

Episode #805 Matthew 12 Part 6-Demons and Relatives

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, ungodly Pharisees, rejecting the Lord’s miracle, asked Him for a sign. He told them that the only sign that would be given them was the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jonah did not live for three days and nights in the belly of the sea monster. He died, as one would expect, but when he was spit up God raised him from the dead.

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

- A. Verse 40. Three days and three nights indicates 24-hour days. The Lord died on Wednesday evening and rose on Sunday morning. In the heart indicates identification with it, He was under the surface, the soil, merged with it.
- B. Verse 41. Nineveh is where Jonah was sent. “Repented” is *metanoeo*, yield, submit, ease themselves of their guilt. These people, though wicked, heard God’s message of condemnation and did what was necessary to lift it. This kind of people God wants in His kingdom. These wicked leaders, however, rejected a much greater Messenger. When they rise, they will be condemned. Ezekiel 20:33-38.
- C. Verse 42. This queen was a monarch who knew she needed to rule in the fear of God. When she heard of a ruler with Divine wisdom, she made a long and dangerous journey to speak to him and learn it. This kind of person God wants in His kingdom.

IV. The Unclean Spirit’s Dwelling. Matthew 12:43-45.

- A. Verse 43. An “unclean spirit” is a “demon” according to Luke 4:33. This might be literal, but it has a symbolic lesson. Israel, always idolatrous, was largely cured of this in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. Yet the religious apostasy they were now committing would lead to the rejection and murder of their Messiah, far worse! Those who yielded to the proclaiming of John the Baptizer were many, yet many failed to go through with this, and the number gathered at Pentecost was small.
- B. Verse 44. The unclean spirit finds his former home ready for him to renew his residence. So with many who returned from captivity, or who had been identified by John: they were ripe for renewed corruption.
- C. Verse 45. “Last” is *eschatos*, the resulting state; “first” the former state. Whatever this says about demons, it also applies to the wicked generation of His enemies.

V. The Lord’s Mother and Brothers Rejected. Matthew 12:46-50.

- A. Verse 46. Notice He had brothers, the children of Joseph and Mary. The same word as the unclean spirit seeking rest in Matthew 12:43 and not finding it. Apparently these did not find what they sought either, in spite of Matthew 7:8. In Mark, this story is preceded by Mark 3:21. It could well be that they were on this mission.
- B. Verse 47. Many make far too much of the fact that a certain woman was the Lord’s mother. She was highly favored and admirable, but just a woman, after all.
- C. Verse 48. The Lord is going to use this occasion to make a very important point about this. Not to disrespect her, but it could be rebuke for the mission of Mark 3:21. His mother and brothers stands for His closest relatives.
- D. Verse 49. Stretching forth His hand was to take in the whole group of them.
- E. Verse 50. “Will” is the Greek *thelema*, meaning the wish or desire.

1. His will is a general thing. Many people are looking for the blueprint God has for their lives. They cannot find it, and no one has ever found it.
 2. We have God's general will for all His people to follow today. It is God's will to be gracious and to be silent. It is God's will that we believe in the One He sent, the Lord Jesus Christ, John 6:28-29. It is God's will that we walk worthy of the calling with which we were called, Ephesians 4:1.
- F. His sisters were probably now married and in other families. Yet He includes them here to make it clear that women and men are capable of being close to Him like this.
- G. The teaching: those who do the will of His Father are His closest relatives, not those who happened to be nearly related to Him while He was on earth.

VI. Conclusion: The Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba would condemn these men, since they responded to God's messenger in their days, and the religious leaders had rejected a much greater Messenger. Do we hear the greater Messenger, Jesus Christ? Do we yield, or are we like these wicked scribes and Pharisees who already stand condemned? The unclean spirit who is cast out seeks entrance back into his original home. In the same way, those who encounter the truth of God and yet who then fall from it end up in much worse condition than before they encountered it. When you find God's truth, do you yield to it? Are you a person of faith, or do you give even greater entrance to the enemy than before God worked on you? The Lord's mother and brothers had no special privileges over anyone who follows the Lord and does the will of God. Do you follow Him and work God's will? If so, you can be one close to the Lord Jesus as a relative! But if not, what a thing you are missing!