

# With Christ or Against Christ ?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us join together in the worship of God. We shall sing to his praise from Psalm 62.

Psalm 62, at the beginning, my soul with expectation depends on God indeed. My strength and my salvation does from him alone proceed. He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence, much moved I shall not be. How long will ye against a man plot mischief? Ye shall all be slain, ye as a tottering fence shall be, and bowing wall. They only plot to cast him down from his excellency.

They join lies with mouth they bless, but they curse inwardly. My soul wait thou with patience upon thy God alone. On him depends all my hope and expectation. He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence. I shall not move it be.

And so on. We shall sing these words to God's praise. My soul with expectation depends on God indeed.

My soul with expectation depends on God indeed. My strength and my salvation does from him alone proceed.

[ 2 : 02 ] He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence.

My soul with expectation. He only is my strength and my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my strength and my salvation is, and my strength is my strength and my strength.

His heaven is my soloág go on joy and Indeed. My soul with compassion Office jurorica, as Knoki as I was honest. The holy daughter does him down from his extenant sin.

In joy in life with my faithfulness And a partnership worthy My soul return with patience Am on thy God alone On him dependeth all my hope And expectation He only my salvation is And my strong rock gives me

He only is my sure defense I shall not forget Let us join together in prayer.

[ 4 : 43 ] Let us pray. Eternal and ever-blessed God, as we come before you in this act of worship, we give thanks that we can be assured of being in the presence of God, even though there are many who are of a like mind and they are situated throughout the world and any given moment they may come before what they call a throne of grace, knowing that you are such a God whose ear is opened to their pleas to receive from them their offerings of thanksgiving to acknowledge their heart when it is lifted up when they are glad, when they are joyful, when they are filled full of the blessings that you bestow upon many and in the same way when they are cast down, when they feel downtrodden and bereft of many creature comforts, they can turn to the God who is able to deal with them accordingly.

So we pray that as we come just now that we would realise that we have a great God, a God who is all-knowing, a God who sees perfectly what is going on in our lives, not just in our lives, but in all the lives that are current in the world.

You have such a vision that we cannot, because we have no experience of it, understand a God who sees the scene of time before you as if it was a flashing moment of light from the beginning of time even to the present and beyond the present into the distant future.

Such a God is a God who is great and your own revelation of who you are and what you are is before us in what you have given to us as your word, a word that reveals to us something of these glories that are divine and more particularly you have revealed yourself to us in the sun of your bosom and we give thanks that in him we see you better, more clearly.

We pray that you would bless us in his name today as we worship that we may know that we have access to you through him and that he has opened that way of access for us.

[ 7 : 40 ] We pray that you would remember your church here in the world with all the varying needs that it has as those who are alive in a world that is much opposed to any who bear your name.

We would pray that your mercy would abound towards us that you would keep us from harm and especially in places where the status quo is such that to do injury to your people is considered something something that is of merit.

We pray that you would guard, keep and protect your own that they may know that you are the God who is their God in a particular way that you would guide away the enemies that would destroy them that you would shelter them from the wickedness that abounds in this world and especially in parts of the world where there where there are deeds wrought against such where the destruction of your people is something that is overlooked.

We pray that you would remember us this day as a collective body a worshipping people wherever we are gathered. We pray that you would bless our congregations bless our communities our villages our towns our cities remember those who govern us and those who rule over us.

We pray for the royal family and all who govern in the name of the Queen. We ask that you would remember our nation first minister and the prime minister especially at this time of COVID-19 we pray that you would remember us in mercy where there is a resurgence of the virus we would pray for that to be dealt with effectively and we are in your hands to that end.

[ 9 : 50 ] We pray for the world that lies at the heart of this pandemic when there are many lives that have been lost still others under threat. We pray that you would encourage those who are dutiful in providing care to those who are afflicted we pray that you would remember those who are seeking remedies that they too would know your hand upon them in mercy guiding them giving light to them even where they are not willing to acknowledge it.

We pray that you would raise up some who would acknowledge you within our parliaments within the spheres of care that they would know that they are truly weak and insignificant in their endeavours were it not for the Lord to be with them in what they are doing.

So bless your word to us to this day. Bless all who preach it proclaim it in whatever way for those who gather and are able to gather in limited numbers we pray that you would bless their gatherings pray that we would remember those who are delivering the word of truth by way of various media.

We thank you for that and pray that you would bless it to all who would be engaged in it. Remember that you would give to those who are hearers of this word that you would give them a hearing ear a heart that is receptive to the truth and a guiding hand upon them that they may follow your lead.

