

Weaving the Word

Judge for Yourself

December 3, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning to judge for ourselves what is right.



Do you stand tall in Christ or lay low in the crowd?

The crowd is listening as Jesus is sending out His boys, warning that **they are marked for attack and assault and abuse.** (Mt 10:17-23)



Those who oppose Him publically accuse Him of siding with the devil, though **He's warned 'em that a house divided will not stand.** (Mt 12:25) And, He tells His boys **He comes with sword and fire to divide His unfaithful family and to burn His rebellious house to the ground.** (Mt 10:34-35; Lk 12:49-53)



Those who refuse to choose to stand have chosen to stand against. (Lk 11:23) So don't drag your heels; take up your cross!



He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, **immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does.** ["So true. **We do. And it does.**"] And when the south wind blows, **you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is.** ["Well, it's simple when the signs are so obvious and familiar"] **Hypocrites!** ["Wait. What? Why?"] You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? – Luke 12:54-56 NIV

The blind see. The deaf hear. The dead are *literally* dancing in the streets!

You see, the signs are so obvious ... *and familiar.* **They had repeatedly been taught by these same teachers, the signs they'd see when it came to the reign of the Son of David.**

And on Jesus' big day when the Pharisees came to test and judge, He healed a possessed, deaf, mute, blind, man. *Grand slam! And ...*

All the people were astonished and said, "**Could this be the Son of David?**" [Why ask such a thing? 'Cause this is the clear and familiar sign they were told they'd see] **But when the Pharisees heard this,** [they changed their tune; and] they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." – Matthew 12:22-24 NIV

The crowd *loves* Jesus' teaching and healing, but they won't take a stand for fear of division and rejection and excommunication.

They want the benefits of following without the cost of joining.

And, Jesus is calling 'em on it.

Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? – Luke 12:57 NIV

"I'm doing *exactly* what the teachers you trust always taught you I'd do. So, are you now going to take *their* inconsistent word over the Word of God?" **Judge what's right and join the fight! Before the Prince of Peace can bring the peace, He must win the war!**

Remember the guy who called out from the crowd? Just a few minutes before *this*, Jesus' attention was turned to the crowd.

Someone in the crowd said to him, "**Teacher**, [notice he's careful to use a term that won't get him in trouble] tell my brother to **divide** the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a **judge** or an **arbiter** [lit. *divider*] between you?" – Luke 12:13-14 NIV

"My adversaries haven't. They say I'm the devil. So, are *you* receiving Me and appointing Me and publically declaring Me as having the authority to rightly judge and divide?"

"Uh, *no*. I mean, *yes*. I mean ... will you just tell him to divide the bean field?"



The cowardly crowd always wants to follow without joining.

It's not an issue of awareness, but of allegiance.

So, when you're in the crowd do you stand tall or lay low?

Jesus concludes His point with a puzzling piece of legal advice:

Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? As you are going with your **adversary** to the **magistrate**, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the **judge**, and the judge turn you over to the **officer**, and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny." – Luke 12:57-59 NIV

Who do you suppose those four represent? And how do they tie in?

You know, **our pride will hide the meaning from us**. Because, **it's too quick to assume that if I have an adversary he must be a *bad guy***.

But, **this crowd is in the wrong**, and **this adversary is in the right**.



And, they'll be imprisoned if they don't pay him what they owe.

So, who's our adversary and what do we owe?

Well, that depends on whose side we're on. **If we're on God's side it's the devil; otherwise, it's *God***.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. [So, here are the terms of God-the-Adversary: 1)] **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under **God's mighty hand**, [which is Jesus] that he may lift you up in due time. [2)] **Cast all your anxiety on him** because he cares for you. [It's just those two. "Hmm ... He drives a hard bargain!" Now, if you accept His terms you'll need to] **Be self-controlled and alert**. [Because, you'll have a new adversary] **Your enemy** [antidikos: opponent; adversary. This word is only used in Jesus' story (Mt 5:23-25; Lk 12:55-59), and here, and the parable of the Unrighteous Judge (Lk 18:1-8)] the **devil** prowls around like a roaring lion looking for **someone** [who has defected to the other side] **to devour**. – 1 Peter 5:5b-8 NIV

You see, **there are only two sides: truth and untruth**. And, **everyone is already committed to one side or the other**. And, the two adversaries are two "fathers" so to speak.

