jesus knows their thoughts, which makes Him God, and Jesus says, "The kingdom of God has come upon you now." See, when Jesus first came [to] earth, He came to present the kingdom of Israel. Most of us know that they rejected Him, they crucified Him, they wouldn't receive Him as their king. Jesus is saying, "Right now, the King, with power, dominion, and subjects, exercising authority [over] His creation, is standing in front of your face[s]."

There [are people] who know the truth, who understand the truth, and these are the kind of people [to whom] you say, "Do you believe that Jesus was born of a virgin?"

"Oh, yeah."

"That He lived a perfect life?"

“Oh, yeah.”

“That He died on the cross for sinners?”

“Yeah.”

“That He was buried and rose again on the third day?”

“Oh, yeah.”

They know all of this about Jesus, but they won't submit to Christ as their Lord. They still won't believe. It's not that they have any excuses other than the fact that they just don't want to believe. They don't want Jesus reigning over them. Maybe you're one of those people. Maybe you [we]re in grade school, and your parents taught you the Scriptures, and [as] you've grown up, you've gone to Awana, you've memorized all these verses, but you know in your heart [that] you don't want to repent of your sins, you don't want Jesus reigning over your life.

Or maybe you're in junior high [or] high school, and you hear me now, and you know that what I'm saying is from the Bible, and yes, you, in general, believe the facts of what I'm telling you, but you don't want to believe so as to have Jesus be your Lord. Maybe you're a college student, maybe you've been enjoying college because you've gotten away from home, and now you can enjoy certain sins [that] you couldn't do with your mom and dad hovering over you. You can enjoy them as much as you want and whenever you want, and you like that. If you really were to repent and give your life to Jesus Christ, He would then ruin your life and require you to abandon all of those sins.

Or maybe you're married, maybe you're a husband and you're not loving your wife, and you know you're not loving your wife. Maybe you're committing adultery, maybe you're looking at pornography, maybe you're engaged in some other wicked activity that you're keeping from her. You're living this duplicitous lifestyle. You know you are, and yet you won't submit to Christ. You won't repent of your sins. You won't have Jesus reigning over you.

Or maybe you're a wife and you just love the things of the world. You love fashion. You love *you*. Your looks [are] what consumes you—how

you appear to other people is what consumes you. You like things. You like romance novels. You like the world. That's what you like. Satan is your lord, not Jesus. You love the world and the things of the world.

Though you walk around [church] on Sundays, though you be the student, or the husband, or the wife, or the grandparent, though you walk around [and] you've got your Bible under your arm, the world is in your heart. That's what you're passionate about. That's what you live for. You know what? [If you're doing any of those things], you've got us fooled. You have us fooled, but you don't have God fooled because He knows your thoughts [see Psalm 94:11]. Who is able to fool God? You know that God has power not only to kill the body, but to cast [you] into hell [see Matthew 10:28]. You know you aren't going to be able to get to heaven, and say on judgment day, "Oh, listen, I pretended to be a Christian for my whole life! You can't cast me into hell! I *pretended!*" Do you think that's going to [work]?

[Do you think God will say], "Oh, well then, come on in. I know you rejected My Son, I know you lived for My enemy for all your life, but come on in because you were good at faking it"? Is [an] eternity of suffering really worth the momentary pleasures of this life? Think about that. It may just reveal that you don't even believe in God. I know that may sound strange, but it's just true. You're an atheist. You don't believe in God because if you did, you would live for God. You don't love God, you don't love Christ, you're just a closet atheist professing to be a Christian. [It's] a very strange, convoluted thing, but [it's] true.