We pray that you would remember any who are unwell. Remember those who are grieving and sorrowful. Remember those who are caring for them and we pray that you would bless them wherever they are called to supply such care.

[ 11 : 49 ] We pray now that you would bless your word to us as we turn to it. Thankful that you speak to us through your word and that even as we read your word that we remember that that the Lord Jesus when he was in the world he took the word that he spoke to his heavenly father to seek his blessing upon it and we do the same and that he supplied the same thanks to you that we should that we should thank you that you have that you have hid certain things from some and that have made them known to others and that that is in accordance with your own wisdom.

So hear our petitions and continue with us watching over us as we spend time together around your word cleansing from sin in Jesus name Amen. we're going to hear the word of God as we have it in the New Testament scriptures and we're going to read from the Gospel of Matthew the Gospel of Matthew and we're reading from chapter 12 chapter 12 and we can read from verse 22 reading from verse 22 and down to verse 37 then was brought unto Jesus one possessed with a devil blind and dumb and he healed him inasmuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw and all the people were amazed and said is this the son of David but when the Pharisees heard it they said this fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils and Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them every kingdom divided against itself has brought desolation and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand and if

Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself how shall then his kingdom stand and if I by Beelzebub cast out devils by whom do you children cast them out therefore they shall be your judges but if I cast out devils by the spirit of God then the kingdom of God is come unto you or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house he that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad wherefore I say unto you all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men and whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the

Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world neither in the world to come either make the tree good and his fruit good or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt for the tree is known by his fruit O generation of vipers how can ye being able speak good things for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things but I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned god add his blessing to a reading of his word to his name be the praise like us to turn for a short while to the passage that we have just read and focus in particular on verse 30 he that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad the words of our text seem to me to be free from any interpretation but the one that is staring us in the face if you are not for

Christ then you must be against Christ you cannot sit on the fence you cannot reserve judgment if you do not gather to Christ you scatter you must respond to Jesus as it is required of us to respond we must respond in the affirmative as is often the case Jesus actions and Christ words are rarely treated with suspended judgment many say amen to what he says many respect in respect to the action that they take they respond in an opposite way in a fairly broad context we find the

[ 17 : 39 ] Pharisees condemn Jesus because his disciples of all people break the Sabbath they are witnesses witnesses for the Lord and yet they are seen by those who are not necessarily the friends of the Lord as those who are Sabbath breakers they are seen plucking ears of corn and eating them to the Jew this consisted of manual labor something that was forbidden on the Lord's day it did not matter that they were hungry and had not eaten the law in their hands was unyielding and unforgiving he has also witnessed carrying out a miracle of healing when a man is presented in the synagogue who was afflicted with a withered hand the brother then rejoiced over the restoration of physical health to the man it deepened their hatred of

Christ then there is the ridiculous accusation that the healing that he is responsible for is done by the power of Beelzebub I want us to look at the statement that we have here in light of blatant opposition to Christ asking where do we stand in relation to him what does it mean to be against Christ what is meant by being for Christ and if we understand these two things what does it say about ourselves or simplicity we can easily identify people in the Bible who are against Christ in one way or another and we're not going to even look at that except with two examples most of you will know Herod the king despised

Christ for his own purely selfish reasons and he sought to destroy the newborn infant Bishop Ryle says of this experience at the very dawn of his human experience that there was only a type and figure of all his experience on earth the waves of humiliation he says began to beat over him even when he was a suckling child at the very other end of his short life we find the undisguised enmity of the world the world arrayed almost in battle order against him not just the scribes and the Pharisees who plotted and planned to take Jesus and kill him if possible keeping their own hands free from guilt it was an impossibility I know but one they aspired to there are many along with them who were guilty of the same desire stop for a moment to tell on the night of his execution which was on the eve of the most holy day in the

Jewish calendar they strove to keep themselves ceremonially pure while at the same time murdering the savior of sinners take note of their blindness because many who claim indifference or innocence as far as being against Christ is concerned are equally deceived many believe themselves free from this charge who would perhaps declare themselves agnostic their claim is that there is not enough information available to them to allow them to judge one way or another usually with regard to the existence of God but logically the same truth applies to the belief in the existence of Christ because he claims to be God's son who according to the scripture God himself shows to be his son this is my beloved son hear ye him he says some deny that

God exists yet it is impossible for them to deny that Christ Jesus existed that he was a historical figure who made all sorts of claims concerning himself which the scripture supports David J.

