

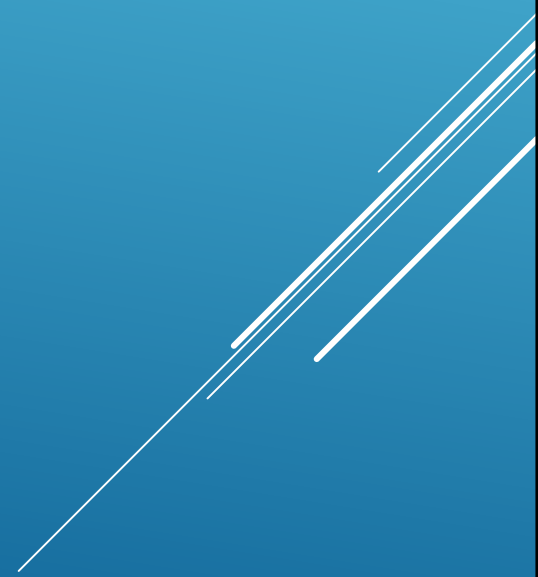
A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

Matthew 12:43-45



THE CONTEXT

Matthew 12:1-42



ENVY, CONTEMPT, AND HATRED

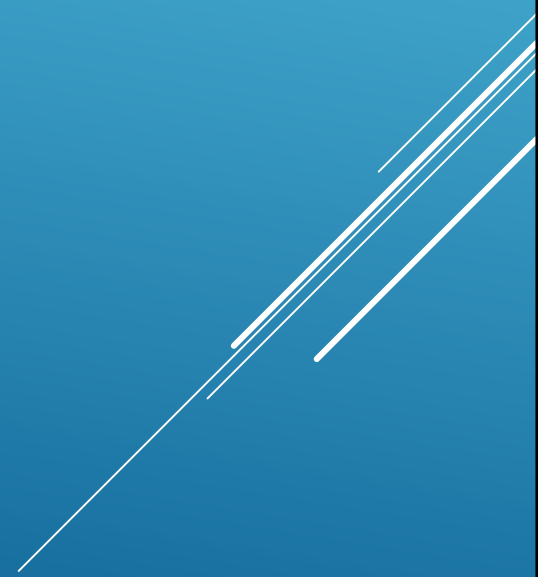
- ▶ The Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of working on the Sabbath – 12:1-8
 - ▶ They were rebuked for judging by their *tradition* – 12:7; Hos. 6:6
 - ▶ Jesus fuels their contempt by saying He is God of the Sabbath and knows the law – 12:8
- ▶ Their envy and contempt blinded them to the truth – 12:9-14
 - ▶ They were blinded to their contradictions – 12:9-12
 - ▶ Rather than listening and learning, they sought to kill Jesus – 12:13-14

MORE ENVY, CONTEMPT, AND HATRED

- ▶ When forced to admit to Jesus' power over demons, the Pharisees' envy blinded them to its meaning – 12:22-28
 - ▶ Their envy brought scorn for the people's belief that Jesus could be the Messiah – 12:22-23
 - ▶ They attributed His power to Beelzebub, ruler of the demons – 12:24
 - ▶ Jesus exposed the foolishness of their accusation that Satan was using Jesus to destroy his finest achievement—enslaving souls – 12:25-30
- ▶ Despite Jesus' display of divine power, these leaders sought another *sign*, bringing condemnation on themselves – 12:38-42

THE ILLUSTRATION

Matthew 12:43-45



THE EXODUS OF AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

- ▶ In response to their rejection, Jesus compares these Jews to a man with an evil spirit – 12:43
 - ▶ This spirit was cast out by God's power, just as Jesus had done earlier – 12:22-23
 - ▶ The spirit couldn't find a suitable abode—a suitable heart for entering
 - ▶ This means that *possession* was connected to the individual's heart...although there may have been exceptions – Mk. 9:19-25

THE RETURN OF AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

- ▶ The spirit decides to return to the house/man it vacated, finding it “empty, swept, and in order” – 12:44
 - ▶ Demonic possession was not necessarily over when the evil spirit departed – Lk. 4:13
 - ▶ To have one’s life emptied of sinful occupations is not enough.
- ▶ Finding the man “empty,” the demon gets seven worse demons to dwell in the man, making his state worse than before – 12:45
 - ▶ Jesus was the answer to the Jew’s spiritual enslavement.
 - ▶ Jesus knew that most would not accept him, returning to spiritual enslavement – Mt. 23:37-38; Acts 2:40

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- What a sad state for God's people to be found!**
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LESSONS FOR TODAY

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LESSON 1:

SELFISH AND SINFUL ATTITUDES

- ▶ If allowed to go unchallenged by the gospel, will cause to spiritual blindness
- ▶ The Pharisees' envy blinded them to their sin and the truth behind Jesus' miracles.
- ▶ When a Christian allows sin in his heart, bitterness, anger, and contempt for brethren follow, and Christ is rejected!
 - ▶ We must heed God's warning – Heb. 3:12-14
 - ▶ We must keep our hearts soft and receptive to the gospel's teaching.

LESSON 2:

REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

- ▶ Continued rejection of the gospel leaves a void in one's life **that Satan will fill!**
- ▶ This was the Jew's problem, seeing they refused to commit despite Christ's teaching and miracles – Jn. 6:66
- ▶ If you hesitate to respond, Satan will steal the word from your heart – Lk. 8:5, 11-12; Acts 13:46; 2 Thess. 2:9-12
- ▶ **All must assure their heart is always open to the gospel and ready to obey!**

LESSON 3:

REFORMATION WITHOUT REGENERATION

- ▶ Reformation without renewal of heart and life leaves one vulnerable again to sin's enslavement.
 - ▶ Despite God casting out the demon, the man was not motivated to fill his life with righteousness and the good works of God, leaving him vulnerable!
 - ▶ A Christian must be diligent to fill the void in their life with good works – Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 1:21-22
- ▶ Failure to diligently subject one's life to Christ will result in spiritual blindness and vulnerability to eternal loss – 2 Pet. 1:5-9; 2:18-22