

Matthew 12  
Part 3 (31-50)

Perilous condition of the Pharisees, a sign of Jonah and a family reaction

- VI. Jesus shows the evil and dangerous condition of the Pharisees. (31-37)
- A. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. (31, 32)
1. All but one sin can be forgiven in this life. (cf Isa 1:18; 1 Tim 1:13-15; 1 Jn 1:9; 2:1, 2)
    - a. In this context Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees.
    - b. They had just accused Him of being in league with Beelzebub. (vs 24)  
Note: This is not the only time the “unpardonable sin” is brought up in scripture. (cf Heb 6:4-6; 10: 26, 29, 31) (also cf Hosea 4:17; Jn 12:39a)
  2. The blasphemy is directed toward the “Spirit” behind the power.
    - a. “Blasphemy” means to oppose, slander, or to speak against.
    - b. Mark adds that the Jews concluded that Jesus had “an unclean spirit.” (cf Mk 3:30)
  3. The reason this blasphemy is unpardonable is the fact that the Holy Ghost is God’s last attempt to get man to repent and come to Him in obedience.
    - a. Adam and Eve rejected God in the garden, yet there was the hope of a coming Sacrifice. (cf Gen 3:15)
    - b. The Jews rejected Jesus (and most still do) even as He died for their sins.
    - c. But, whosoever rejects the Word, which the Holy Ghost inspired, rejects God’s last effort.
    - d. No divine directive will come after the Word. Therefore, the rejection of the scriptures seals one’s doom.  
Note: This sin is committed gradually. The normal process contains (1) “Resisting” the Spirit. Acts 7:51 (2) “Grieving” the Spirit. Eph 4:30 (3) “Quenching” the Spirit. 1 Thess 5:19
- B. Fruit inspection will determine the type or quality of the tree. (33)
1. Good fruit comes from good trees. (cf 7:16-20)
    - a. The determining factor in our inspection of the tree should not be by the shape or the bark of the tree, but the fruit.
    - b. There is always a possibility to misjudge if we go by any other factor. (cf 1 Sam 16:6, 7)
    - c. Let our fruit be to His glory. (cf Gal 5:22-24)
  2. Bad fruit comes from bad trees.
    - a. As a tree is known by its fruits, a person is known by their speech and actions.
    - b. Jesus is telling them to be honest in what they see.
    - c. If the fruit is good the source must also be good.
- C. Jesus explains the judgement by their works. (34-37)
1. The condition of the heart determines the actions and speech of the individual. (cf Prov 12:6, 17-19; Lk 6:45)  
Note: The bible “heart” is a person’s mind. (cf Prov 23:7)
    - a. “Vipers” are a short poisonous snake. Death occurs with great agony. (cf Num 21:6)

- b. These men’s hearts were full of poison, like the viper. (cf 3:7; 23:33)
  - c. They accused Jesus of being with the devil, but Jesus pointed out they are the very ones who had the devil as their father. (cf Jn 8:44)
  - d. Jesus’ good heart is contrasted to the Pharisees’ evil heart.
  - e. As followers of God our heart should be good. (cf Ps 37:30, 31; Prov 25:11, 12; Eph 4:29)
2. The goodness or evilness of our hearts will be determined by the words we use. (36, 37)
- a. These verses seem harsh, but Jesus knew the very words we speak reveal our direction. (cf Isa 3:8; Jer 23:36)
  - b. Many misunderstand the “idle words” of this verse. It doesn’t mean useless or meaningless.
  - c. In the context it has reference to malicious and hurtful words, i.e., the words the Pharisees had just spoken against Jesus. (24)
- Note: The bible speaks here of being judged by the words we speak. In other verses we also see we are judged by works, (cf James 2:21-26) and also faith. (cf Rom 1:17; 3:28; 5:1) Some might find a contradiction here, but not so. Our speech, deeds and faith show the character of our heart.
- VII. They asked for a sign to be shown to them. (38-45)
- A. The Pharisees asking for a sign, after all that Jesus had done, showed their hypocrisy. (38) (cf Lk 11:16)
- 1. This request may have been made to try and fool the people into thinking they were fair and honest in their evaluation of Jesus.
    - a. Nothing could be further from the truth. (cf 16:1-4; Jn 2:18; 4:48)
    - b. Chapters 8 and 9 show many great signs which Jesus did, but they hated Him. (cf 12:14)

Note: A sign would be a miracle. (Same word used in Jn 2:11, 23; 4:54; 6:2, 14; 7:31)
- B. The Jew’s relationship to God was considered similar to a marriage vow. (39-42) (cf Ezek 16:38; Hosea 3:1)
- 1. Jonas (Jonah) was three days in the belly of the whale. (cf Jonah 1:17)
    - a. The whales belly was a “type” of the grave our Savior was in.
    - b. The type was both general: a temporary grave; and specific; three days. (cf 16:21)
  - 2. “The men of Nineveh” had seen less and responded with greater understanding.
    - a. Jonah preached for forty days and the entire city repented. (cf Jonah 3:5-10)
    - b. The Jews had seen the mighty works of Jesus for months, maybe years, yet were still unrepentant.
  - 3. Likewise, the queen of the south would condemn this generation. (cf 1 Kgs 10:1)
    - a. She marveled at Solomon’s wisdom. (cf 1 Kgs 10:7)
    - b. Solomon got his wisdom from the Godhead. (cf 1 Kgs 4:29; Prov 9:10)
- C. Jesus illustrates His point with a story of the unclean spirit. (43-45)
- 1. If the Pharisees’ attitude continued the problem would get worse instead of better.
    - a. It is a story of a man in two conditions. Going from bad to worse.

- b. When the evil spirit was cast out, a good spirit should have taken his place.
  - c. When he returned and found the man unrepented, it made a better dwelling place for evil.
  - d. These Jews were now like the first state of this man. If they didn't repent they would be like the second state.
2. The number "seven" is often used to show completeness. Here it is used as a finished state of wickedness. (cf Rev 1:4)
- VIII. Jesus uses His earthly family for additional teaching. (46-50)
- A. They may have come to persuade Him to compromise or at least to get out of the public's eye. (46, 47) (cf Mk 3:20, 21, 31-35)
- 1. While He was teaching they interrupted Him with something they thought was more important. (cf Lk 8:19-21)
  - 2. This was His mother and His earthly family. (cf 13:55, 56; Mk 6:3; Gal 1:19)
- B. Jesus said that those willing to do the will of the Father are His mother and brethren. (48-50)
- 1. This is true for us today. (cf Mk 3:35; Lk 8:21)
  - 2. Jesus did not turn His back on His earthly family, but He did not let them distract His efforts.
  - 3. He knew that true loyalty was to God.
    - a. This loyalty transcends all other loyalties. (cf 6:33)
    - b. What a lesson for us.

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