The people in our text [in Luke 11] were very religious, but they would not believe in the Lord of glory [see 1 Corinthians 2:8]. They knew the Scriptures, but they would not submit to the Lord of Scriptures. They were convinced they were going to heaven, but they were going to hell. My question to you is: [Is] there something keeping you back from repenting of your sins and believing in the gospel to save you? What's holding you back? There's no use lying to yourself. God knows your thoughts. Let's just not play games anymore. Right now, Jesus is listening in, so even though you

may be able to fool other people, you're not fooling Jesus. You need to tell Jesus right now in your heart, "Jesus, listen, I don't want to repent of my sins. I don't want to become a Christian. I don't want to serve You. I don't want to love You because" and just fill in the blank right now. Fill in the blank in your mind. State it because He is listening [and] He knows your thoughts. Tell Him, "Lord, listen, I don't appreciate Your death on the cross for me. I don't appreciate the mercy and grace You've extended to me. I want to live for myself. I want to live for my sins. I want to side with Your enemy. I am willing to call myself a Christian, but I'm not willing to live for You." Just tell Him you [wouldn't] mind if He would save you from hell—you would actually prefer it—but not if it means giving up your sins in this life.

You [may] think, "I would never do that." Well, that's what you're doing if you won't repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Tell Jesus, "Listen, I want You to judge me. I want You to cast me into hell because I love my sins more than You," because that's what everybody does when they won't repent. That's what they're saying. You may fool us, and you know what? You *have* fooled us, but Jesus knows your thoughts. That's what we learn in this text [in Luke 11].

There [was] a time in Israel [when] Elijah the prophet stood before Israel, and [do] you know what they said? "We worship the Lord God of Israel," but [do] you know what the truth was? They were worshipping Baal. And so, Elijah gather[ed] them all together. Now, they were all very religious, they were all claiming the right God, but they were all worshipping the false god. Elijah [said] this in 1 Kings 18:21: "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.' But the people did not answer him a word," like some of you aren't answering a word. What do you say to that? I mean, who wants to think in [his] mind, "I follow Beelzebub"? Nobody wants that, but that's the truth. If you won't have Jesus, you will have Satan. Don't think you can get to heaven by sitting on the fence, by living your life in the world, sucking up the pleasures of the world, living for the flesh, and then think

you're going to get into heaven because you've named the name of Jesus with your lips.

I say to you, as Elijah said to them: "If Jesus is Lord, follow Him; if Satan is lord, then follow him." Make up your mind this morning, and don't leave here until you've told God in your mind, "Lord, I will not have You reigning over me," or, "Lord, I repent of my sins. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I receive Him as my Savior. I trust Him to save me. Change me, make me into a new creature" [see 2 Corinthians 5:17]. As Joshua said, "I place before you life and death, choose life that you will live" [see Deuteronomy 30:19].

For the rest of us, we need to look at our lives. Even if [we] are Christian[s], we can be deluded, we can be deceived, we can be sidetracked, and pretty soon we're wasting our [lives] on nothing for eternity. The bulk of our efforts, our money, our thoughts, our existence is [used] to ignore the spiritual realm, eternity that's coming, what really matters, and to just focus and be absorbed in what's passing away. Oh, Satan is so good at it. We need to "redeem the time, for the days are evil" [see Ephesians 5:16]. Don't accuse Jesus of being of Satan, and don't change subjects. Your soul is at stake. Jesus knows your thoughts, so let's all leave here acknowledging that Jesus is Lord, that [He] has power over demons, that [He] isn't aligning Himself with the forces of evil, that [He] knows our thoughts, and [that He] will save you. He will change you, He will transform you, He will make you into a new creature, but you must turn your back on your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Do it and God will save [you] and He will change you. Let's pray.

Father, we are so grateful for this text. What a strong and forceful text it is, to realize that so often people, we ourselves included, get sidetracked from what's true, from what's eternal. Father, help us to live every day realizing there is an angelic war waging just beyond the thin film of this reality, that all around us there are demons trying to keep unbelievers from being saved, and trying to cause believers to be ineffective, distracted, wasting their lives. When they could be glorifying their Creator, instead [they are]

indulging in the flesh. Oh, Father, help us not to be that way. And, Father, if there [are people] here who realize that they don't love You, they don't know [You], they are really rejecting the Lord and asking to be judged because they will not turn from their sins, I pray that You would grant them grace, "grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" [2 Timothy 2:25] that they would come to salvation, that they would be born again, that You would turn them into new creatures [see 2 Corinthians 5:17]. And, Father, [I pray that] they would begin to live a life of devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, help us all to be this way, help us be that way more for Your glory, for Your honor, for Your future kingdom. We pray [this] in Jesus' name, Amen.

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