

## Episode #804 Matthew 12 Part 5-The Evil Pharisees

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 12, the Lord’s miracle of casting out a demon was belittled by His enemies as being done by the power of Beelzeboul, the prince of the demons. The Lord points out this is foolish, for Satan would never win by casting out himself. Then He reveals that all sins will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit will never be forgiven. We discussed the meaning of this as attributing the clear, evidential miracles of the Spirit to Satan. Since no such clear, evidential miracles are done today, this sin cannot be committed.

III. The Unforgivable Sin. Matthew 12:31-32.

- A. Verse 32. “The Holy Spirit” is in Greek “the Spirit the Holy,” meaning the Person. The Pharisees did this when they ascribed His works to Satan. “Age” is the Greek *aion* or “eon,” meaning a flow of things. The impending eon is the kingdom of God. Then it was “at hand,” but it has been suspended and its completion delayed.

IV. Good and Bad Fruit. Matthew 12:33-37.

- A. Verse 33. This is following up on His teaching in the “sermon on the mount,” Matthew 7:17-20. They were reasoning contrary to the Lord’s teaching there. They were taking the good thing the Lord had done which communicated to them that the Lord was sent from God and attributed it to Satan, like a bad tree with good fruit.
- B. Verse 34. Brood is “progeny,” *gennEma*, related to *gennaO* “to generate.” John used this same term in Matthew 3:7, and the Lord in Matthew 23:33. Also used for offspring of plants, though a different word than Matt. 12:33. They showed their hearts were full of evil. Abundance is same word as the leftovers at the feeding of the 4,000.
- C. Verse 35. “Treasure” means treasury, Greek *thesaurus*. What they had said was a particularly evil thing. This shows the evil treasury they had in their hearts.
- D. Verse 36. In the Day of Judgment people will be accountable for every word, no matter how carelessly spoken. This could also refer to the words they had just spoken, for as II Timothy 4:1 says there will be a judgment of all in that day. That day is the kingdom of God.
- E. Verse 37. “Justified” means declared righteous. Many people will be justified because they have spoken words of faith regarding the Lord Jesus Christ and proclaimed their belief in Him. Others speak very lightly of the Lord Jesus Christ. These idle words may be tossed off, but they will have to give an account of them in that Day.

V. The Sign of Jonah. Matthew 12:38-42.

- A. Verse 38. They had just seen the blind seeing and dumb speaking! Perhaps they viewed these as signs for the common people, and they, the elite, deserved a special sign of their own. A sign says something: the miracles told the truth about Christ.
- B. Verse 39. Adulterous indicates their unfaithfulness to God. His words have a sarcastic tone: they had ascribed His miracles to Beelzeboul, so what sign could be given them? They would create their own sign when they crucified Him. “Jonah” means “Dove,” here referring to the Old Testament prophet.
- C. Verse 40. The “great fish” was a “sea monster,” could refer to a whale or other creature. People fail to put God in here and so doubt the story. Jonah did not live in

the fish like Pinocchio. He was swallowed whole but quickly died, and was raised when he was spit up. Three days and three nights indicates 24-hour days.

VI. Conclusion: The Lord pointed out that a good tree will bring forth good fruit and a bad tree bad fruit, and the same is true of good and bad men. The idle words of these religious leaders would cause their condemnation in the day of judgment. The scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign, but they were being very disingenuous, and the Lord promised them no sign but that of Jonah. Do we believe the truth of God that is right in front of us, or do we reject it as these ungodly Pharisees did?