

Luke 11:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Analysis

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Jesus eliminates neutral ground in the cosmic conflict between God's kingdom and Satan's. The phrase "not with me" (μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ, *mē ōn met' emou*) and "against me" (κατ' ἐμοῦ, *kat' emou*) create a binary—no middle position exists. Similarly, "gathereth not with me" (μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ, *mē synagōn met' emou*) versus "scattereth" (σκορπίζει, *skorpizei*) uses harvest imagery: those not actively gathering God's harvest are, by default, scattering and destroying it.

This statement directly confronts the Pharisees' Beelzebub accusation: their neutrality or opposition to Jesus places them on Satan's side, regardless of religious credentials. The verse also has broader application to Christian discipleship—passive Christianity that doesn't actively advance God's kingdom through evangelism and discipleship effectively opposes it. There is no spiritual Switzerland. Every person either gathers with Christ (bringing people to Him) or scatters (hindering the gospel). The urgency of this reality demands wholehearted commitment, not lukewarm religion.

Historical Context

The harvest metaphor was common in Jewish teaching, representing the gathering of Israel or the final judgment (Joel 3:13, Matthew 13:30). Jesus appropriates this imagery for present kingdom work—gathering souls into God's kingdom is the great harvest, and those who don't participate actively hinder it. This binary

language countered Jewish assumptions that ethnic descent or Torah observance guaranteed right standing with God regardless of response to Jesus. The Pharisees imagined they served God while opposing His Messiah—Jesus declares this is impossible.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' elimination of neutrality challenge contemporary notions of 'live and let live' spirituality?
2. In what ways might professing Christians be 'scattering' rather than 'gathering' through passive or nominal faith?
3. What does this verse teach about the cosmic stakes involved in our daily choices to advance or hinder the gospel?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	μὴ	ὦν	μετ'	ἐμοῦ	κατ'	ἐμοῦ	ἐστίν	καὶ	ὁ
G3588	not	He that is	with	me	against	me	is	and	G3588
	G3361	G5607	G3326	G1700	G2596	G1700	G2076	G2532	

μὴ	συνάγων	μετ'	ἐμοῦ	σκορπίζει
not	he that gathereth	with	me	scattereth
G3361	G4863	G3326	G1700	G4650

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 12:30 (Parallel theme): He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

Luke 9:50 (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Mark 9:40 (Parallel theme): For he that is not against us is on our part.

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