

THE DIVISIVE CHRIST—*“Suppose ye that I Am Come to Give Peace on Earth?”*

Luke 12:51-53; Matthew 10:34-36

This text is a hard saying. Jesus’ statement is revolutionary. It goes completely against the world’s view of Jesus Christ.

Jesus asks, *“Suppose ye...”* *“Suppose”* suggests the assumption most people have that Jesus came to bring everyone together. He answers, *“Think NOT that I am come to send peace on earth...”* (Mt. 10:34). He is saying, “Don’t get the wrong idea about Me and why I am here.”

People seem to always get the wrong idea about Jesus Christ. Truly He *“endured such a CONTRADICTION of sinners”* (Heb. 12:3). Even those in Christ’s day didn’t realize who He was and what He was doing.

- Some said He was the son of Joseph conceived out of wedlock.
- Some said He was in a collaborator with Beelzebub.
- Some called Him a prophet.
- His disciples thought He was a ghost as He walked on the water.
- When Mary saw Him on the morning of His resurrection, she thought He was a gardener. Gardeners never create anything—All a gardener does is bring out of nature what is already there. Some still think Jesus is just a gardener, and not the Creator of the garden. To them, Jesus is just a man who brings out the best in human nature.

I. **The PROSPECT of peace denied.**

A. A **PUZZLING** statement! Startling... Surprising.

Christ’s answer is contrary to the angel’s announcement on the morning of His birth—*“Glory to God in the highest and on earth PEACE, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14). Notice the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7.

Instead of answering in the affirmative, Jesus said, *“NAY; but rather division.”* *“THINK NOT that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a SWORD”* (Mt. 10:34). Jesus came to precipitate conflict (sword—a weapon—opposite of peace).

There is not much preaching from these two texts today. They are too negative. Today our society is all about getting together... getting along... going along, and don't "rock the boat."

The world's philosophy is to obscure distinctions and seek to merge, mix, and meld things together (sexes, races, religion).

"Think NOT that I am come to send peace on earth..." Jesus would have liked to bring peace. But peace must be on His terms. The reason the world has no peace is because it turned down His offer of peace. They rejected His terms for peace. There will never be peace on earth until Christ's terms for peace are accepted. Until then there is...

- B. A **POSTPONING** of peace—Because the world rejected Christ's offer of peace, His offer of peace has been postponed until after the second coming.
 - 1. At His second coming He will divide the sheep from the goats / the wheat from the tares and burn them (Mt. 25:31-41).
 - 2. After His enemies are removed, Christ will reign over all the earth in peace. Any talk of world-wide peace today will have to wait until that day!

II. The **PURPOSE** of division declared.

➡ Notice the phrase *"I am come..."* (v. 49, 51; Mt. 10:34).

- A. God is the **Author of division** (see Gen. 1:4; Ex. 8:23).
 - 1. Jesus Christ was **the most divisive and disturbing person** who ever walked on the earth (John 7:40-43 cf. 9:16; 10:19).
 - 2. Christ's enemies brought many false accusations against Him. But one accusation was very true—*"He stirreth up the people"* (Luke 23:5). Amen! He should stir us up!
- B. Division suggests a separation.
 - 1. He came to divide the true from the false—The real from the counterfeit.
 - 2. **To bring about CLARITY** and show whose side people are really on. No middle ground or straddling the fence.

III. The **PARTING** of division described. (vs. 52-53 cf. Mt. 10:34-36).

A. The INSTRUMENTS in the dividing—Fire and Sword (Mt. 10:34).

Symbols of God's Word:

1. FIRE—Jer. 20:9—“*His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones...*” Jer. 23:29—“*Is not my word like a fire?*”
2. SWORD—Eph. 6:17—“*...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*” Heb. 4:12—“*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”). cf. Rev. 19:15

B. The IMPACT of the dividing.

1. A fire does two things: DESTROYS and REFINES. Jesus came to bring **TWO kinds of fire**: (1) Pentecostal fire (fire of revival) and (2) punitive fire (fire of retribution).
2. A sword is not an instrument of peace. It cuts, divides, and separates. God is a **God of SEPARATION**.
 - His sword divides FAMILIES (Luke 12:51-53). Generally, we consider family to be our closest relationship, and the last to be broken. But Christ will be a divider among the families. Many can testify to this truth. This can even be seen in Jesus' own family!
 - His sword divides FRIENDS.
 - His sword divides us from FASHIONS of this world
 - His sword divides us from FILTH of this world
 - His sword divides us from FALLACIES of this world

C. The IRONY of the division. **What divides us also unites us.**

1. Where Christ divides those who are for Him from those who are against Him, at the same time, He unites those who are for Him and joins together those who oppose Him (cf. Luke 23:12—“*And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between*”

themselves.”). Pilate and Herod were joined together over the rejection of Jesus Christ.

2. The thing that unites us as a nation (our Constitution) also divides us from other nations.
3. The truth of God’s Word that unites us also divides us from that which is untrue and opposed to God’s Word. TRUTH DIVIDES and UNITES.
4. The Christ that unites us as Christians also divides us from non-Christians.

SUMMATION: Christ’s offer of *personal* peace. The peace He gives today is a peace in the hearts of those who accept His terms for peace.

Christ’s peace is not the absence of strife, but peace in the midst of strife. Jesus said, *“In me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation...”* (John 16:33). *“My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you”* (John 14:27).

Before Christ’s coming we were enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). Jesus came, **not** to give peace on earth, but to **MAKE** peace between man and God. Colossians 1:20 says, Christ *“made peace through the **blood** of his cross.”* The war is over for anyone who accepts Christ’s payment for sin.

What are Christ’s **terms for peace**. Receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Christ’s peace cannot coexist where sin has not been forgiven, cleansed, and removed.

How can we advance the peace of Christ? (1) By proclaiming *“the gospel of PEACE”* so people can be saved and reconciled to God! (2) By praying for the coming of Christ—(1) into the hearts of people who are lost and (2) to come again and establish His reign of peace.

Have you accepted Christ’s terms for peace? If you die without accepting His terms for peace, you suffer the awful division of being eternally separated from God in the lake of fire.