[ 22 : 24 ] Randall a church of Scotland minister wrote a book called believe it or not in it he observes that at the very outset of Jesus ministry he was tempted by the devil to adapt his message in ways that would appeal to people in modern day Scotland no time is given to biblical teaching that insists for example that God is or that Christ is the Messiah sent by him to be a saviour to sinners Paul's words are ignored but the fact that they are ignored by the ignorant does not invalidate the claim that is made by Paul and the truth that he directs attention to he writes I certify you brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man for

I neither received it of man neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ opposition to Christ does not invalidate the claims of Christ denial of our accountability to Christ may make us believe that we will not answer to him but we will many Jews know God many Jews many gods the one who says I am the only living and true God says we will answer to him at the last and there are many who say they have their reasons for not believing in Christ believing in him or believing on him he is but the poor man's crutch they say and we have no need of him or they could argue he let me down when I needed him most he failed me seldom does the one who says this have sound reasons for believing that

Christ should have been there for them when in their lives they had little time for him or little appreciation of who he really was how can I say that well let's consider for a moment those who are for Christ I believe one of the most important things you can say about them is that they have a real relationship with Christ they know him to be real they know he really means something to them there is a story told of a highland gentleman by the name of the accursed red Donald he was once a follower of Roman Catholicism but he discovered for himself the reality of faith in Christ and because of his embracing of evangelical truth the priest that was responsible for him cursed him from the pulpit hence the name but

Donald was once speaking to the question at a communion season and was asked along with others to describe the nature of true faith he began by describing the faith of the hypocrite which is no faith at all and he compared it to a rope of straw he said it can easily be seen but it will not stand its strain but then he said the faith of the child of God is of the finest gold it can be drawn out as fine as a hair that can only be seen when the sun shines upon it you may be cannot see it but it is always there and those who have faith in Christ know him to be the son of God the apostle John at the beginning of his first epistle writes that that that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye may also have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son

Jesus Christ that fellowship is all important some people believe that the church is all that matters others would argue that Christ is all that matters Christ and the church cannot be separated he is the head of the body and the body is his church to be one with him is to be one with his people you cannot be in a relationship with Christ and be at odds with his people seems an obvious truth it is important to stress that even from context those who were Christ's accusers alleged that it was by the power of the devil that he cast out devils logically Christ said that could not be as verse 26 states if Satan casts out Satan he is divided against himself how shall then his kingdom stand the same logic applies throughout the context to be for

[ 27 : 56 ] Christ is to be with Christ in the sense of a life of commitment to him a life of obedience a life of service a relationship with Christ alters your relationship with everything else and everyone else Paul in the epistles to the Romans writes their life what what is the end result he asks too much religion to be happy in the world and too much of the world in their heart to be happy in the religion it is hardly what you would call the best of both worlds so the final question is I suppose the key question are you for or against Christ how would you answer the bottom line is simple and the Lord himself does not want us to be in any doubt those who spend their time in fellowship with them with him and with his people often times receive encouragement from his own lips there was once a godly woman of Cromarty and she was called Margaret Williamson and she lived to a fair age shortly before her death she was visited by a man who was making his way to a funeral at Cromarty and he found her by the shore taking water from a spring there

I'm not sure if this man I think he was a good man I believe that he was he asked her a question to elicit from herself where she was with the Lord and her answer to his question was I know she said because he has told me he has been speaking to me and he asked her a second question what has he been saying and her answer was I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more and she asked for his help with the water because she felt weak but she said I will soon be well he duly complied to her request and took the water and her arm as she walked back to her home and as they parted she said to him remember and call on your way back this is something he did and he found her sitting in the chair with the Bible on her lap and her finger on the text that she had quoted to him before he had parted from her

I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more she was no longer in this world and she had gone to be with the one that she had spent her days with in the world that conviction she had as she made her way to eternity there would be no thought in her mind that it would not be like that if the question is asked you today are you for the Lord or against the Lord how would you answer and depending on your answer what do you envisage that awaits you at the end of your life here in this world if you are for the Lord you know that you will be with the Lord if you will spend your days in this world against the Lord what life do you have and what awaits you in the next look carefully at what the scripture says and make a conscious endeavour to get to know the Lord that he may be your Lord let us pray heavenly father heavenly father we give thanks that your word tells us that there is life to be found in Christ Jesus and that it is life without end and that those who know him as their Lord and their saviour and are with him and he with them can spend their days here in this world with that assurance even though there may be times when they suffer doubts and uncertainty the nature of the relationship is such that he will make himself known to them we pray that you would encourage your people with that truth and direct their attention to it and they find their hope bolstered by the word of life we pray for those who are yet to know Christ that they may know the true poverty of living their life without him and they may settle in their minds the desire to seek him out earnestly watch over us we pray guide us in the truth cleanse from sin and now may grace mercy and peace from God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all now and always

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