That's why Jesus later says to those who continued to oppose:

If God were your Father, you would love me ... **Why is my language not clear to you?** Because you are unable to hear what I say. **You belong to your father, the devil** ... for he is a liar and the father of lies. ... **He who belongs to God hears what God says**. The reason you do not hear is that **you do not belong to God**. – John 8:42-47 NIV

And, it's high time to switch sides!

So, how can we know if we're resisting the right adversary?!

[The Apostle John writes] Dear children, let us not love with **words or tongue** but with **actions and in truth**. [Don't just follow; join!] **This then is how we know that we belong to the truth**, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ... – 1 John 3:18-20a NIV

But, if we refuse to judge rightly, by standing up and acting on what we know to be true, then it puts us at odds with Truth.

And, if we're at odds with Truth, the devil *isn't* our adversary. He's our dad!

And sadly, our "**Adversary**" is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (Jn 14:6)

Now, the term "**magistrate**" means *ruler*. **The magistrate represents the law and thereby has authority to accuse us before the judge**. Any guesses on who our accuser is?

Again, it depends on whose side we're on.



If we're on the Lord's, it's the devil; otherwise it's ... Moses.

[Jesus said] Do not think I will accuse you before the Father. **Your accuser is Moses**, on whom **your hopes are set**. [If you're hoping that religion will get you in, **think again!**] If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. – John 5:45-46 NIV



Exhibit A: the bronze serpent Moses raised up on the cross.
(Num 21:6-9; Jn 3:14-17)

[And, long before Moses came along, Job wrote] Oh, that I had one to hear my case, and that my **accuser** would **write out his indictment!** Surely, *I* should wear it on **my** shoulder or put it on **me** like a diadem; [or: *a crown*] – Job 31:35-36 NAB

And after this, the lord used Moses to do just that.

And, the Law of Moses led to death, (Rom 7:6-10, 8:2-3) until Christ came, and ...

... having canceled the **written code**, [ESV: *record of debt*] with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. – Colossians 2:14 NIV

Got'a choose: **get right with the Lord or get left with the Law.** And if our only defense is a list of rules we tried and failed to live up to we'll end up imprisoned by the "**officer**" or *punisher*.

In fact, our one and only hope of escape is to pay what we owe before we go before the "**Judge**". Any guesses who the Judge is? Here's a hint: it's *not* the Father.

The Father judges no one, but has entrusted **all judgment to the Son**, that all may honor **the Son** just as they honor **the Father**. – John 5:22-23 NIV

Because, God-the-Father and God-the-Son are One.

[So] Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? [If you're holding back and laying low, then] As you are going with your **adversary** [the Lord] to the **magistrate**, [the Law that leads to death] try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, [it takes effort to join; but, *only because of our pride and resistance and fear and rebellion*] or he may drag you off to the **judge**, [who walks with you and reaches out to you all the way to the grave] and the judge [will have no choice but to] turn you over to the **officer**, [who has to enforce the letter of the Law that you've chosen to be judged by] and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny." – Luke 12:57-59 NIV

What a disastrous shock if your Adversary was also the Judge!



What an ecstatic relief if the Judge was also your Savior!

If anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous [Judge]. And He Himself is the **propitiation** [or: *appeasing*] for our sins ... – 1 John 2:1b-2a NKJ

So, judge for yourself what is right.

Pay what you owe before you go before the Righteous Judge, by humbling yourself under God's mighty Hand, joining Jesus, and casting all your cares on the One who completely cares for you.